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# House of Commons Debates

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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, November 30, 2022

The House met at 2 p.m.

[English]

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*Prayer*

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• (1405)

[Translation]

**The Speaker:** It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation

[Members sang the national anthem]

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, more than one in three women experiences gender-based violence during their lifetime. As a father blessed with three beautiful daughters, this is a terrifying statistic and a reality that is not acceptable. No one should face violence because of who they are.

[Translation]

Today marks the fifth day of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence campaign, which began on November 25. Violence against women and girls remains the most prevalent human rights violation in the world. This is not a challenge we can overcome in 16 days.

[English]

We have proof that violence against women and girls is preventable. The single biggest action we can take is to support a strong and autonomous women's movement, here in Canada and abroad. It is up to all of us to be better and to do better.

[Translation]

I call on all members of the House and everyone living in Canada to step up and take action to end violence against women and girls.

### VETERANS

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank parliamentarians on all sides of the House for joining the celebration of service, where we welcomed veterans to Parliament Hill to thank them for their service and help them in their transition.

We were joined by the True Patriot Love Foundation and the Treble Victor Group, which help veterans find jobs in the private sector. Veterans brings skills, experience and loyalty to a job, and I would like to thank and congratulate Babcock Canada and Commissionaires for their innovative commitment to hiring veterans.

We also presented the Tracey J. Hubley Memorial Award for veteran purpose, which honours the late Tracey Hubley, who was a former Hill staffer. She was the president of Summa Strategies and was a great supporter of military families and veterans.

The award was given to Team Rubicon Canada, which just helped with disaster response after hurricane Fiona. Hundreds of veterans have worked on over 100 disaster response missions, and have shown that they can find purpose and continue to build this country.

I give a big “Bravo Zulu” to all of those groups.

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### MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

**Mr. Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, congratulations to the newly elected mayors, Matthew Shoemaker of Sault Ste. Marie and Enzo Palumbo of Prince Township, along with all of the council members on their recent successful municipal election.

I also congratulate all the school board trustees who represent the four school boards in our area. I thank all who placed their names on the ballot. As a former two-term school board trustee and a four-term city councillor, I know how important municipal politics is to Canada.

I met with Mayor Shoemaker and Mayor Palumbo in the riding, and we have agreed to work together to serve the constituents whom we mutually represent. I have met with council members and will continue to meet with them throughout January.

*Statements by Members*

I give a big shout-out to Mayor Christian Provenzano, Mayor Ken Lamming and previous councillors and trustees for all of their contributions to our beautiful communities. They certainly have left their mark. I am looking forward to the new mayor and council leaving their mark as well.

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[Translation]

**INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY**

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, December 2 is the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery. It is a grim reminder that, even now, in 2022, this problem still exists. Slavery has not been relegated to the history books; it remains a chilling reality to this day.

According to the International Labour Organization, over 40 million people around the world are currently victims of forced labour. I deplore the fact that, all over the world, modern slavery affects women in particular. They are subjected to terrible practices, such as debt bondage, forced marriage and human trafficking.

Together with my fellow members of the All Party Parliamentary Group to End Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, I encourage everyone here to work across party lines to eradicate new forms of slavery, such as sexual exploitation, child labour and the forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict.

Together, let us take action against this scourge.

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[English]

**100TH ANNIVERSARY OF EASTER SEALS**

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Windsor—Tecumseh, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Easter Seals Ontario was established 100 years ago in my hometown of Windsor thanks to the vision of Rotary clubs, including our own Rotary Club of Windsor (1918).

Easter Seals has grown into a national organization that supports countless children with disabilities through programs, camps and funding for mobility equipment. More importantly, Easter Seals has been a steadfast champion for building a Canada that is more inclusive and barrier free. This November, Easter Seals celebrated its centennial by hosting events, including Windsor-Essex's 40th Annual Easter Seals Telethon, which raised an incredible \$235,000.

This Saturday will mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Join me in celebrating 100 years of Easter Seals Ontario and celebrating the remarkable volunteers back home and across the nation who are building a more inclusive and better Canada.

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• (1410)

**JEWISH REFUGEES**

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today is Jewish refugee day. On this day, we commemorate the nearly one million Jewish refugees who were forcibly displaced from Arab countries and Iran between the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.

For centuries, large Jewish communities lived in the Middle East, Iran and north Africa in relative peace with their neighbours. However, everything changed in the years leading up to and following the rebirth of the state of Israel in 1948. Suddenly, Jews were subjected to systemic anti-Semitism and evicted from their homes. They were subjected to arbitrary arrest, torture and murder.

This year, B'nai Brith, which is Canada's oldest Jewish advocacy organization, will again commemorate these refugees and will raise awareness of this great injustice by hosting a virtual event tonight. I urge MPs from all parties to join this event. It can be accessed on the website.

Let us all remember the stories of Jewish refugees from Arab lands and Iran, and continue to fight against anti-Semitism, injustice and racism in all of its forms.

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**HINDU HERITAGE MONTH**

**Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of 830,000 Hindu Canadians, I would like to thank all members of the House for unanimously supporting my motion to proclaim November as Hindu Heritage Month.

Hindu Canadians have come to Canada from all countries in South Asia, several countries in Africa and the Caribbean, and many other places. We are bonded by our faith and heritage.

To mark this historic beginning and a new era for Hindu Canadians, I raised a flag with the Hindu sacred symbol, Om, on Parliament Hill.

Hindu Canadians are the most peaceful, educated and successful group in Canada.

I also thank all of those who recognize the contributions of the Hindu heritage to mankind and the contributions that Hindu Canadians have made and continue to make to the socio-economic development and cultural heritage of Canada.

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**NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY**

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there are times when nations need to join together for the purposes of collective security, to defend our democracy and the international rule of law, as well as to ensure peace and stability in the world. Last week, NATO parliamentarians did just that with delegations from all 30 NATO countries meeting in Madrid for the 68th annual NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

Over a five-day period we debated, deliberated and voted unanimously on six resolutions that covered the top security and defence issues facing Euro-Atlantic countries today. These included cybersecurity, climate change, the economic consequences of Russia's war on Ukraine and the next steps for NATO's deterrence and defence.

All NATO parliamentarians were united and resolute in standing with Ukraine. It was clearly stated that the Russian state, under the current regime, is a terrorist one, and there is a need to continue to support Ukraine in every way possible. We also affirmed our need to keep building up defences and resiliency in each of our own countries.

Russian aggression will not go unpunished. We will move forward together, united in our goal for peace and security in the world.

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#### OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, cold kills not often by direct exposure but quietly. People who are stuck in cold homes are more likely to die from high blood pressure and cardiac events resulting from their body's struggle to maintain circulation.

Reports say that 150,000 people will likely die from the cold in Europe this winter due to soaring energy costs amid Putin's murderous war on Ukraine. While Germany restarts its coal-powered plants, the Liberal government continues to block LNG projects and pipelines that could supply the world with affordable cleaner energy.

Thousands of Canadians also cannot afford to heat their homes due to inflation, taxes and supply constraints. It is time for the government to cut the carbon tax and get out of the way so that Canada can supply the world with affordable energy. Its failure to do so will likely cause some vulnerable people to lose their lives this winter.

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[Translation]

#### OUTAOUAIS PARTICIPATION AT COP15

**Mrs. Sophie Chatel (Pontiac, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last week the entire Outaouais region was preparing for the United Nations COP15, to be held soon in Montreal.

As part of our For a Green and Prosperous Outaouais initiative, which I launched a year ago with my partners at the Conseil régional de l'environnement et du développement durable de l'Outaouais, or CREDDO, we brought together more than 70 biodiversity experts and elected officials from the region, including our indigenous communities on the Kitigan Zibi reserve, to bring our voice, the voice of the Outaouais, to COP15 in Montreal.

I would like to thank everyone who made this event a great success. It is with communities as committed as the Outaouais that we will achieve our global targets for protecting nature and biodiversity.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

[English]

#### WINSTON CHURCHILL

**Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today we celebrate the birthdate of a great leader, Winston Churchill.

#### Statements by Members

Remembered for his leadership and heroism during the Second World War, he had boldness and determination quite unlike any other, which consistently shone through over his six decades in public service to his country.

In 1929, after his ninth re-election as a parliamentarian, the British Bulldog, as he was known, visited my province of Alberta as part of a North American tour. Revelling in the beauty of these great plains to the mountains, he said:

I've heard so much about this wonderful province of Alberta that I don't want to miss anything.

Today Alberta honours the late, great prime minister. In the spring of next year, his statue is to be unveiled in downtown Calgary. Remembering Churchill's legacy, in his own words:

All the greatest things are simple, and many can be expressed in a single word: freedom; justice; honour; duty; mercy; hope.

**The Speaker:** I just want to remind hon. members that S.O. 31s are going on. When you are talking to each other, please try to whisper. If you are talking in a loud voice, then it gets in the way of the person getting their message across. I just want to remind the hon. members to get very close to each other and whisper, and then go back to their seats, if they have something important to say to each other.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Lévis—Lotbinière.

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#### RURAL COMMUNITIES

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, rural communities have been hit hard by the Liberals' inflationary policies. Everything costs more, much more.

With the triple carbon tax that is rapidly increasing because of the Liberals' incompetence, the cost of transportation in these communities has cut into family budgets and hurt small main street businesses in Canada's rural communities.

The Prime Minister lives in an ivory tower and does not recognize the challenges faced by Canadians living in rural areas. It is high time that the Prime Minister travelled to the interior of our country to see the problems that all Canadians are experiencing. His obsession with increasing the carbon tax will have an impact on many Canadians' financial autonomy and leave them cold and hungry.

The Prime Minister has spent so much money since 2015, that he has to pick the pockets of Canadians to hand out some goodies during the holidays.

*Statements by Members*

For the well-being of all Canadians, it is time for Canada to have a competent, proud and strong government, a Conservative government.

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[English]

**HEALTH CARE FOR MILITARY WOMEN**

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it was just over 30 years ago that women were first allowed to participate in all military workplace settings, including combat by land, sea and air.

How these environments impact their fertility and pregnancy, and even the epigenetics of their offspring, remains largely medically unknown. Many military members delay their pregnancies to support their military careers, but then some find themselves with PTSD upon release and facing a lack of health care providers familiar with PTSD treatments and medications that are safe to continue when pregnant or breastfeeding.

Perinatal and mental health services for veterans and military women appears in three mandate letters for the Minister of National Defence, the Minister of Veterans Affairs, and the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, but nothing is moving forward. I challenge those ministers to get to work on this important issue. Military and veteran women deserve to have equitable research and knowledge about the risks of the unique workplace exposures possible from the military.

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**JEWISH REFUGEES**

**Hon. Jim Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in honour of Jewish refugee day, I would like to commemorate the nearly one million Jews who were forced into exile from Iran and other countries in the region beginning in 1948.

This forced migration was marked by a religious persecution and even genocide. Many individuals and families found safe harbour here in Canada. The communities that thrive today contribute so much to the diverse mosaic of the Canadian identity. Anti-Semitism and racism of all kinds remain a part of the lived experience for people in Canada and around the world.

One of our best defences against this can be found through education. B'nai Brith, Canada's oldest Jewish advocacy organization, will host a virtual commemoration of the story of Jews from Iran and Arab lands this evening. The event can be accessed through the B'nai Brith website. It is through education that we can build our defences against hatred in all of its forms.

\* \* \*

● (1420)

[Translation]

**VICTOR-LÉVY BEAULIEU**

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today I want to acknowledge the works of Victor-Lévy Beaulieu, a giant of Quebec literature and a proud resident of Trois-Pistoles.

Last month, Mr. Beaulieu was selected to receive the Prix de la langue française, one of the highest honours awarded to a writer in the entire Francophonie. He is the first Quebecker in history to receive this honourable distinction.

A man of many talents, Mr. Beaulieu has written novels, literary essays, plays and screenplays. He was also a teacher, a columnist and an editor. In addition to producing a monumental collection of works over the span of five decades, he also engaged in politics; above all, he is a staunch defender of the Quebec nation and a proud sovereignist.

Unfortunately, the Académie française and Académie Goncourt did not allow Mr. Beaulieu to accept his award when his health prevented him from travelling. This regrettable choice only emphasizes the importance of celebrating the talent and contribution of Victor-Lévy Beaulieu to Quebec culture and the Francophonie.

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[English]

**GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES**

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, back in August, the Prime Minister made a speech in which he talked about the complex challenges facing Canada. The Prime Minister was clear that strong institutions are among those things that guarantee our freedom.

Let us pause for a moment and reflect on the current state of our institutions. There is an immigration backlog of over a million people. Many Canadians still cannot obtain a passport in reasonable time. Canadians still pay the highest wireless bills in the world, yet we see the government desperately trying to regulate and censor online content despite the fact that many Canadians lack high-speed Internet services to access it. We have a government actively outlawing our grandfathers' hunting rifles while looking us in the eye and saying that it is not. Canadians are paying more and getting less.

It seems like everything is broken under the current Liberal government, but we can fix this. Canada needs an accountable and affordable Conservative government. Under the leadership of the member for Carleton, we will bring back hope, win the support of Canadians and clean up this Prime Minister's mess.

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**MCGILL PUBLIC POLICY STUDENTS**

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, progress depends on sound public policy. Public policy is both a science and an art. It relies on rigorous analysis and an acute sense of the possible.

Today, graduate students from McGill's Max Bell School of Public Policy are on Parliament Hill to build on their study and exploration of the issues facing our country. They are here to learn firsthand about government decision-making in a Westminster parliamentary system.

They are accompanied by the program's founding director, Professor Chris Ragan, one of Canada's top economists. Professor Ragan has succeeded in bringing together academics and practitioners in myriad subject areas to create one of the country's leading faculties dedicated to excellence in public administration.

I ask members of the House to join me in welcoming our Max Bell visiting students to the nation's capital today. We look forward to these bright young minds returning soon, to take up roles and responsibilities that will guide our ship of state into a promising future.

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## ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

### DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on November 7, Global News reported that the Prime Minister received briefings from CSIS saying that China had funnelled money to federal candidates. The Prime Minister says that he heard nothing about it and knew nothing about it, but since that news came out on November 7, has he asked CSIS whether there is any proof of those allegations?

• (1425)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think all Canadians understand that I need to be deliberate about my answers, when it comes to matters of national security. Canada and its allies are regularly targeted by foreign states like China, including during our elections. Our national security agencies, under this government, are taking more action than ever.

We created an independent panel to evaluate foreign interference threats to Canadian elections and that panel confirms that election integrity was not compromised. Yes, I am regularly—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

[English]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is very interesting. He has received briefings. The question, then, is whether he received those briefings since November 7, when Global News reported that CSIS had said the Chinese government had funnelled money to nearly a dozen candidates. The Prime Minister says he knew nothing about money from China to candidates.

However, presumably he would have been curious enough to ask, when he read about it in the news. Did he?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think members and all Canadians understand that I need to be deliberate about my answers when it comes to a matter of national security.

### Oral Questions

Canada and its allies are regularly targeted by foreign states like China, including during our elections. Our national security agencies, under the current government, are taking more action than ever and indeed are among the global leaders on countering foreign interference in elections. We created an independent panel to evaluate foreign interference threats to Canadian elections that confirms that election integrity was not compromised. I am briefed, but more, all parties are briefed on threats—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the question is whether he has been briefed since November 7 about whether or not a foreign power funnelled money to Canadian federal candidates, yes or no?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have said a number of times in the House, to this moment, I have not. In all the briefings I have received, there has never been information around candidates receiving money from China in the 2019 election or in the 2021 election. We have independent public servants who are engaged to oversee the integrity of elections. They confirmed the elections did complete themselves with full integrity.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, did the Prime Minister ask for briefings on the allegations that were in the November 7 story, yes or no?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know the member opposite, who sat in a cabinet, understands the importance of respecting national security guidelines. On top of that, I know the member opposite understands how important it is to ensure the integrity of our elections, because he was the minister for elections integrity under that previous government. However, under that previous government, while he was making reforms to our elections act, he did absolutely nothing on foreign interference.

What we did was bring in a number of mechanisms and a number of new tools to ensure the integrity of our elections.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister wakes up in the morning, reads a story that says a foreign government funnelled money to Canadian federal candidates, and he cannot tell us if he picked up the phone or face to face asked his officials if these allegations were true.

We will move on to a next question. The Prime Minister said yesterday when I asked if there was any electoral interference from a foreign government that there was none that “significantly changed the outcome of the election.”

Was there any interference, to his knowledge, yes or no?

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, like I just said, Canada and most of our allies are regularly subject to foreign interference from various states, including China, on an ongoing basis and including during our elections. That is something the member opposite would know if he had paid attention when he was minister of elections, and also if he were to ask his two colleagues who are previous leaders of the Conservative Party from 2019 and 2021, whose teams were briefed before, during and after those elections on foreign interference.

• (1430)

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister denies Chinese interference in and influence over the Canadian government. He said in English that there was little or no significant influence over the 2019 election. I wonder at what point interference is considered to be little, medium, a lot, dangerous or too much.

In 2016, within 48 hours of a Chinese bank being granted the right to operate in Canada, \$70,000 from Chinese communities were deposited in the riding of Papineau.

Is this interference or influence?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague raises an important question: Should politicians who make partisan accusations decide whether or not there was problematic interference in our democracy during the election? That is why we leave it up to our intelligence services and experts in the public service. I have created a committee that is responsible for taking an independent and objective look at the electoral system to ensure the integrity of our elections, and that is what it did during the 2019 and 2021 elections.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, let me make better use of my 35 seconds. In 2016, the Liberal coffers in Papineau, the Prime Minister's riding, got a \$70,000 boost from the Chinese communities of Toronto and Vancouver. Around that same time, a new bank was created specifically to serve Chinese communities in Canada.

Looking back, was that interference or influence?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, interference in our democratic processes and our elections is an extremely important and crucial issue. I realize the hon. member is attacking the integrity of our institutions. Canadians can trust the process we set up to oversee the integrity of our elections. I can assure Canadians that, despite the ongoing reality of interference in our country, our democratic institutions and our elections were not affected.

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**HEALTH**

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Dr. Guylaine Larose, a pediatrician at CHU Sainte-Justine, is saying she has never seen the emergency room so busy. She has never seen so many children in respiratory distress, so many exhausted doctors and nurses, and so many distraught parents. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister sits back and does nothing.

When are the Liberals going to wake up and offer help, like they did during the pandemic, to save our health care system?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House respect provincial jurisdictions. We are well aware of how much Canadians are suffering because their health care systems are overwhelmed and struggling to meet the demand. That is why we are here to work with the provinces and territories to improve health care system outcomes. Yes, we are here with more money, but we are also here with more tools to ensure that our systems can improve and remain public, to meet the expectations of Canadians.

[English]

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, leadership means finding solutions, not hiding behind excuses.

We have another serious threat to our health care system in the form of Danielle Smith's sovereignty act in Alberta. Albertans are worried about their health care system, and the act is going to do nothing to deal with the problem. In fact, it might make things even worse. People in Alberta are worried that Danielle Smith will use the sovereignty act to undermine Canadian laws, like the Canada Health Act, and make patients pay to access hospital services.

What is the Prime Minister doing to stop Danielle Smith from destroying health care in Alberta? What is he doing to protect health care so Albertans get the care they need?

• (1435)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can very much understand why so many Albertans are preoccupied with the premier's choice to bypass the legislature in order to advance her agenda, but on this side of the House we will remain focused on standing up for Albertans on working constructively with anyone who wants to advance better jobs and a cleaner environment for Albertans, and who wants to work to ensure that they are getting quality health care services with real results and real outcomes.

We are going to continue to work with all Albertans to deliver a brighter future for them.



*Oral Questions***THE ECONOMY**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Governor of the Bank of Canada says that because deficits spilled over longer than they needed to, inflation went on longer than it needed to as well. As a result, the average cost to a Canadian is \$3,500. Now, yesterday, the Parliamentary Budget Officer said that the Liberal government has brought in \$50 billion in brand new inflationary spending, contradicting the claim that the Liberals would “keep their powder dry”.

Why are they spending more and making Canadians pay more?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has made it very clear that he disagrees with our focus on supporting Canadians. He made it crystal clear by standing and voting against support for families who could not otherwise afford to send their kids to the dentist. That demonstrates the priorities of the Conservative Party to not be there for Canadians and to attempt austerity as a way of moving forward.

We demonstrated during the pandemic that by being there for families, small businesses and communities, not only did we get through the pandemic but we ended up with a stronger economy.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, austerity is when one in five Canadians have to skip meals because they cannot afford groceries. That is the austerity that meant 1.5 million Canadians literally had to go to a food bank in a single month. What is the NDP solution? It is to vote with the Liberals to raise home heating bills by applying the carbon tax and tripling it. This coming winter, we are expecting a 100% increase in home heating bills.

Will the Prime Minister cancel his plan to raise the tax and take all taxes off home heating altogether?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what the member opposite just demonstrated is that he does not understand that what he has been talking about from the very beginning is austerity. It is withdrawing and not being there to support Canadians who need it, in the hopes that it will somehow make everything okay.

What Canadians saw during this pandemic and what Canadians are seeing during this recovery is that by being there in targeted, measured ways, through things like making sure every family can afford to send their kids to the dentist and like making sure we are giving a top-up to the lowest-income renters, we support people in difficult times, something the Conservatives do not do anything about.

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**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, speaking of difficult times, the Prime Minister's policies have given us a 32% increase in violent crime and a 90% increase in gang crime. Murder rates are now rising again this year, year after year.

What is his solution? It is to ban Grandpa Joe's hunting rifle. In fact, he wants to ban hundreds of thousands of hunting rifles and

spend hundreds of millions of dollars doing it. Why will the Prime Minister not leave hunters alone and go after the real criminals?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear that we are not targeting law-abiding hunters and fishers. We are not going after shotguns or rifles. We have banned military-style assault weapons. Unfortunately, Conservative politicians continue to mislead Canadians, to base things on fear and to be focused on making assault weapons legal again in this country.

We will continue to take the necessary measures to keep Canadians safe while respecting the rights of law-abiding Canadians. That is what Canadians expect, and that is what we have been doing.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I get my information from the amendment that the Prime Minister's government tabled in the committee. I have it right here, a list of the firearms that he wants to ban. It includes the Webley & Scott wildfowl gun, fowl as in wild turkeys and wild ducks. That is right in the list that his government put forward of guns he wants to ban.

Why is he more concerned with protecting wild turkeys from hunters than he is concerned about protecting Canadians from criminals?

• (1440)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we see once again that the Conservative Party is deep in the pockets of the American gun lobby. The reality is Canadians know that we can and will continue to respect law-abiding hunters—

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

**The Speaker:** I am looking to the whips for some support, and I think I got it.

The hon. Prime Minister from the beginning.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, once again we see the extent to which the Conservative Party of Canada is in the pocket of the gun lobby. We will continue to move forward in responsible ways while respecting the choices of law-abiding hunters and fishers and people who use guns responsibly to continue with their rifles and shotguns, while at the same time preventing those military-style assault weapons that were designed to kill the largest number of people in the shortest amount of time from being used in this country.

The Conservatives continue to try to bring those back. We still stand strongly on better gun control.

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is right on page 294 of the Prime Minister's proposed amendments that he wants to ban the Webley & Scott wildfowl gun. Again, this is a firearm specifically designed to go after turkeys and ducks. These are tools for farmers and hunters, many of whom are first nations who rely on country food in order to feed themselves, but he wants to ban them and turn those people into criminals. I am taking my information directly from these amendments.

Why will the Prime Minister not stand up and admit that he wants to ban hunting rifles and shotguns rather than going after the real criminals?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again, the Conservatives do a good job of talking about their supposed tough-on-crime agenda. That single-minded approach they have is, unfortunately, wrong.

As we have seen, supposedly tough-on-crime legislation that keeps getting struck down by the courts does not do a thing to keep our communities safer. That is why we are focused on smart legislation to ensure that Canadians are protected and to make sure our communities are safer. We are going to continue to move forward on responsible gun control while respecting the rights of law-abiding hunters and farmers.

[Translation]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and his policies have caused a 32% increase in violent crime. Crime related to street gangs has increased by 90%.

His solution is to ban the hunting rifles used by farmers, indigenous peoples and people living in rural communities.

When will he finally target the real violent and repeat criminals instead of our hunters and farmers?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our Bill C-5, which the Conservatives voted against, gave judges the ability to increase maximum sentences for hardened criminals. This provides the flexibility to ensure that criminals are punished and put in prison while respecting the legal principles that apply to everyone.

We will continue to introduce measures that will keep our communities safe while the Conservatives will continue to want to bring assault weapons back to Canada.

\* \* \*

**DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Let us continue, Mr. Speaker. We are not talking about the integrity of institutions. We are talking about the integrity of the Liberal Party of Canada.

I would like to remind the House that this Prime Minister refused to denounce China's genocide of the Uighurs and he refused to impose sanctions on China in the Uighur file.

Can the Prime Minister tell us whether any of our institutions have looked into the Chinese funding in the Liberal riding of Papineau in 2016?

• (1445)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I understand that the sovereignist wants to attack the integrity of Canada's institutions. The reality is that, since 2015, we have significantly increased the tools to keep our institutions strong. We created the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, which looked into interference in the election. We also passed the Elections Modernization Act, which addresses this issue and which the Bloc Québécois voted against. We created an expert panel to monitor and report on electoral interference. We closed the fundraising loopholes to prevent foreign money from being used in our elections. We implemented stricter controls on advertising and online platforms and—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, if I were to guess, I would say that there has never been a sovereignist who funded the Prime Minister's campaign. That being said, if the Prime Minister is saying that there was no interference in the Canadian election, then why did he fall over himself in front of the Chinese President? It is odd.

If the Prime Minister thinks there was no interference, I have another question for him. Is Papineau one of the 11 ridings where there were donations that originated from China, or is it the 12th?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we all know that the leader of the Bloc Québécois likes to hear himself speak. Perhaps he should listen to others because I have said several times that Canada and our other allies are regularly targeted by foreign states such as China with interference, including during elections. When I expressed my concerns about Chinese interference in Canada, that is exactly what I was talking about. We have put measures in place to ensure the integrity of our elections. These measures worked and they revealed that our elections were not compromised.

**The Speaker:** I want to remind members that when they yell or speak loudly, even when they use their hands, we can see their lips move. It is just a reminder.

\* \* \*

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have excellent gun control in Canada, but I think the Liberals have lost their minds. They have very quietly introduced an amendment to Bill C-21 that will ban rifles and shotguns.

Later, when the amendment was made public, the Minister of Public Safety said that no, it was not true, that the Liberals would not ban hunting weapons. The Liberals say one thing and then they turn around and say something else. We want to know if the Prime Minister has seen the list of weapons in the amendment that bans hunting weapons. They are going to be banned in Canada. Does he know what we are talking about?

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear. We are not targeting owners of hunting guns and rifles. We know that military style assault weapons have no place in our communities. That is why we have moved forward with an assault weapons ban in this country. It is a ban that the Conservative Party wants to overturn, but we will stand firm.

While respecting hunters and farmers, we will ensure that our communities are safer and that these assault weapons are banned.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that is the problem. The Prime Minister is trying to tell Canadians that people have assault weapons when what we are talking about are rifles and shotguns, old guns with wooden stocks that people use to shoot ducks or squirrels. These are not assault weapons. That is why the Prime Minister needs to see pictures from the list of all the firearms the Liberals are going to ban. He says he is not attacking hunters, but he is attacking hunters by trying to ban all the guns used for hunting and protecting wildlife in Canada.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we will always be there to keep Canadians safe. We will always be there to protect our communities and make the necessary investments. Yes, we have a plan to improve gun control to protect Canadians, their families and their communities.

We have put forward proposals to ban assault-style weapons, but we will respect hunters' and farmers' right to use rifles and shotguns.

● (1450)

[English]

**Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Prime Minister is saying that he is protecting public safety, but the crime rates are skyrocketing in this country. Gang-related homicides have not been this high since 2005. Violent crime is up by a third since he took government seven years ago.

Canadians are seeing this every day in the news in our communities, and the Liberals have now brought forward a new plan for fighting crime. Do members want to know what it is? It is to go after hunters and farmers and the tools that hunters and farmers use safely every day in this country. That is what the Liberal Prime Minister is targeting now.

When is he going to stop this unfair attack on our hunters and farmers and start going after the real problem, the gangsters and criminals in our cities?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know that a responsible approach to keeping our communities safe needs to have multiple facets, and that is exactly what we are doing by freezing the market on handguns; investing more in CBSA, so it can interdict illegal firearms coming into this country; and yes, moving forward to ensure that it is no longer legal to buy, sell, own or use military-style assault weapons in this country, which is something the Conservative Party wants to reverse.

We are, on top of that, continuing to invest in police officers, despite the fact that the Conservatives slashed resources for policing, and we are continuing to invest in community programs and safety.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister continues to deny he is going after hunting rifles, but I am looking at the list right now, and it has hundreds and hundreds of perfectly common, reasonable and legitimate hunting rifles on it. Members do not have to take my word for it. They can take the word of the tens of thousands of hunters who have already reached out to MPs in every party across this chamber, including Liberal members with rural Canadian seats. I know they have received these emails as well.

No one believes that going after hunters and farmers is going to solve the crime issue under the Prime Minister's watch, or perhaps the Prime Minister believes it. Perhaps he is just trying to change the channel from his failed record on public safety. When will he stop this unfair—

**The Speaker:** The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the member wants to talk about a failed record on public safety, she needs only look at the previous Conservative government, which continued to put forward a supposed tough-on-crime agenda that could not get any of those supposedly tougher laws to actually stick. The fact that they kept getting struck down time and time again by the courts indicated how wrong Conservatives were, not just in their legislation, but also in their attempts to keep Canadians safe.

On this side of the aisle, we are focused on evidence-based policy. We are focused on ensuring that we are supporting communities. We are investing in police, and we are strengthening—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Burnaby South.

\* \* \*

**THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, first-time food bank use in Ontario is up 65%. That is a staggering number. At the same time, corporate grocery stores are making huge profits. A report indicated that Loblaws is making \$1 million extra in excess profits per day.

Corporate greed is absolutely driving up the cost of food. What is this Prime Minister going to do for families in this upcoming holiday season who are worried about the cost of food? What is he going to do to tackle greedflation, and how about those families?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the member well knows, we introduced, in budget 2022, a Canada recovery dividend, and we increased the corporate income tax rate on financial institutions permanently.

### Oral Questions

On top of that, we have continually delivered for hard-working families. Whether it was cutting child care fees in half right across the country to make a huge difference in the lives of so many families, moving forward on a GST rebate that puts hundreds of dollars in the pockets of 11 million households, moving forward with dental benefits that ensure all families can send their kids to the dentist, or providing the top-up for low-income renters, these are things that provide concrete help Canadians.

\* \* \*

### HOUSING

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General recently sounded the alarm that the Liberal government is not assessing whether its steps to reduce homelessness are actually working or not. It is an indictment and a failure of its approach to homelessness. The reality is that indigenous communities are bearing the brunt of this failure, as indigenous community members are 11 times more likely to experience homelessness.

After years of broken promises, will the Prime Minister finally commit to a timeline for a fully funded, indigenous-led urban, rural and northern housing strategy?

• (1455)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, every Canadian has a right to a safe and affordable place to call home, and it is unacceptable that anyone in this country experience homelessness. That is why we are moving forward, in partnership with indigenous peoples, on an urban indigenous strategy that will support and fight against homelessness by giving the supports to people. These supports will be culturally appropriate and anchored in language and traditional knowledge. They will also ensure that the healing that needs to go hand in hand with addictions and mental health care, and so many other things, is addressed in a comprehensive way. We will be getting it right.

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### TELECOMMUNICATIONS

**Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, now more than ever Canadians rely on access to affordable and reliable high-speed Internet, which keeps us connected with loved ones and allows us to learn online. It also improves access to essential services and creates opportunity for our businesses to grow.

Could the Prime Minister update the House on achieving our government's goal of connecting 98% of Canadians by 2026 and 100% of Canadians by 2030?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from Sudbury for her dedication to her constituents.

Every Canadian, wherever they are in the country, deserves good and reliable high-speed Internet. Today, 93.5% of Canadians are connected to this essential service, compared to 79% in 2014 under the previous government. Through our nearly half-billion-dollar top-up to the universal broadband fund, we will bring 60,000 more rural homes online. It is all part of building an economy that works for all Canadians.

### DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a specific question for the Prime Minister. It is not about money from China. It is not about the government's election panels. It is not about the overall integrity of the last two elections. It is specifically about whether the Prime Minister was ever briefed about interference by Beijing involving any candidates or riding associations. Was he briefed?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as Canadians would expect, I am regularly briefed by our intelligence officials on a broad range of ongoing attempts at interference against Canadians and against our institutions by a number of countries, including China, but I can also highlight that during elections, all parties designate teams that also get briefed by our intelligence experts to ensure that before, during and after the elections, they understand the threats of foreign interference that have happened.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, he is the Prime Minister.

It is rather surprising to learn today that he did not ask for any new briefings on the allegations reported by Global News. That was several weeks ago, and the RCMP has even opened multiple investigations to shed light on these allegations.

My humble advice to the Prime Minister is that he ask for a new briefing from CSIS and the RCMP immediately, and that he be more straightforward in answering the opposition's questions.

Then again, perhaps he would rather continue to bury his head in the sand. Who is he protecting by refusing to come clean?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, allow me to correct my hon. colleague.

I am regularly briefed on all sorts of issues affecting Canada and Canadians. The reality is that when it comes to matters of national security, I need to be deliberate about my answers, and that is exactly what I am doing, because I do not want to put Canadians at risk.

The reality is that, yes, our intelligence services are very active on many files that they keep us informed about. They keep all parliamentarians informed on these files through the security and intelligence committee of parliamentarians.

### CARBON PRICING

**Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this Liberal government is really out of touch with what is happening in Canada. Inflation is hurting Canadians, who can no longer make ends meet.

I often talk about workers who have to use food banks, namely, 1.5 million in just one month; young people who are living in their parents' basement because housing prices have doubled in Quebec City alone; and students who have to sleep in shelters. I have been talking about these issues for a long time. I want to remind members that we are living in a G7 country.

Does the Liberal government recognize these hardships and will it take real action like not increasing the carbon tax?

• (1500)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let us talk about real action.

Tomorrow, families that could not afford to send their children to the dentist will be able to start filing claims for the money to be able to do so.

The reality is that it will make a big difference in the lives of many families that are struggling to make ends meet to be able to get dental care for their children.

Unfortunately, despite my colleague's interjection, she and all of the Conservatives voted against these measures to help families access dental care.

**Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, he is talking about going to the dentist. I am talking about buying groceries.

People are telling us they are struggling, but the Liberals ignore them and keep going. They want to raise taxes.

Each of my colleagues here today has long been sharing in the House some of the awful things that their constituents are going through in their community.

I will repeat my question: Will this Prime Minister and his government cancel their carbon tax plan?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know full well how concerned all Quebeckers and Canadians are about the fight against climate change. That is why we put a price on pollution.

Unfortunately, the Conservatives want to make it free to pollute across the country. We will continue our fight against climate change.

I will point out that in the places where the federal price on pollution applies, families are receiving more money than it costs them a year. We are there to help families in need while fighting climate change, which is what most Quebeckers want.

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### DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, when questioned a little more closely, the Prime Minister

### Oral Questions

talks about everything, but not once did he mention the riding of Papineau.

He is responsible for protecting our democracy, but he seems to care more about funding by Chinese interests and the British Crown than about democracy. I will try again.

Does the Prime Minister recognize that in 2016, in 48 hours, his riding received \$70,000 in funding from Chinese nationals?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we put in place measures to protect the integrity of our institutions, our elections and our election funding. We have always followed all the rules for election funding and we introduced new measures to bolster Canadians' trust despite the personal attacks by politicians here.

Canadians can rest assured that our institutions and the rules governing them are respected. The integrity of our institutions has not been breached.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, assuming I will not get a more specific answer than that, let me be perfectly clear. I am taking that as a "yes".

In 2016, the riding of Papineau received \$70,000 from Chinese interests in 48 hours. Basically, I have two questions.

Was the Prime Minister briefed on funding in his riding? Here is the second thing I am curious about. Was there an investigation into funding in his riding? Was he the recipient of Chinese funding, or the target of Chinese influence or interference in Papineau in 2016?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our federal electoral rules have long ensured that the only people who can donate to federal political parties are Canadian citizens and residents of Canada. There are perhaps some suggestions that border on intolerance and stereotyping when my colleague talks about China. We raise funds, and we have always done so in various communities. We will continue to reach out to Canadians of all backgrounds and encourage them to participate in the electoral process.

\* \* \*

[English]

### THE ECONOMY

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Ontario food bank usage is at a record high because of the Prime Minister's reckless inflationary spending. Forty-six per cent of food bank users are there because they cannot afford food. Fourteen per cent are there because they cannot afford housing. Eleven per cent of those users' wages are being eaten alive by the Prime Minister's inflation.

When will the Prime Minister realize the pain this inflation is causing Canadians, stop his reckless spending and get in touch so that Canadians do not have to keep skipping lunch?

*Oral Questions*

• (1505)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, having spoken with many families across the country that are having to rely on food banks, I can say that they are also extremely worried about being able to send their kids to the dentist. These are the kinds of things they do not get to do when they are squeezed for resources.

As of tomorrow, we are opening applications for supports so that families of all income levels can send their kids to the dentist. Unfortunately, the member and all Conservatives voted against giving \$1,300 for dental support over the next two years to families who need it.

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the trust fund Prime Minister is completely out of touch. The supports he is talking about are being vaporized by his own inflation. His inflation is going to cost each Canadian \$3,500.

When my family moved here, we lived basement to basement while the Prime Minister lived in taxpayer-funded mansions. That is why he has no clue. He has not only driven out investment; he is also driving out newcomers.

When will he stop driving newcomers out of this country, get in touch with reality and stop forcing families into food banks?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, while the Conservatives continue to focus on personal attacks on me, I will continue to focus on Canadians, with supports so all families can afford dental care in this country, something the Conservatives voted against, and with a \$500 top-up to help low-income renters, something the Conservatives voted against. Indeed, we are continuing to move forward by cutting in half child care fees across the country, something the Conservatives campaigned against in the last election.

We will continue to be there for Canadians while the Conservatives continue to ignore them.

\* \* \*

**CARBON PRICING**

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, all the supposed supports the Prime Minister is talking about are being vaporized by inflation. It is crushing Canadians.

The Prime Minister continues to crush them with his plan to triple the carbon tax. It is going to punish Canadians for living their lives, for buying groceries, for heating their homes and for driving to work. While food bank usage is at a record high, a third of food bank users being children, the Prime Minister is sipping champagne in a \$6,000-per-night taxpayer-funded hotel room.

The Liberals are out of touch and Canadians are out of money. When will the failed Prime Minister cancel his failed carbon tax?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let us talk about children. Let us talk about the Canada child benefit that has lifted hundreds of thousands of kids out of poverty, a benefit that the Conservatives campaigned and voted against.

Let us talk about the fact that we are cutting child care fees in half right across the country, making a difference of thousands of dollars in the pocketbooks of Canadians, something the Conservatives voted against.

Let us talk about the fact that kids from lower-income families cannot go to the dentist because their parents cannot afford it. As of tomorrow, they will get the support to send them to the dentist, which is going to make a huge difference. Unfortunately, Conservative politicians voted against that as well.

On this side of the aisle, we will stand up for Canadians. On that side of the aisle, they will ignore them.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, protecting species at risk and working hard to achieve our conservation objectives is a priority for my constituents. We know how important wild species and natural spaces are to our way of life, and we also know that nature is a crucial ally in our fight against climate change.

Can the Prime Minister tell us what our government is doing to protect species at risk and stop biodiversity loss?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Châteauguay—Lacolle for her question and her hard work.

Our ecosystems are precious and fragile, and we must protect them. On Monday, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change announced more than \$8.7 million in funding over the next three years through the habitat stewardship program for species at risk. This funding will support 67 conservation projects led by people across Canada who are taking action to recover species at risk in their communities. It is the right thing to do, and we are doing it.

*Oral Questions**[English]***CARBON PRICING**

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a successful agri-food business owner in my riding has shown me his freight bills with large surcharges from shipping companies that have been added due to the carbon tax. This entrepreneur takes great pride in using made-in-Canada inputs but wonders how much longer he can continue to absorb these extra costs.

Will the Prime Minister stop this made-in-Canada inflation and cancel his plan to triple the carbon tax, or will he just triple down and let his carbon tax cancel this entrepreneur's made-in-Canada success story?

• (1510)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have heard directly from farmers and agricultural producers about how the disruptions in global supply chains, the energy shortages, the challenges we are facing around the world with the war in Ukraine and coming out of the pandemic and other issues have contributed to real challenges for many families. That is why we are going to continue to step up even as we move forward in the fight against climate change.

We know that protecting our lands and resources and protecting families that live off the land will be unbelievably important for decades to come. That is why it is such a shame to see the Conservatives continue to have no plan for the future of our environment.

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government does not have a plan for the environment. It has a tax plan that it is going to triple.

Even the Governor of the Bank of Canada has said that the carbon tax is inflationary. These surcharges are a textbook example of made-in-Canada inflation. A food processor, like my constituent, has to pass on those surcharges. The carbon tax is driving up the cost of groceries and forcing more Canadians to the food banks.

Will the Prime Minister give people some hope and cancel his plan to triple his carbon tax?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it seems to be only Conservative politicians who do not understand that we cannot have a plan for the future of the economy if we do not have a plan to fight climate change.

What we have demonstrated over the past seven years, by making sure that it is not free to pollute anywhere across the country and making sure we are investing in transforming and decarbonizing our industries, is that we are securing good jobs for the future. The investments we are making in steel, agriculture and manufacturing are making a huge difference in creating good jobs for decades to come for Canadians and communities from coast to coast.

\* \* \*

**FINANCE**

**Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what the Conservatives do understand

is the number of targets the Liberal government has hit, which is zero.

The cost of government is raising the cost of living, with \$54 million for arrive scam, \$6,000 for a hotel room for one night and billions of dollars in corporate welfare. All the while, Canadians are suffering with high rates of inflation, the doubling of interest on mortgage payments and record food bank usage.

Will the government finally show a bit of discipline and a bit of compassion and limit its inflationary deficit spending?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we went into the pandemic with the strongest fiscal position of any of our peers and we came out of it with the strongest fiscal position of any of our peers. We did that because we invested in Canadians. We supported small businesses. We supported families. We supported workers. We supported students. We supported seniors. Not only was that the right thing to do because it allowed most of them to get vaccinated, but it also ensured that we would stay strong in our economic recovery.

We have recovered 100% of our jobs faster than the United States. We are seeing strong economic growth. We will continue to be there with targeted supports for Canadians who need them.

\* \* \*

**DENTAL CARE**

**Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know that provincial and territorial programs do not cover dental care needs for all children under the age of 12 equally across Canada. I have been hearing from families in my riding that they need better access to good oral health care. That is why I am pleased that our government took action and moved forward with our interim Canada dental benefit, which received royal assent just two weeks ago.

Could the Prime Minister please speak to how our government is investing in a Canada-wide dental care program to improve access for those who need it the most? When will Canadians be able to apply for this benefit?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Avalon for his hard work for his constituents.

Despite Conservative Party opposition, as of tomorrow the families of half a million kids under 12 will be able to access the Canada dental benefit. That means up to \$1,300 over two years per child for dental care. It will be open through the CRA's My Account for those with a net family income of under \$90,000 who do not have access to private dental insurance. It is tax-free and goes directly to parents.

*Private Members' Business*

This is all part of our plan to make life more affordable for Canadians.

\* \* \*

• (1515)

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this week marks World AIDS Day. The HIV/AIDS crisis once devastated Canada and the 2SLGBTQI community. Today, through the dedication and hard work of the community, we have the tools to eliminate HIV infections once and for all, but the Liberal government continues to ignore the calls for the annual \$100-million investment that it would take to do this.

When will the government provide the funds to eliminate HIV so that all Canadians can live a safe and healthy life?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know that far too many Canadians still deal with the disease of HIV/AIDS, and the fact is that we will continue to be there to support them. When we hosted the world AIDS conference in Montreal this summer, we made historic investments toward supporting people not just in Canada but around the world to live free of AIDS. This is something we are going to continue to stand for.

I thank the member opposite for his strength and advocacy on this issue. We will continue to work with him and with all members of the House as we keep Canadians safe.

\* \* \*

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, the major global summit on nature, COP15, opens next week in Montreal. It was originally scheduled to take place in China, so China retains the chairmanship of this conference, but the Prime Minister could do more. Many civil society organizations have asked the Prime Minister to put the message out and ask other heads of government to come to Canada so that a strong global biodiversity framework can be achieved.

Is the Prime Minister willing to reach out and improve the chances of success for COP15 in Montreal?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the member for her long-standing advocacy.

We are excited about stepping up to welcome the world for COP15, focused on nature and biodiversity, because we know how much it matters. In Montreal, we will be pushing countries for results on funding, protected areas and more. At home this week, we announced money for 67 projects to protect species across the country. We have gone from protecting less than 1% of our coastal areas before 2015 to protecting over 14%. I am looking forward to sharing more next week in Montreal.

**The Speaker:** That is all the time we have today for Oral Questions. I want to thank the members for a very peaceful question period. That was very good.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[Translation]

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT**

The House resumed from November 23 consideration of the motion that Bill C-288, An Act to amend the Telecommunications Act (transparent and accurate broadband services information), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Speaker:** It being 3:18 p.m., pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-288 under Private Members' Business.

[English]

Call in the members.

• (1530)

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

(Division No. 228)

**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
Bennett	Benzen
Bergen	Bergeron
Berthold	Bérubé
Bezan	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Block
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Bragdon	Brassard
Brière	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Cannings	Carr
Carrie	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Chahal	Chambers
Champoux	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Chong	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cooper
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Dalton
Damoff	Dancho
Davidson	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
d'Entremont	Desbiens



*Private Members' Business*

Desilets	Desjarlais	Normandin	O'Connell
Dhaliwal	Dhillon	Oliphant	O'Regan
Diab	Doherty	O'Toole	Patzer
Dong	Dowdall	Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Dreeshen	Drouin	Perkins	Perron
Dubourg	Duclos	Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Duguid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Poilievre	Powlowski
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz	Qualtrough	Rayes
Ehsassi	El-Khoury	Redekopp	Reid
Ellis	Epp	Rempel Garner	Richards
Erskine-Smith	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Roberts	Robillard
Falk (Provencher)	Fast	Rodriguez	Rogers
Fergus	Ferrieri	Romanado	Rood
Fillmore	Findlay	Ruff	Sahota
Fisher	Fonseca	Sajjan	Saks
Fortier	Fortin	Samson	Sarai
Fragiskatos	Fraser	Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Freeland	Fry	Scheer	Schiefke
Gaheer	Gallant	Seeback	Serré
Garneau	Garon	Sgro	Shanahan
Gaudreau	Gazan	Sheehan	Shields
Généreux	Genuis	Shiely	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Gerretsen	Gill	Simard	Singh
Gladu	Godin	Small	Sorbara
Goodridge	Gould	Soroka	Steinley
Gourde	Gray	St-Marie	Stewart
Green	Hajdu	St-Onge	Strahl
Hallan	Hanley	Stubbs	Sudds
Hardie	Hepfner	Tassi	Taylor Roy
Hoback	Holland	Therrien	Thomas
Housefather	Hughes	Thompson	Tochor
Hussen	Hutchings	Tolmie	Trudeau
Iacono	Idlout	Trudel	Turnbull
Ien	Jaczek	Uppal	Valdez
Jeneroux	Johns	Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Jowhari	Julian	Van Popta	Vandal
Kayabaga	Kelloway	Vandenbeld	Vidal
Kelly	Khalid	Vien	Viensen
Khera	Kitchen	Vignola	Villemure
Kmiec	Koutrakis	Virani	Vis
Kram	Kramp-Neuman	Wagantall	Warkentin
Kurek	Kusie	Waugh	Webber
Kusmierczyk	Kwan	Weiler	Wilkinson
Lake	Lalonde	Williamson	Yip
Lambropoulos	Lamoureux	Zahid	Zarrillo
Lantsman	Lapointe	Zimmer	Zuberi— 318
Larouche	Lattanzio		
Lauzon	Lawrence		
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier		
Lehoux	Lemire		
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)		
Liepert	Lightbound		
Lloyd	Lobb		
Long	Longfield		
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)		
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacKenzie	Nil	
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire		
Maloney	Martel		
Masse	Mathysen		
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)		
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)	Caputo	Joly
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty	Jones	Lametti
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	Martinez Ferrada	Muys
McLean	McLeod	Schmale	Sinclair-Desgagné— 8
McPherson	Melillo		
Mendès	Mendicino		
Miao	Michaud		
Miller	Moore		
Morantz	Morrice		
Morrison	Morrissey		
Motz	Murray		
Naqvi	Nater		
Ng	Noormohamed		

NAYS

PAIRED

Members

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

[Translation]

Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology.

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

*Private Members' Business*

[English]

**COPYRIGHT ACT**

The House resumed from November 25 consideration of the motion that Bill C-294, An Act to amend the Copyright Act (interoperability), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**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 second reading stage of Bill C-294 under Private Members' Business.

● (1540)

[Translation]

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

*(Division No. 229)***YEAS**

## Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison	El-Khoury	Ellis
Albas	Aldag	Epp	Erskine-Smith
Alghabra	Ali	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Allison	Anand	Fast	Fergus
Anandasangaree	Angus	Ferreri	Fillmore
Arnold	Arseneault	Findlay	Fisher
Arya	Ashton	Fortier	Fortin
Atwin	Bachrach	Fragiskatos	Fraser
Badawey	Bains	Freeland	Fry
Baker	Baldinelli	Gaheer	Gallant
Barlow	Barrett	Garneau	Garon
Barron	Barsalou-Duval	Gaudreau	Gazan
Battiste	Beaulieu	Généreux	Genuis
Beech	Bendayan	Gerretsen	Gill
Bennett	Benzen	Gladu	Godin
Bergen	Bergeron	Goodridge	Gould
Berthold	Bérubé	Gourde	Gray
Bezan	Bibeau	Green	Hajdu
Bittle	Blaikie	Hallan	Hanley
Blair	Blanchet	Hardie	Hepfner
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney	Hoback	Holland
Block	Blois	Housefather	Hughes
Boissonnault	Boulerice	Hussen	Hutchings
Bradford	Bragdon	Iacono	Idlout
Brassard	Brière	Ien	Jaczek
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe	Jeneroux	Johns
Calkins	Cannings	Jowhari	Julian
Carr	Carrie	Kayabaga	Kelloway
Casey	Chabot	Kelly	Khalid
Chagger	Chahal	Khera	Kitchen
Chambers	Champoux	Kmiec	Koutrakis
Chatel	Chen	Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Chiang	Chong	Kurek	Kusie
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)	Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Cooper	Cormier	Lake	Lalonde
Coteau	Dabrusin	Lambropoulos	Lamoureux
Dalton	Damoff	Lantsman	Lapointe
Dancho	Davidson	Larouche	Lattanzio
Davies	DeBellefeuille	Lauzon	Lawrence
Deltell	d'Entremont	LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Desbiens	Desilets	Lehoux	Lemire
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal	Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Dhillon	Diab	Liepert	Lightbound
Doherty	Dong	Lloyd	Lobb
Dowdall	Dreeshen	Long	Longfield
Drouin	Dubourg	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
Duclos	Duguid	MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacKenzie
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi	Maloney	Martel
		Masse	Mathysen
		May (Cambridge)	May (Saanic—Gulf Islands)
		Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
		McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
		McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
		McLean	McLeod
		McPherson	Melillo
		Mendès	Mendicino
		Miao	Michaud
		Miller	Moore
		Morantz	Morrice
		Morrison	Morrissey
		Motz	Murray
		Naqvi	Nater
		Ng	Noormohamed
		Normandin	O'Connell
		Oliphant	O'Regan
		O'Toole	Patzer
		Paul-Hus	Pauzé
		Perkins	Perron
		Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
		Poilievre	Powlowski
		Qualtrough	Rayes
		Redekopp	Reid

Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Rood
Ruff	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sarai
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Scheer	Schiefke
Seeback	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Shields
Shipley	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard	Singh
Small	Sorbara
Soroka	Steinley
Ste-Marie	Stewart
St-Onge	Strahl
Stubbs	Sudds
Tassi	Taylor Roy
Therrien	Thomas
Thompson	Tochor
Tolmie	Trudeau
Trudel	Turnbull
Uppal	Valdez
Van Bynen	van Koevorden
Van Popta	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vignola	Villemure
Virani	Vis
Vuong	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Weiler
Wilkinson	Williamson
Zahid	Zarrillo
Zimmer	Zuberi — 318

### NAYS

Nil

### PAIRED

#### Members

Caputo	Joly
Jones	Lametti
Martinez Ferrada	Muys
Schmale	Sinclair-Desgagné — 8

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

[*English*]

Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology.

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

● (1545)

**The Speaker:** I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, Government Orders will be extended by 25 minutes.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### POINTS OF ORDER

#### COMMENTS BY MINISTER OF NATIONAL REVENUE

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, May 3, during question period, after the member for Northumberland—Peterborough South asked a question, the Minis-

### *Points of Order*

ter of National Revenue said, “Mr. Speaker, I can well understand, during this Mental Health Week, how warped the thinking is on the other side of the House and that they do not understand what we mean.”

In response to such a comment making a parallel between mental health problems and the argument of an opposition member, the Speaker rose and said, “Perhaps it would be appropriate for the minister to phrase her words differently. Maybe she could apologize for that last statement. It was a little inflammatory.” Reclaiming the floor, the minister said, “I apologize, Mr. Speaker.”

My colleagues can find all these excerpts in the revised Hansard, volume 151, No. 063.

Unfortunately, that is not where this sad story ends, because on November 16, on local radio in the Gaspé, CIEU-FM, the Minister of National Revenue came back to her statement and, believe it or not, doubled down on it. She said, “I worked in mental health for 25 years and I saw all sorts of things, but I must say that I have rarely seen what is happening across the way when I look at my colleagues, and I am really concerned”.

To be polite, to say the least, the—

**The Speaker:** Order. I need to interrupt the member for a second. There is noise and it is not coming from the House. I would ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to go outside and ask people to calm down a bit and keep the noise down.

The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent can continue.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the story does not end there. It goes on.

On November 16, on local radio in her riding of Gaspé, CIEU-FM, the Minister of National Revenue came back to her statement and even, believe it or not, doubled down on it. She said, and I quote, “I worked in mental health for 25 years and I saw all sorts of things, but I must say that I have rarely seen what is happening across the way when I look at my colleagues, and I am really concerned”. To put it politely, the apology that the minister gave here in the House in May was not very sincere, to say the least.

We may have different opinions on a subject. We can, and I would even venture to say that we should, have different opinions. We can use evidence-based arguments to attack the opposing views of the other side. However, we should never resort to insults.

There are a thousand acceptable ways to attack an opponent without resorting to unacceptable means. Unfortunately, the Minister of National Revenue used insults as a weapon and as an argument, not once but twice. In my opinion that is unworthy of the mandate that citizens gave us with trust and respect.

**The Speaker:** I would like to thank the hon. member for his intervention. As he knows, my power is limited to the House, and I cannot leave and impose what was decided in this place to a situation outside the House.

The hon. member for Salaberry—Suroît.

*Routine Proceedings*

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, had my colleague next to me not mentioned it, I would not have risen to concur in his point of order. I, too, was affected and felt insulted and even scorned by my colleague's comments.

I believe my colleagues know that I am a social workers and member of my professional association. I also find that it is an insult to the profession to make a clinical judgment without an assessment about colleagues she does not know. Even with 25 years' experience in mental health, one is not necessarily an expert capable of making a clinical judgment about all of one's opposition colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I know that you have no authority over what happens outside the House. I had the opportunity to personally speak to the minister to ask her to withdraw her comments and qualify them. It seems to me that a good social worker would have said that it is possible that some individuals opposite may have mental health issues. You cannot make a blanket statement about one's colleagues as she did. It is written in the rules of our profession and we also learn that at school.

Perhaps the minister needs to be reminded more generally to be more careful next time. Implying that members of the opposition have mental health problems is rather contemptuous, and it is simply not something we do in this job. Given that she has experience in the field, it is even more improper for her to do so.

• (1550)

**The Speaker:** Once again, the Speaker has no authority over what happens outside the House. Today, during Oral Questions and Statements by Members, we had a good example of how we should respect others in the House. I thank all members for acting in a very civil manner today, and I encourage them to continue to do so.

I know that the party leaders in the House worked very hard with the whips to accomplish what we saw today. I hope that this will continue, not only in the House, but also outside the chamber, both in person and on the radio, and on social media.

I thank both hon. members.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

### FEDERAL ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION OF NEW BRUNSWICK

**The Speaker:** It is my duty to lay upon the table, pursuant to subsection 21(1) of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, a certified copy of the report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission of New Brunswick.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 32(5), this report is deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

[*English*]

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

### FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development in relation to Bill S-211, an act to enact the fighting against forced labour and child labour in supply chains act and to amend the customs tariff.

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House without amendments.

### CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

**Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 13th report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, entitled "Supplementary Estimates (B), 2022-23: Votes 1b, 5b and 10b under Department of Citizenship and Immigration and Vote 1b under Immigration and Refugee Board".

[*Translation*]

### INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology, entitled "Post-Covid-19 Economic Recovery: How can we rebuild better?".

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

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as you know, we are submitting a dissenting report.

This government went on a spending spree during the COVID-19 pandemic. Over \$200 billion of that was not associated with COVID-19 at all.

Inevitably, we cannot accept this report as is. That is why we will be filing a dissenting report.

\* \* \*

• (1555)

[*English*]

## PETITIONS

### CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of my constituents here in Ottawa Centre.

The petition concerns the corporate social responsibility of Canadian companies, in particular as it relates to human rights abuses and environmental damage around the world.

*Routine Proceedings*

## DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF POLITICAL BELIEF

The petitioners from my community want to make sure that companies, Canadian companies in particular, prevent adverse human rights impacts and environmental damage throughout their global operations and supply chains. They also ask that companies do their due diligence, including by carefully assessing how they may be contributing to human rights abuses or environmental damage abroad and providing access to remedies when those harms occur.

The petitioners ask that there be meaningful consequences for companies that fail to carry out and report adequate due diligence, and that a legal right be established for people who may be harmed to seek justice in Canadian courts.

## CANADA POST CORPORATION

**Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of the good people of Winnipegosis, who are forced to drive over 40 minutes to pick up their mail after Canada Post closed their local post office multiple times. These rural residents are feeling punished for simply living in rural Canada. These valid concerns are amplified by seniors, persons with disabilities and those who do not have the ability to travel. They are calling on the Liberal government, first, to provide a detailed explanation of why this essential service was closed despite anticipated staffing shortages, and second, to work with Canada Post and the Minister of Rural Economic Development to ensure that these temporary post office closures in rural areas are not normalized.

I support the people of Winnipegosis.

## FARMERS' MARKETS

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, farmers' markets are a really key tool for COVID-19 recovery. As small business owners and incubators, they state that they are domestic system and food security builders and local economy community builders, and that farmers' market coupon programs are a key support for new market development and a support for existing markets and their provincial associations.

There is a farmers' market coupon program in B.C., which is why these petitioners from my riding are calling for a federal matching program. They are stating that a national matching program would assist in meeting those demands, encourage provinces without a provincial program to create one, and support provinces that have a provincial program to expand to meet demand. They are calling for the federal government to match provinces that are already contributing to their farmers' market coupon programs.

## HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

**Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising in the House today to present a petition forwarded by my constituents in Calgary Centre concerning their support for Bill S-223, which is before Parliament at this point in time. It is all about banning the sale of organs from around the world. This petition is obviously a concern for people who feel there are regimes around the world that are harvesting organs from people who are unwillingly going there. Obviously, that should be banned in Canada.

These people are petitioning to make sure we support that ban in the House and in Parliament in general.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the first petition I am tabling today is in support of an excellent private member's bill that I presented in the House. We have a parallel version of that bill that was tabled just yesterday in the Senate. These bills are Bill C-257 and Bill S-257. Conveniently, they have the same number.

Petitioners are calling on the House to recognize the problem of political discrimination and how Canadians can face political discrimination and have a right to be protected from that kind of discrimination. It is a fundamental right to be politically active and vocal. It is in the best interests of Canadian democracy to protect public debate and the free exchange of ideas, and Bill C-257 and Bill S-257 seek to add protection against political discrimination to the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Petitioners call upon the House to support Bill C-257 and Bill S-257, which seek to ban discrimination on the basis of political belief or activity, and to defend the rights of Canadians to peacefully express their political opinions.

## CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the next petition also deals with an issue of freedom of speech and expression. It is a petition raising a grievous concern about a commitment in the Liberal Party's election platform to deny charitable status to organizations that take positions the Liberals disagree with, particularly on the issue of abortion.

Petitioners note that this commitment to deny charitable status on the basis of the convictions of an organization could put at risk the charitable status of organizations like hospitals, houses of worship, schools, homeless shelters and other charitable organizations, simply on the basis of the personally and sincerely held views of those who lead or work at these organizations. This proposal from the Liberal platform would involve applying a values test, discriminating against people based on their political views, similar to what we saw in the previous values test put in the Canada summer jobs initiative.

Therefore, petitioners call on the House to protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis, without discrimination on the basis of values and opinions and without the imposition of another values test. Also, petitioners want to see the House affirm the right of Canadians to freedom of expression.

*Routine Proceedings*

## ETHIOPIA

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the next petition I am tabling speaks to concerns about the situation in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. Notably, this petition came in prior to the signing of the recent peace deal. I know now there is a great deal of hope that the deal will be fully and quickly implemented and will lead to lasting peace, justice and reconciliation.

However, I still want to put this petition on the record to demonstrate the active engagement and concern of Canadians about the situation in Tigray. It includes a call that is very much still relevant, which is to engage directly and consistently with the Ethiopian and Eritrean governments on issues that emerged from the conflict and to call for international investigation into credible reports of war crimes and gross violations of human rights law.

## CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the next petition I am tabling deals with concerns raised by constituents about the Minister of National Defence's Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination in its final report, published in 2022.

The report includes a recommendation that religious clergy who come from denominations and faiths that have particular views on gender and sexuality should be excluded from being chaplains to the Canadian Armed Forces. This was a recommendation from the national defence minister's advisory panel, and petitioners are very opposed to this recommendation. The report slanders mainstream Canadian religions as discriminatory. Petitioners note that chaplains are entitled to charter-guaranteed freedom of religion, and they should be able to serve without the kind of discrimination advocated by this ironically named panel.

Petitioners call on the House to reject the recommendations on chaplaincy in the Canadian Armed Forces in the final report of the Minister of National Defence's Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination and to affirm the rights of all Canadians, including armed forces chaplains, to freedom of religion.

## HUMAN RIGHTS IN AFGHANISTAN

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the next petition that I am tabling deals with the human rights situation of Hazaras in Afghanistan.

Petitioners note various campaigns of genocide that have targeted the Hazara community in the last 100 years and state that the situation has only gotten worse since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. Petitioners call on the government to recognize the 1891 to 1893 ethnic cleansing perpetrated against Hazaras as a genocide and to designate September 25 as Hazara genocide memorial day.

## HUMAN RIGHTS IN CHINA

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, next I am tabling a petition that draws attention to the situation of Huseyin Celil. Huseyin Celil has been detained in China for over 5,000 days. Petitioners note that they were very pleased to see the release of the two Michaels from unjust and arbitrary detention in China. They would like to see the Govern-

ment of Canada make similar efforts to secure the release of Huseyin Celil.

The petitioners note that Celil is a Canadian citizen; that he was taken from Uzbekistan to China; that the Chinese government has continued not to recognize his Canadian citizenship and denied him access to lawyers, family and Canadian officials; and that he was coerced into signing a confession and underwent an unlawful and unfair trial. Evidence now makes clear as well that the Chinese government's treatment of Uighurs meets most, if not all the criteria for genocide, as outlined in the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Mr. Celil was active in promoting the human rights of Uighurs prior to his arrest and detention.

• (1600)

Petitioners call on the government to take a number of specific steps: to demand that the Chinese government recognize Mr. Celil's Canadian citizenship and provide him with consular and legal services in accordance with international law; to formally state that the release of Mr. Celil from Chinese detainment and his return to Canada are a priority of the Canadian government of equal concern as the unjust detentions of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor; to appoint a special envoy to work on securing Mr. Celil's release; and to seek the assistance of the Biden administration and other allies on working to obtain that release, as we have seen in the past.

• (1605)

## FALUN GONG

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am tabling a petition that highlights the ongoing persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China.

The petitioners note various reports that have identified this persecution, and that the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners includes organ harvesting, killing people for their organs and transplanting those to others, obviously without the consent of the person being killed.

The petitioners call on the Canadian Parliament and the government to seek to stop the mass murder of innocent people for their organs, including but not limited to Canadian legislation to ban organ tourism, also to take additional steps to call for an end to the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners, and to urge that those who participate in this persecution be brought to justice.

## HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the next petition I am tabling is similar but somewhat more specific. It also deals with the issue of organ harvesting and trafficking broadly, and calls on this House to adopt legislation to combat forced organ harvesting and trafficking.

The petitioners note a number of bills that have been brought forward on this topic. Most recently we have Bill S-223, which has just come out of committee and will soon be going to third reading in this House.

The petitioners hope that this Parliament will be the one that finally succeeds in passing organ harvesting and trafficking legislation.

## AFGHANISTAN

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the next petition that I am tabling highlights the plight of the Sikh and Hindu minority in Afghanistan. It calls on the government to take action to support that minority by having a special program to allow persecuted minorities from Afghanistan to come to Canada.

Many of these signatures were gathered prior to the Taliban takeover, and petitioners no doubt were expressing their will at the time that the government could have acted, when it would have certainly been much easier to provide support to these minorities. Nonetheless, I think it is still important to table this petition to recognize what could have been done and was not, and still needs to be done to support Sikhs, Hindus and other minorities facing persecution in Afghanistan.

## HEALTH

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the final petition that I am tabling in the House deals with the issue of conscience rights. It notes that the COVID-19 pandemic exposed serious gaps in support and services available to seniors and those who were dying. The forced closure of care homes and hospices which do not wish to participate in or facilitate the killing of their patients risks exacerbating the crisis in available long-term and palliative care.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to respect the charter-protected conscience rights of those who operate and work in care homes and hospices, ensuring that these facilities will be able to continue to operate.

\* \* \*

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 869, 871 and 873.

[Text]

Question No. 869—**Ms. Raquel Dancho:**

With regard to the illegal border crossing at Roxham Road: does the government have any plans to shut down the border crossing, and, if so, when?

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Roxham Road is not an official port of entry. The closest port of entry is Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle. When asylum seekers cross the border at Roxham Road they are advised by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police that they are entering Canada illegally and are subject to arrest. When the asylum seeker expresses their intent to continue and make a refugee claim, they are arrested and processed by the RCMP and subsequently transferred to the CBSA for the processing of the refugee claim. Since the border restrictions under the Quarantine Act ended in 2021, there has been an increase of refugee claimants entering Canada between the POEs. Asylum seekers are once again accessing the route to Canada at Roxham Road.

## Routine Proceedings

The Government of Canada has been in continuous contact with the United States on issues related to our shared border, including our desire to modernize the safe third country agreement. Canada continues to work towards the modernization of our immigration and refugee protection system to support economic recovery, national security and public safety priorities while offering asylum to those in need of protection.

Question No. 871—**Mr. Robert Kitchen:**

With regard to Order in Council P.C. 2020-903 and the coming into force of Section 292 of the Budget Implementation Act, 2019, No. 1 (S.C. 2019, c. 29): (a) on what date did Section 292 of the act come into effect; (b) who, in the Office of the Prime Minister, signed the order fixing the date for the coming into force of Section 292 of the act, which was published on December 9, 2020; and (c) what are the details of any government website entries related to the coming into force of the Order in Council, which have been modified in any way since January 1, 2021, including, for each, (i) the website which was modified (ii) the date it was modified, (iii) what was modified, (iv) the manner in which the information was modified, (v) the reason for the modification, (vi) who ordered the modification?

**Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the response from the Privy Council Office is as follows.

Regarding part (a) of the question, in general, orders in council, or OIC, come into force on the day they are made by the Governor General, unless an order contains a specific effective date.

In the case of P.C. 2020-903, the OIC fixed the date of registration as the effective date for section 292 of the Budget Implementation Act, 2019, No. 1. The order was approved by the Governor in Council on November 20, 2020, and then registered on December 9, 2020, making December 9, 2020, the effective date.

In response to part (b) of the question, orders in council are approved via decisions made by the Governor in Council, not by members of the Office of the Prime Minister. The “Governor in Council” means the Governor General acting on the advice of members of the King’s Privy Council for Canada, i.e., cabinet ministers. All Governor in Council approvals require a minimum quorum of four King’s Privy Council members, who advise that the Governor General approves a government proposal by signing the related order in council.

Order in Council P.C. 2020-903 was signed by the Governor General on November 20, 2020, and came into effect on December 9, 2020, the date on which it was registered.

In response to part (c) of the question, with few exceptions, OICs are made available to the public. To facilitate access by Canadians, they are posted on the PCO-OIC website at <https://www.canada.ca/en/privy-council/services/orders-in-council.html> within three working days after approval by the Governor General.

The Order in Council P.C. 2020-903 was made on Friday, November 20, 2020, and posted on the PCO-OIC website on Wednesday, November 25, 2020, at <https://orders-in-council.canada.ca/attachment.php?attach=40012&lang=en>.

*Routine Proceedings*

In accordance with the subsection 11(1) of the Statutory Instrument Act, it was subsequently published in the Canada Gazette on December 9, 2020, the day the order was registered and came into force: <https://www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p2/2020/2020-12-09/html/si-tr73-eng.html>. Also on December 9, 2020, the record for Order in Council P.C. 2020-903 was updated on the PCO-OIC website to reflect the fact that the order in council was registered and therefore in effect.

Please note that the orders in council division of the PCO is only able to comment on changes to the PCO's website.

Question No. 873—**Ms. Rachel Blaney**:

With regard to the Pacific Salmon Strategic Initiative (PSSI), since its inception: (a) what initiatives, programs, and projects have been created or received funding, broken down by key area, namely (i) conservation and stewardship, (ii) salmon enhancement, (iii) harvest transformation, (iv) integration and collaboration; and (b) what is the total amount of funding spent to date through the PSSI?

**Mr. Mike Kelloway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the Pacific salmon strategy initiative's, or PSSI's, financial reporting aligns with broader departmental financial reporting requirements, the total amount of funding spent to date is categorized by vote. Vote 1 covers salaries and wages, operations and maintenance; vote 5 covers capital expenditures; and vote 10 covers grants and contributions.

The total expenditures for PSSI across year one, 2021-22, is \$15.4 million, with \$5 million for salaries and wages, \$9.9 million for operations and maintenance, \$500,000 for capital, and no expenditures for grants and contributions. Spending for the current fiscal year, 2022-23, is ramping up given various programs, such as BCSRIF 2, have just been launched in recent months, with final expenditures available by early summer 2023. Under PSSI, BCSRIF was extended to 2026, with an additional \$128.55 million in partnership funding: \$90 million from the federal government and \$38.55 million from BC. On September 15, 2022, application information for the second phase of the BCSRIF program was made available to the public, including how to apply for this funding, with an application deadline that closed on November 15.

The launch year for the PSSI was 2021-22 and focused on finalizing financial and program authorities and engagement with indigenous peoples, partners and stakeholders regarding early program design, implementation and ongoing consultative mechanisms.

For 2022-23, numerous initiatives are under way in year two of the PSSI, with priority areas of action focused on early salmon rebuilding activities; setting up programs, tools and data solutions for transformative shifts; and determining prioritized stocks.

The department is continuing to work to ensure new and ongoing investments and activities in Pacific salmon programming are appropriately aligned to achieve key results. In particular, programs and actions will be implemented to respond to the historic declines of Pacific salmon by putting in place conservation approaches and plans for prioritized Pacific salmon stocks.

Budget 2021 announced \$647.1 million over five years, as well as \$98.9 million in amortization funds for the PSSI. The resulting \$746 million included \$4.7 million in revenues that have been

lost as a result of reduced revenues from fishing licences. Consequently, the total cash profile for PSSI is \$741.3 million over five years.

\* \* \*

• (1610)

[*English*]

**QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 865 to 868, 870 and 872 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[*Text*]

Question No. 865—**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo**:

With regard to the Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI), broken down by round, province and units: (a) how many RHI applications received federal funding; (b) how many RHI applications were denied federal funding; (c) of the units in (a), how many (i) have been completed, (ii) are still being built; and (d) of the units in (a), how many were not completed and the applications collapsed, and what were the reasons?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 866—**Mr. Rick Perkins**:

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and the southern resident killer whales at the Pender Island bluffs, broken down by year since 2015: (a) how many southern resident killer whales have travelled to the Pender Island bluffs; (b) on what date were they first spotted; (c) on what date did they leave the zone; (d) when did they travel; (e) what did they feed on; (f) how many (i) were struck or entangled, (ii) died; (g) how many boats were fined for entering the zone; (h) what was the yearly cost of enforcement; and (i) how often did DFO patrol the transit zone?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 867—**Mr. Rick Perkins**:

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), broken down by year since 2015: (a) what was the DFO's budget and expenditures in view of enacting their willing buyer-willing seller policy, for all licence buy-backs; (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by license type and species; and (c) how many licenses have been acquired, broken down by license type and species, and what is the average cost by species?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 868—**Mr. Rick Perkins**:

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and the spawning biomass of North Atlantic mackerel in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, broken down by year since 2015: (a) what was the size of biomass, broken down by the date of data collected; and (b) what are the details of how the data in (a) was collected, including the location of data collected, the methodology used and what vessel was used to collect the data?

(Return tabled)



*Government Orders***Question No. 870—Mr. Robert Kitchen:**

With regard to reports that some files related to requests made under the Access to Information and Privacy Act (ATIP), which have received lengthy extensions and are not being worked on, broken down by government entity subject to the ATIP: (a) how many outstanding ATIP requests have received an extension in excess of five years; (b) for each request in (a), what are the details, including the (i) date received, (ii) length of extension, (iii) anticipated completion date, (iv) subject matter; and (c) for each request in (a), what specific work was conducted on the file, broken down by year since the request was received?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 872—Mr. Don Davies:**

With regard to the federal tobacco control strategy for fiscal years 2020-21 and 2021-22: (a) what was the budget for the strategy; (b) how much of that budget was spent within each fiscal year; (c) how much was spent on each component of the strategy, specifically (i) mass media, (ii) policy and regulatory development, (iii) research, (iv) surveillance, (v) enforcement, (vi) grants and contributions, (vii) programs for Indigenous Canadians; (d) were any other activities not listed in (c) funded by the strategy, and, if so, how much was spent on each of these activities; and (e) was part of the budget reallocated for purposes other than tobacco control, and, if so, how much was reallocated?

(Return tabled)

[*English*]

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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**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 at this time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[*English*]

**NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR RECONCILIATION ACT**

The House resumed from November 29 consideration of the motion that Bill C-29, An Act to provide for the establishment of a national council for reconciliation, be read the third time and passed.

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to contribute to the debate on Bill C-29 at third reading.

This is quite critical legislation and I will start with some preparatory comments. Our government is committed wholeheartedly to pursuing all avenues possible in the advancement of reconciliation in this country. It goes without saying that when we speak about reconciliation, a cornerstone of this concept is the idea about accountability, that the government, the country, needs to be held

accountable for historical wrongs that have been perpetrated against indigenous peoples for literally centuries on this land.

Residents in my riding of Parkdale—High Park in Toronto have spoken to me regularly over the past seven years about the importance of reconciliation, the need to advance it and to address the TRC calls to actions. I am very pleased to note that the TRC calls to action, five of them in particular, are really at the heart of this legislation.

What my constituents and people around the country have told me is that we need to ensure we are doing everything in our power as a government and as a Parliament to remedy the wrongs that were inflicted upon generations of indigenous people, particularly indigenous children who, through the residential schools program, were robbed of their families, their culture, oftentimes their language and, indeed, their history.

Going back seven years to 2015 before we came into power as government, we campaigned on a platform that called for a renewed relationship with indigenous peoples, one that would be based on the recognition of rights based on respect, co-operation and partnership. An important cornerstone of any nation-to-nation relationship as it is being advanced is basic respect for the autonomy and self-determination of the various indigenous peoples that we engage with, being first nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. This is important on the international stage, but it is also important right here in Canada.

The reconciliation process that I am speaking of has to be guided by the active participation and leadership of indigenous peoples. I will digress for a moment. We had an example of that in the legislation I was privileged to work on, which, if memory serves, was either Bill C-91 or Bill C-92 two Parliaments ago. However, the important piece is not the number of the bill that we advanced at the time, but the indigenous languages legislation that we advanced and passed in this Parliament, which is now firmly part of Canadian law.

In that context, we co-developed the legislation in that spirit of reconciliation, in terms of giving full participation and leadership in the development role to indigenous communities, first nations, Inuit and Métis. That is an important aspect of reconciliation and how it manifests, but so too is this bill. With this bill, we would put in place institutional mechanisms that are called for in the TRC calls to action for indigenous peoples, so they can hold Canada and the Canadian government to account for meeting goals on the path toward reconciliation.

### *Government Orders*

What is Bill C-29 about? It is called “an act to provide for the establishment of a national council for reconciliation” and, like the indigenous languages bill that I was privileged to work on two Parliaments ago, it has been driven by the active participation of first nations, Inuit and Métis communities, organizations and individuals right across the country. What it would do is establish a permanent, indigenous-led, independent council with a mandate to monitor and support the progress of reconciliation in this country, including progress toward the full implementation of the TRC calls to action.

Let us talk about those calls to action. I mentioned them at the outset of my comments. The calls to action call on the government to create a non-partisan body that would hold the Government of Canada to account on the journey toward reconciliation. Specifically, calls to action 53 and 54 call for the establishment of this national council for reconciliation and for permanence of funding, which is very critical. We need to not only create the body, but adequately resource it.

Call to action 55 calls on the government to provide relevant information to the council in support of its mandate, providing it with the tools so it can execute its functions. Call to action 56 calls on the government to publish an annual report in response to the national council's annual report covering what the government is doing in terms of advancing reconciliation, another key component.

I will digress for a moment. I know there were some very useful amendments proposed at the committee stage, which I believe were universally adopted and it was unanimous coming out of committee. One of the components was for the government's response to be led by the Prime Minister himself, which is really critical in terms of emphasizing the prioritization and importance of this issue about advancing reconciliation. It is critical to not underestimate the impact that this kind of council will have on fostering the type of relationship with indigenous peoples I mentioned at the outset of my comments.

- (1615)

Through the annual response report, Canada would be consistently required to account for progress being made and also progress that has not yet been made, including identifying challenges, hurdles and obstacles.

It would be the people most impacted by such policies, the first nations, Inuit and Métis people on this land, who would have the power and wield that power to hold the government of the day to account.

That is really important. This is not about partisanship. This is not about what the Liberal government will be held to account for. This is what any government in the country would be held to account to do, going forward, with respect to advancing reconciliation, which is very critical in terms of such a pressing matter.

It is clearly only the beginning of some of the work we need to be doing. We know that, in Ontario, in my province, the median income of an indigenous household is 80% of that of a non-indigenous household. We know that the life expectancy of an indigenous person is over nine years shorter than a non-indigenous person on this land.

We know that while fewer than 5% of Canadians are indigenous, indigenous women represent over half of the inmate population in federal penitentiaries. We know that when we account for male participants, while indigenous men represent 5% of the population, they represent 30% of the prison population. Those are really chilling statistics.

I can say, parenthetically, that TRC call to action 55 has several subcategories. Two of the subcategories, and I will just cite from them, talk about the council ensuring that it reports on the progress on “reducing the rate of criminal victimization of Aboriginal people” as well as, in call to action 55, subsection vii, “Progress on reducing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in the justice and correctional systems.”

I think one important facet of what the council will be doing, and also how the government will be responding, is highlighting some of the initiatives we have already started to take.

I am very pleased to say that, about two weeks ago, we secured passage and royal assent of Bill C-5. The bill addresses mandatory minimum penalties in the country, which have been in place for far too long, and how those mandatory minimum penalties served to take low-risk, first-time offenders and overly incarcerate them, disproportionately impacting indigenous men and Black men in Canada.

That is an important facet, in terms of how we advance this fight for reconciliation and how we advance some of these terms that are specifically itemized in the calls to action. That is exactly the type of thing I would like to see reported on by the council and included in the responses by the Canadian government, as to what further steps we can take to cure such instances, such as overrepresentation.

There are lasting effects. All of these statistics I have been citing demonstrate the lasting effects of the intergenerational trauma in Canada that has been inflicted upon first nations, Inuit and Métis communities. They are the result of enduring systemic discrimination and systemic racism in this country. That is critical to underline. It should be an issue that is really incontrovertible in the chamber.

We cannot begin to address such serious issues until we put into law a mechanism for holding the government of the day accountable, consistently accountable, for the actions, both past and present, and for what we are doing to remedy these historical injustices.

I was quite pleased to see this bill get the support of all parties at second reading. I am very confident that, hopefully, it will get support, once again, of all of the parties in the chamber.

I note, again, some of the important amendments that were made. I mentioned one of them right at the start of my comments. Other useful amendments presented by a multi-party group at committee included having elders and residential school survivors and their descendants populate the board of directors for this council. That would be a really critical feature.

*Government Orders*

I will say, somewhat subjectively, that I was quite pleased to see the fact that the importance of revitalizing, restoring and ensuring the non-extinction of indigenous languages also forms part of the amendments that were suggested by the committee, something we have wholeheartedly adopted already in Parliament.

As I mentioned earlier, the response to the annual report will be led by the Prime Minister himself.

That being said, this bill would do more than place obligations on the government. It would compel the government to continuously hold a mirror to itself, to urge us to never stop striving to do the best job we can vis-à-vis reconciliation. It would urge us to take ownership of the wrongdoings of the past and of the challenges of the present, and to work toward a commitment to do better going forward.

I think this type of honesty and accountability has been long sought after, and Bill C-29 is a step in the right direction.

I commend the bill and I urge all of my colleagues to do the same and ensure its passage.

• (1620)

**Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the process was a very collaborative one at committee and I appreciate that process.

The hon. member spoke a couple of times about the amendment that was made to call on the Prime Minister to respond to the annual report, rather than the minister, as was in the original legislation. It was agreed upon at committee that we would do that.

I am just curious if the member has a reason why that was not included in the draft legislation in the first place, as that was very specifically a response to call to action 56 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for his work on the committee. I have reviewed the calls to action myself and I recognize what is in call to action 56. I could simply say, without having in-depth understanding of the genesis of the bill, that I presume it was probably deemed appropriate at that time for the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, who led off debate yesterday at third reading, to be leading the response. That is the key ministry that was involved in generating the legislation.

However, I take at full value what is listed in call to action 56 and also the fact that the government has supported that very useful amendment.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

It really is nice to see everyone rallying around this bill. I am glad all members want to see it pass so we can head in the right direction.

This bill refers to all sectors of Canadian society and all governments in Canada. It is not very precise. Will federally regulated private corporations be subject to this legislation? Will an independent aviation company be subject to it? Would the member please clarify some of these things?

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Repentigny asked a very good question.

This is my personal opinion, but I believe it is everyone's responsibility to fight discrimination against indigenous peoples, including federally regulated private corporations. I think this is a challenge that all companies, even private ones, should take up. However, I cannot provide a specific answer. I will follow up, and we can talk about it later.

[*English*]

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to my hon. colleague. The fact is that the government was found guilty of wilful and reckless discrimination against first nations children and the broken child welfare system. The government has gone back to court. It spent about \$15 million fighting Cindy Blackstock and the children. This is not reconciliation.

The opportunity to get this right is before us, but it requires that the government stop putting the threat of the money being taken off the table, sit down and negotiate, make sure that it puts the interests of children first and have a timeline that is reasonable. A deadline of the end of March is not going to make this thing work. We have to end the discrimination and it has to be done right.

I am asking if the government is willing to call off the lawyers and sit down and negotiate with the first nations experts to make sure we get a plan in place that leaves no child behind in this country.

**Mr. Arif Virani:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for that question, and I obviously note his advocacy on behalf of indigenous communities in his riding and generally in Canada. It is an important question.

With respect to the litigation, what I would simply say is that obviously any discrimination, whether it is in the child welfare system or not, is something that needs to be rooted out in this country. I think the litigation had various aspects to it. It went through various permutations and combinations, so to speak. What I am very pleased about is the final settlement reached. It is a historic settlement in Canada of \$40 billion, \$20 billion of which went to the litigants and \$20 billion to communities for the entrenchment of programs that would seek to avoid ever having repetition of that kind of discrimination within the child welfare system.

As to his specific question about the timing of resolving the payment allocation, I do not have that information at hand, but as I mentioned to the Bloc MP, I am more than happy to follow up on that going forward.

• (1625)

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy 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 Kitchener Centre, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship; the hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton, Elections Canada.

*Government Orders*

[English]

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as always, it is an honour to be able to enter into debate in this place and address some of the most pressing issues facing our nation.

First, I would like to start off by saying how important it is to ensure that, as we have discussions in this place, we do so under the pretext and with the understanding that meaningful reconciliation is so absolutely essential to the conversation we must have within this place and the work we all do as parliamentarians.

I find so often we see its importance when it comes to indigenous concerns and the issues faced, whether it be the tragedies that quite often make headlines, the host of other concerns we deal with through our offices with Indigenous and Northern Affairs or Crown-Indigenous Relations, or simply the concerns that come across our desks and come up in conversation as regular Canadians.

Indigenous people in this country deserve more than photo ops. They deserve more than just words. They deserve that meaningful reconciliation. As we have talked about Bill C-29, and specifically addressing calls to action 53 through 56, we see how absolutely essential that conversation around meaningful reconciliation is.

I am going to repeat a statement shared with me when I addressed this bill at second reading, which is that indigenous peoples in this country deserve to not simply be stakeholders, but shareholders. Whether it is with respect to the specifics around this conversation, and I will get into some examples of that here in a moment, they deserve to be shareholders in the future prosperity of everything that Canada is.

I think that meaningfulness in everything we do is so absolutely essential, and I have been concerned as I have watched since being elected first in 2019, but also since the Trudeau Liberals took office with grand platitudes to address so many of the concerns that—

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think the member, on reflection, realizes what he did wrong. He is not supposed to be using the name of the Prime Minister, but rather his title.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will have to support the hon. parliamentary secretary on that one, so maybe the member could back it up a bit and start again.

The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to start my speech again. I meant the Prime Minister and his party. However, I would reference that the parliamentary secretary was using a prop in his speech yesterday, and I did not call him out for that. I will simply leave that there.

I also note that I will be splitting my time with my friend and colleague for the constituency of Louis-Saint-Laurent.

There was one conversation that I found somewhat troubling here yesterday. In that conversation there seemed to be some fairly significant opposition to the idea of economic reconciliation. I have a whole host of quotes from committee testimony. The conversation led to not only addressing past wrongs and not only addressing how we deal with those today. It was also about how to truly address the

future so that indigenous people in this country have everything that is required to prosper, to succeed and to see that reconciliation that is so absolutely essential.

I find it concerning that this seems to have become a hang-up with some on the left in this country. I pose a very general question to all those who are listening: Why is there so much opposition by certain political entities in this country to the idea of ensuring that indigenous peoples in this country are given every tool necessary to succeed and to prosper?

I hope it would be the goal of every single member of this place. I am so pleased that in my home province of Alberta there are many examples where first nations and band councils have partnered in resource development, whether that be traditional oil and gas or not. It was wrongly suggested yesterday that Conservatives only talk about resource partnerships when it comes to oil and gas. However, I had the opportunity to meet with a band that is not in my constituency, but just a little way to the south. It is in the process of going through significant red tape and unfortunate barriers that exist in building a solar farm.

There are some incredible innovations and advancements being brought about through indigenous creativity, ensuring indigenous people are truly a part of Canada's economic future. I note the importance of that meaningful reconciliation.

When it comes specifically to Bill C-29, which addresses calls to action 53 through 56 in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report, we have highlighted through the course of Bill C-29 the importance of the democratic process. I highlighted a number of concerns, and many of my colleagues did likewise, over the course of debate at second reading. We fulsomely debated it then and sent that bill to committee.

What we saw at committee was truly the parliamentary process at work. I believe the Conservatives brought forward about 20 amendments, including one on what I hope was an oversight in addressing call to action 56. Instead of having the Prime Minister respond to the council recommendations, it would have been the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations. The TRC was very clear one way. The bill mistakenly, I hope, referred that responsibility to someone else.

However, Conservatives were very productive and saw, if I remember correctly, 17 of the 20 amendments passed at committee. They are amendments that would make the bill stronger, to help address some of the concerns we heard from stakeholders and to help ensure that meaningful reconciliation can take place.

There are certainly some things that can continue to be worked on, and I dare to challenge anyone who says we have everything perfect as it stands now. However, I was incredibly disappointed yesterday when one particular amendment was passed at committee, including with the support of one member of the Liberal party. The Liberals passed an amendment yesterday at report stage of the bill that removed a national indigenous organization, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples.

● (1630)

There are members who may not be aware of some of the history surrounding why this is important. Specifically, there is the Daniels decision and a long court case between groups of indigenous people, including non-status Indians. That is important, because often the conversation circles around those who have status, but there is a whole host of indigenous peoples in this country who do not necessarily have that status card from the government. However, yesterday, the Liberals specifically included an amendment, which passed at committee, to have the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples removed from this council.

I will highlight why that is concerning. Liberals often, including today, say how important it is to have a diversity of voices at the table. However, the Liberals may find some of the positions that CAP holds to be inconvenient, along with some of the things its members say in regard to being critical about the government. However, just because they are critical about the government does not mean that they should not have their voices included. I believe it was the Native Women's Association that was also included through a Conservative amendment.

I am very disappointed to see that move against a whole host of indigenous peoples from this country. That includes many who do not fit the typical stereotype associated with those who may live on reserves and have that card from the government that suggests they are a particular member of a band or not. It is that "or not" that is absolutely key.

We have heard from so many across the country, especially since our Conservative Party leader has done a huge amount of outreach into indigenous communities from coast to coast to coast. They have a sense of hope and opportunity. The Leader of the Opposition, the leader of the Conservative Party, sees and articulates the potential that truly exists for Canada's indigenous people. I am excited to be a member of a party that looks for those opportunities for meaningful reconciliation and would ensure that Canada's indigenous peoples are truly given every opportunity afforded to them to succeed and prosper in Canada.

● (1635)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a big part of the reconciliation and the calls for action deal with the issue of incarceration. Part of those calls incorporate the idea that we need to reduce minimum sentencing or reduce the number of times that minimum sentencing is being utilized.

Given the Conservative Party's approach to minimum sentences, based on things like Bill C-5, does the Conservative Party support calls for action that deal with the reduction, in any way, of minimum sentences?

### *Government Orders*

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Liberal Party and Prime Minister was at James Smith Cree Nation a few days ago. We saw a failure of the justice system. We saw somebody who had, I think, close to 100 charges with outstanding warrants. There was a call to law enforcement the day before with an explicit request for intervention because of fear. I find it absolutely tragic that the Liberals would be so blinded by ideological activism that they would ignore those victims, like the many we see associated with those tragic events in Saskatchewan.

Victims, including indigenous victims of crime, deserve to have justice served in this country, because they do not see it. We have a clear example where the Prime Minister was this week that justice was not served. Indigenous people deserve better.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I think my remarks will come across more like a request or a wish or maybe even a demand. We know that indigenous affairs are under federal jurisdiction. However, certain things, such as health care and education, fall under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. Quebec had its own commission, the Viens commission, which made hundreds of recommendations. Quebec has already invested \$125 million in upgrading, enhancing and ensuring the long-term viability of public services and establishing cultural safety.

We already have a committee with first nations and the Inuit. We have another committee with university researchers. The point is, we want to see this council tackle federal issues in Quebec, not issues that are under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces.

[*English*]

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Mr. Speaker, I have the utmost respect for the way our country was created. There was the separation of powers between federal and provincial, and then the provinces designating powers to municipalities.

However, let us be very clear. There has to be an all-of-government approach. There has to be real collaboration between different levels of government to ensure there is meaningful reconciliation. That will require tough conversations and real collaborations.

One of the problems that we see with the way the government approaches things is that it likes to talk about collaboration, but then it tells stakeholders how they should feel. When it comes to ensuring that indigenous peoples are included in conversations, it is time that indigenous peoples in this country are not simply stakeholders but that they are truly shareholders.

● (1640)

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to be here for this debate and to speak in support of an overdue action plan to establish a national council for reconciliation.

*Government Orders*

We know that the lack of action by the government has resulted in many different outcomes. One, for example, is the overrepresentation of indigenous children and youth in care. We can all agree that the current government has broken several promises it made to indigenous people.

Can the member clarify which sections of law or government policy he believes should be a priority for the national council for reconciliation to review to ensure the voices of indigenous peoples are heard and acted upon?

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Mr. Speaker, I agree that the government has not fulfilled many of the promises it made, including promises that were key parts of its previous election platforms. However, that does not seem to stop the government from pursuing a path forward regardless.

When it comes to indigenous voices being heard at the table, I find it very concerning that the member and her party voted for an amendment that specifically excludes many indigenous peoples in this country through the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples. They voted for an amendment, which the government brought forward, to exclude many indigenous peoples who are traditionally under-represented in the conversations that are very important to have in this place. That is a very serious question that the NDP and Liberals have to answer.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to participate in this debate, especially after my colleague's eloquent speech. There was one line that will stay with me for a long time.

[*English*]

He said that they do not want to see the first nations stakeholders as real, true partners. I love that line.

[*Translation*]

We are here today for the final stage of the bill that will establish the national council for reconciliation. I am always filled with pride and emotion when I rise to speak on an issue that affects first nations. I have the great honour and privilege of being the member of Parliament for Louis-Saint-Laurent thanks to the support and assistance of the people of this riding. I represent the people of Wendake, an indigenous community in the Quebec City area that is well known and well established. We know that the Wendat have been here since the dawn of time, but they are more permanently settled in the northern part of Quebec City. They have been there for more than 300 years. As a result, ours is a fruitful, extraordinary, exemplary and, I would say, very inspiring relationship for all Canadians and all first nations. I will have the opportunity to come back to this later.

Obviously, we agree that this national council for reconciliation needs to be created. We believe that it is a step forward in order to improve the way indigenous and non-indigenous people work, grow and live together.

I would like to acknowledge the outstanding work done by my colleague from Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River. I am glad I got that right. If there is one thing I do not like about my job at the

federal level, it is the interminable riding names. I will never run for Speaker of the House, because I will never be able to remember even two names. The current Chair occupants can rest assured that they do not have a potential opponent in me.

I think that my colleague from Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River did an excellent job of properly examining this bill. In the beginning, he spoke out about the shortcomings in the original version. It is important to point out that it took a long time for this bill to be introduced, debated and passed in the House of Commons. In fact, the government first talked about it back in December 2017. We know that there was an election, and then another one. We know that Parliament was prorogued because the Prime Minister did not want us to get to the bottom of the WE Charity scandal, so the government kept putting the bill off. Now here we are five years after the first draft. It has taken way too long to get here.

My colleague also mentioned problems related to transparency and independence when it comes to the appointment of members of this national council. We are also wondering about the soundness of the results. How can we determine whether this council is achieving real, concrete, relevant and successful results when we believe there were shortcomings at that point?

It is the same thing when it comes to accountability. The definition was far too vague, in our opinion. We wanted this council to report directly not to the minister responsible for indigenous-government relations, but to the Prime Minister himself. In fact, it was one of the recommendations of the 2015 report.

My colleague led the clause-by-clause study and went about it in a positive and constructive way to improve this bill. No fewer than 19 amendments were introduced by my colleague. The fact that 16 of those 19 amendments were accepted is proof that the work was taken seriously and completed diligently. A 17th amendment was almost adopted, but unfortunately, a partner walked away at the last second.

I congratulate and thank the colleagues from the other parties, but a special honour goes to the colleague who proposed these amendments for the good of the bill and to properly advance this bill. We owe a debt of gratitude to my colleague from Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River. When I say “we”, I mean us parliamentarians, but especially us Canadians and the first nations, for the ability to work well with this national council for reconciliation.

Therefore, we will be voting in favour of this bill, which had 16 amendments that were proposed by my colleague from the official opposition and that improved the bill.

*Government Orders*

• (1645)

[*English*]

I think it is quite important to remind everybody we are not talking about a brand new start. It is part of our Canadian history. When we talk about first nations, we all have to recognize, as proud Canadians, as we should be, if there was something wrong in our past. There is the fact that the relations we had with our first nations were not very good, for century after century.

We could talk about the fact that, all around the world, the big countries have to address that kind of issue. Yes, that is for sure. However, it is not because the rest of the world was not good that we have to be okay with the fact that we were not good. This is why I think this is a step forward and a way to address it correctly.

[*Translation*]

I would like to remind members that I was not in the House to witness that great moment on June 11, 2008. Many people currently sitting in this House were there. For the first time in history, the Government of Canada, through its prime minister the Right Hon. Stephen J. Harper, formally apologized to first nations for the horrors committed at residential schools.

[*English*]

For the first time, the only time in our parliamentary Canadian history, we saw a first nation leader here in the House, listening to the formal apology and the national excuses from a Prime Minister and answering to that.

The only time a first nation leader has spoken directly to Canadians in the House of Commons was in 2008 under former prime minister Stephen Harper. Whatever we can say, whatever happens, whatever party we are, we have to be proud of this great Canadian moment in our history.

[*Translation*]

What happened after the apology? The Prime Minister made sure that it was not the last step. Rather, it was the beginning of what was to be reconciliation. He created the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. For five years, this commission travelled from coast to coast, and it was both studious and thorough in its work. I remember because I was a provincial MNA, and I attended one of the hearings in Wendake.

Thousands of citizens and thousands of first nations people testified to the horrors of a shameful stain on Canadian history, our history: residential schools that were designed to kill the Indian in the heart of each child. It is terrifying to think about, to think that it happened for generations, for over 100 years. Thousands of people still bear the scars today.

Yes, what happened is serious and it must be recognized. Yes, there was an apology. Yes, the commission was created. It tabled reports and over 90 recommendations in 2015. Some will remember the reactions we had at that time: Yes, this needed to be acknowledged.

I would like to remind members that six specific recommendations, calls to action 71 through 76, directly addressed the issue of burial sites and cemeteries. When graves were discovered two years

ago, everyone suddenly grasped the horror of what had happened, but where were those people when the public apology was delivered in 2008? Where were they during the six years when the commission was investigating what happened to first nations? Where were they in 2015 when the report was tabled with specific actions for addressing this problem?

That is what happens when a relationship that is unequal, disrespectful and unproductive persists for centuries. Today we are passing a law that will create a national council for reconciliation. It will never be enough, but it is a step in the right direction that we applaud.

• (1650)

[*English*]

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate my colleague's approach of us working collectively together.

We have seen the government fail. It has delivered on 13 of the 94 calls to action. We see the disproportionate overrepresentation of indigenous people when it comes to the justice system and the prison system, and the overcrowding of people in precarious housing situations.

Could my colleague speak to some of the changes he would like to see the government, as well as the new national council for reconciliation, address immediately regarding the social determinants on health and government policies? What would he like to see the council advance to help support the betterment of the lives of indigenous people in Canada?

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Mr. Speaker, it is quite important to remind everybody that we are on the same planet. We are in the same country, and we are the same people. This is why we have to address this issue collectively instead of in a more partisan way.

The answer to this question should come from the first nations themselves. Obviously, as a member of Parliament, I have my personal point of view on that, but what is it based on? It is based on the fact that I have lived near a first nation all my life. I am 58 and a half years old and I have spent all of my life near the Wendake first nation, so I know them well. As I said earlier, they are a good example and good inspiration for everybody.

As for the issue raised by my hon. colleague, I do not see it on a daily basis in my riding with my communities, but I know and recognize that this is the fact for so many other places in this country. I hope that the national council will give a voice to the first nations, to give the government and parliamentarians the ways to address things correctly based on their perspective instead of others' perspectives.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there are 94 calls to action, as every member of Parliament understands and appreciates. What I like about Bill C-29 is that it deals with four calls to action. We need to recognize that not all of the calls to action can be done overnight. It is a work in progress.

*Government Orders*

I am wondering if my friend and colleague could provide his thoughts on the fact that for many of them, we have to work with other jurisdictions and stakeholders to accomplish a call to action.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Mr. Speaker, the member raised a great example. He is the member for Winnipeg North, and I know there is a big issue to be addressed in Winnipeg with first nations, which is not the same issue that we have to address in the Quebec City area. Based on my personal experience and knowing them pretty well, it is not the same case. This is why we should work hand in hand with first nations, our provincial partners and our municipal partners.

The question raised by my colleague from the Bloc a few minutes ago was exactly that. If we talk about the health care system for first nations, yes, first nations are under federal jurisdiction. We also know and recognize that health issues are not only a federal responsibility for first nations, but also a provincial one, and we have to work hand in hand with our municipal partners.

• (1655)

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

Before us, we have what I believe has been a priority not only for me personally but also for the Prime Minister, as has been demonstrated time and time again when he has talked about how important our nation-to-nation relationship with indigenous people is today and will be in the future. It is in the best interests of all.

Truth and reconciliation is so important. That is why shortly after the commission's report was tabled back in 2015, the Prime Minister, who was leader of the third party at the time, made it very clear that if we were in government, we would be in favour of enacting and encouraging in any way we can all 94 calls to action.

Today, we are talking about a piece of legislation that creates the national council for reconciliation. It would be an important, powerful and influential council. The minister responsible has put forward an interim board, or a committee, if I can put it that way, to make sure that the council we are creating today gets off on the right foot.

I am a little concerned regarding what we do as legislators, what takes place in the House of Commons and how information is disseminated in our communities, especially on the issue of reconciliation. Members will try to marginalize the types of things we are doing inside the House, as if the government is not responding to the calls to action. Nothing could be further from the truth.

When members go outside of this chamber and start saying that the government is not acting on the calls to action or has only done 14 of 94, that is misrepresentation at its worst. It is misrepresentation because at the end of the day, many of the 94 recommendations are not even federal responsibility. Many of the recommendations are a joint responsibility between the federal government and provincial governments. Most of the recommendations are a work in progress, just like Bill C-29, which has been worked on for years and will, once passed, incorporate four calls to action.

Let us look at the idea that every child matters and at residential schools. The people of Winnipeg North, and I believe Canadians as a whole, recognize how important that theme, idea and reality is. If we look at it, we see the government has been actively working on that file. We are working with different indigenous people to ensure they have the financial resources to do the things that are so critically important. Those are calls to action 72 to 76 and they are in progress.

If members are trying to give a false impression to get Canadians and, in particular, indigenous people to believe that the government is not working on the calls to action, I would suggest that is exceptionally misleading, because the numbers clearly demonstrate that.

I am going to give members an example. Today is about Bill C-29. I remember debating the child welfare bill, which was, in fact, on call to action number four and was completed quite a while back. That was Ottawa's sole responsibility and we completed that call to action.

• (1700)

One call to action associated with that is the first one. Call to action number one deals with child welfare, which is not just for Ottawa. It includes the provinces.

To understand why I feel so passionate about this particular issue, take a look at the province I represent. Back in June 2010, I was inside the Manitoba legislature raising the fact that the child advocate was saying Manitoba was in a child care crisis situation. Children in the province of Manitoba were in a very serious situation. That was after many, many years of a government run by a political party that I will not mention. Members can look it up with a Google search.

At the end of the day, child welfare, the number one recommendation, is not just a federal responsibility. Ottawa is working with its provincial partners, setting up a council and working with indigenous leaders to deal with children. I would like to say that the recommendation in call to action number one has been achieved, but I think it would be extremely optimistic to see it achieved in the next number of weeks or months. It might take a while. It took the province and Ottawa many years to cause the problems we have there today. Thousands of children were displaced from their birth parents, and these are the types of issues that are going to take a while.

When a member goes into the community and starts espousing that we are not acting on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action, it gives a false impression to people who are looking for hope. Imagine an indigenous community looking for leadership. It is looking for people to be apolitical on such an important file. In fact, for over 80% of the calls to action, there has been significant progress when the federal government has been involved. A dozen or more have been completed, and today we will pass four more when the legislation passes.



*Government Orders*

We have to take into consideration that this goes beyond the people in this room and take a look at others. It was great to see the Pope come to Canada. That was one of the calls to action. Yes, the federal government and maybe members in the opposition benches played a role, but do not let there be any doubt that it was the indigenous community that was ultimately successful at convincing the Pope to come, do the right thing and provide a formal apology. The federal government does not get the credit and the provinces do not get the credit. It was about the indigenous community working with the Pope and the Pope doing the right thing. That is how that call to action was resolved.

This is about the people in our communities, such as Diane Redsky, the executive director of Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata, who is retiring after many years of running that organization. It is at the ground level dealing with indigenous health care and social and justice issues. I wish her the very best.

At the end of the day, this is about communities, organizations like Ma Mawi and many others, and indigenous leaders. They are the ones who will hopefully be able to ensure that we continue to be held accountable. A big part of that is going to be done through the national council for reconciliation, something we are creating today.

Time does not permit me to go through all the things I would like to highlight, but I can tell members about a few others.

• (1705)

I like how we have responded to the statutory holiday and like what it has turned into. In my home city of Winnipeg, in year one, we had a wonderful gathering and a walk from The Forks to St. John's Park. This year, it was from The Forks to the convention centre. Thousands of Winnipeggers and Manitobans as a whole, and I suspect many from outside the province, showed up, recognizing how important it is that we achieve reconciliation.

To me, that is the essence of what we should be striving to achieve. Truth and reconciliation is not just for politicians inside this chamber, the Manitoba legislature or any other legislature. I would even dare say it is not just for indigenous leaders. It is for everyone. That is one of the reasons that I think the legislation we passed to recognize it and see how it evolves will make all of us as a nation better, because this heightens the level of awareness and recognizes the truth.

I will conclude my remarks with that in the hope that at some point today, we might see the collapse of debate so we can get the bill passed through third reading.

**Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Winnipeg North very passionately talked about all of the great work the Liberals have done since 2015 and how there was a sense of urgency.

With regard to this particular bill and the four calls to action that he speaks of, this matter was first introduced in December 2017 in an announcement by the Prime Minister. That included the formation of an interim board of directors, which did its work from January 2018 to June 2018. At that point, it issued a report with 20 very specific recommendations for the foundation of this legislation

and some next steps. It also included a draft bill. That was in June 2018.

The next step taken in this process was to announce the transitional committee, which was one of the recommendations from June 2018. Guess when that happened. It was in December 2021, three and a half years later. That does not indicate a sense of urgency to me in the progress on this bill.

Maybe the member for Winnipeg North could tell us, in his eloquent way, how the three-and-a-half-year inaction on this has set us back as we get to this point on reconciliation.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the fact that the Conservatives are supporting the legislation. We have even seen some amendments brought forward, which shows the openness of the government to recognizing that we can improve upon the legislation. If the member was not here, although I suspect he might have been, when the minister gave the detailed explanation of how we got to this point, I think the member might benefit from looking over exactly what the minister said.

However, again I would emphasize that from day one to where we are today, given the number of legislative actions and legislative pieces that have passed through the House, the numerous budgetary measures and the obligations to consult with indigenous partners not only on the calls to action but other pieces of legislation we have brought through the House, we have done exceptionally well. That is not to mention the fact that we have just finished going through a worldwide pandemic.

There are all sorts of things at play here. If the only criticism is that we are not quite moving fast enough, I will compare our government in the last seven years to any other government in the history of our nation when it comes to dealing with indigenous issues.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, I heard the member refer quite a few times to the calls to action as recommendations. I want to make very clear that these are calls to action.

I began reflecting, when I heard that, that perhaps this may be the root of why we are seeing such a lengthy delay in the government's implementation of the calls to action and, in particular, why it has taken seven years to establish a national council for reconciliation. It may be why indigenous communities continue to not have access to clean drinking water or affordable housing, as just a few examples.

It has taken seven years to get to a starting point for moving toward these calls to action, and I am wondering if the member could clarify how he will begin moving forward at a much quicker speed to have them implemented.

• (1710)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I absolutely totally disagree with what the member is saying.

I understand the calls to action and the truth and reconciliation report. When it was tabled back in 2015, it was the leader of the Liberal Party who stood up virtually immediately and said we would act on all 94 calls to action. Even Thomas Mulcair did not do that.

*Government Orders*

We have done this consistently from day one, both legislatively and from a budget perspective. We can take a look at the numbers and the reality.

Members of the NDP need to have a better understanding that, not only are they doing a disservice here in the House, but by spreading misinformation outside the House, they are taking away hope that the indigenous people in particular, but Canadians as a whole, have for truth and reconciliation.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on some of the first comments the member for Winnipeg North raised. I find it very interesting. I would expect this kind of behaviour from Conservatives, but certainly not from the NDP. The member for Courtenay—Alberni stood up, like so many NDP members have, to basically say the government has completely failed on the calls to action. That could not be further from the truth.

All we have to do is google delivering on truth and reconciliation calls to action and we would get to a Government of Canada website that not only tells us the status, but breaks down the details as to what has been happening on each and every action, who is responsible and how the government has been coordinating things.

The NDP would like us to believe that we can wave a magic wand and suddenly all 94 recommendations would instantly be dealt with.

Could the member for Winnipeg North pick up—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I want us to imagine we are of indigenous background, and we look at the calls to action. We are looking for leadership. What we see often from this House is a high sense of co-operation where in fact we are moving forward. We see a sense of hope that, for the first time, we have Canadians looking at truth and reconciliation and acting on the calls to action.

Then, we have some members of Parliament who are going out and about spreading misinformation and trying to give the impression that Ottawa does not care and Ottawa is not acting on the calls to action. That sort of misinformation takes hopes away from young people and it takes hope away from indigenous people.

Nothing could be further from the truth. This is a government and a House of Commons that want to deliver, and we are delivering, whether it is financially or on the calls to action. As I say, there are 94 calls to action, and we are responsible, wholly or in part, for well over 80% either being complete or in process. Hopefully after today we will be able to say four of those calls to action have passed third reading.

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I think instead of the member pointing at the NDP, maybe he should come to my community and ask the Nuu-chah-nulth how the Liberals are doing in terms of delivering on the 94 calls to action. What he is going to learn is that they have not been delivering. That is a fact.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** That is not a fact. That is a lie.

**Mr. Gord Johns:** In fact, Mr. Speaker, I was just at an announcement. There is some good news in here.

Is that member telling me that the Nuu-chah-nulth are lying—

• (1715)

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I believe it is exceptionally clear in our Standing Orders that accusing someone of lying is absolutely inappropriate, and that is exactly what the member for Kingston and the Islands just finished doing in a heckle.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, actually, the New Democratic member accused me of lying, and I did not say a word. The member said it was the member for Winnipeg North. I was actually listening to everything the member said, and he just made an accusation that I was lying. I would ask him to withdraw it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Let us just take a breath here, organize ourselves and remember that we should not be accusing anybody of anything when we are sitting here speaking to something as important as this bill.

The hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni, and if he did say it, I would ask him to retract it.

**Mr. Gord Johns:** Mr. Speaker, I asked him to consult with the Nuu-chah-nulth in my riding to measure how they are doing. I invite the members, really with an olive branch, to come and meet with the Nuu-chah-nulth people.

Now, there are some good things happening. Just two weeks ago, the B.C. government, working with the Huu-ay-aht First Nations, announced the creation of the Oomiiqsu mother's centre. It is creating a safe and culturally appropriate home. It is an indigenous-led model of care for women who are trying to keep their families together, who are leaving abuse, facing mental health and addiction disorders, or who are living in poverty and trauma. However, there is still no federal money. I hope that the government will live up to the council's recommendations and deliver funding.

Will the government work with the Province of British Columbia and ensure that we are delivering on that first call to action and make it a priority?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I assure the member that, virtually from day one, Ottawa has been working with indigenous people, provinces and everyone who wants to listen in terms of how we can have a positive impact on the lives of indigenous people here in Canada through truth and reconciliation in particular.

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Lakeland.

This is a critically important bill. Despite the heated exchange that just happened, I think all members of the House can agree that this is an important bill and that seeing more reconciliation going forward is positive for our country and for our relationship with indigenous peoples from coast to coast to coast. It is something that I have been very fortunate in my riding and my community to see first-hand.

*Government Orders*

Through my experience growing up in Fort McMurray, I have had the opportunity to get to see what reconciliation looks like first-hand. Many of the industrial partners in my region and specifically a lot of the oil and gas partners, big bad oil and gas, have been working with indigenous communities throughout my region for over 40 years and providing economic reconciliation in some of the most profound and meaningful ways.

I thought this was normal. I thought this was just what everyone did, because this is what I grew up with. I did not know there was something other than this. In Fort McMurray, it is really cool and I would welcome members opposite to come and visit. They could see what reconciliation actually looks like by coming to Fort McMurray and seeing first-hand what economic reconciliation means.

The members opposite, and specifically the member for Winnipeg North, were bragging about how this bill addresses four calls to action. The member is actually correct. It does address four calls to action, but only because of the absolutely spectacular work of my Conservative colleagues who brought in amendments to correct three of the four calls to action to make sure the bill actually addressed the calls to action. The bill that was presented by the Liberals failed to actually meet the calls to action initially. It failed to meet three of the four. Luckily, the amendments were accepted.

I would argue that every amendment that was put forward by the Conservatives on this bill was exceptionally reasonable and meaningful and based on testimony. I am disappointed to see that while we put forward 19 amendments and 16 of them are in this final version of the bill, there are three missing. One is very near and dear to my heart. It is economic reconciliation. This is something that the government sometimes fails to acknowledge exists. It fails to acknowledge the importance of economic reconciliation.

When we were talking about this piece of legislation, I had some conversations with my colleagues. I said that someone I would really like to have appear as a witness before the committee was the CEO of the Athabasca Tribal Council that represents treaty 8 first nations in northeastern Alberta. The CEO is a woman by the name of Karla Buffalo, who has become a friend and an adviser to me. She is wise well beyond her years. In her written brief, she said:

We believe strongly in the need for authentic and action-oriented reconciliation. In our traditional territory, in Treaty 8, the First Nations are leaders in the advancement of economic reconciliation at a remarkable pace. Our focus is not just on fiscal sovereignty but also on cultural revitalization and fostering strong and thriving communities and Indigenous people. We are here to encourage a collaborative process with all Nations, respecting their individual sovereignty and self-governance.

I read that into the record because it is exceptionally powerful. This is about actions, not words. This is about making sure we are actually advancing and knowing what we are here to do.

I have been exceptionally fortunate in my time as an elected official serving the people of northeastern Alberta to have had the opportunity to interact one on one with many elders and with many indigenous leaders throughout my region and learn directly from them what reconciliation actually means. One of the people whom I had one-on-one conversations with was Dr. Willie Littlechild.

Dr. Willie Littlechild was part of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. He worked tirelessly on that. He is such a strong voice for indigenous people and reconciliation. He often says that it

is not reconciliation, but it should be “reconcili-action”. It needs to be action-based. That is so critically important.

• (1720)

While this bill is great and I will support it, it could be better. It could have been substantially better had the government been willing to understand that economic reconciliation is a way of putting action into reconciliation. It is not the only way of getting there, but it is a way we should be looking at, that we should be looking to try to find paths through. It is important.

The government could stand to learn, if it were willing to humble itself and come up to northeastern Alberta and meet with the chiefs themselves, meet one on one and hear what economic reconciliation has meant for their first nations. If members came up to Fort McMurray, they would see big coach buses that take people to and from work every single day. On the side of those coach buses, it says “Fort McMurray First Nation Group of Companies”.

One would be hard pressed to find a company in town that has not made a significant and meaningful partnership with an indigenous community or partnership. We have some of the most successful indigenous businesses in the entire country that are based out of my hometown of Fort McMurray or the first nations that are in our backyards.

This is the piece the government has failed to recognize the importance of in this piece of legislation. I am not bringing this up by way of pointing fingers, but because this is what expert witnesses brought up. This is what elders in my region brought forward. This is what the CEO of the tribal council that represents the five first nations in my region brought up. This is something they brought forward as a suggestion and a recommendation to the committee.

The members opposite like to talk about the calls to action and how they have done a great job. I heard the member say that 80% have been started or are in progress. I would love to see his stats on this, because everything I have been able to find shows a much lower number of calls to action that have been started or are in progress.

I was looking at a website earlier today, [www.indigenouwatchdog.org](http://www.indigenouwatchdog.org). It compares the findings of where it thinks the government is, where the government thinks it is, and then where CBC thinks the government is when it comes to progress on reconciliation. The numbers are not as flattering, by any stretch of the imagination, as the member for Winnipeg North would have us believe.

This is something that is critical. We cannot just gloss over these pieces. There is a reason it is called truth and reconciliation, and not just reconciliation alone. There have been absolute horrors that have been committed in the past by governments of Canada, for years upon years, and somehow glossing over that something has been done that has not been done is not a way of making things better.

*Government Orders*

We need to be brutally honest about where we are and recognize that we can always do better. If someone thinks that somehow this is perfect and we have this 100% right, they are missing the forest for the trees, because the whole point of truth and reconciliation is learning where we have made mistakes and doing our best to go forward, knowing we are not always going to be perfect. It is about progress; it is about positive progress forward.

This is a piece that the government is very good about, patting itself on the back and celebrating all of its successes, but it has not provided the action required.

While the bill, in general, is a good thing, it has taken far too long to get to this chamber. It has taken far too long for us to get to this place, because the government has failed to put any importance on this.

I would urge all my colleagues to vote for this, but I would also urge any future parliamentarians who are looking at this and reading this speech in their preparation to look at putting in economic reconciliation when they are looking to update this bill, because it is critically important and it is missing.

• (1725)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was listening to the member's comments, and she mentioned the Indigenous Watchdog website, so I went and looked at that. As a matter of fact, based on my quick assessment, it is only showing, based on various different institutions, what is considered complete.

She then went on to talk about why there is no availability of what is being done on the calls to action. As I said in my previous question, she can find that very easily. All she has to do is google "94 calls to action" and the rest will pop up. They will populate by Google itself. Then she will find herself on a Government of Canada, not a Liberal Party, website where she can then see what actions have been taken and the results of each one. Every single one has the details on it. It is very easy to find.

I want to thank her for the work that her colleagues did on the committee. It does not matter to me whether the suggestions come from this side of the House, at committee, or working together at committee. I am just thrilled to see that, based on her assessment, three more recommendations could be achieved because of the incredible work of the committee, including the Conservatives who did that work, so through you, Mr. Speaker, to her colleagues, I thank them.

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:** Mr. Speaker, I do not need the member for Kingston and the Islands to mansplain how to google to me. I do not think it is appropriate in any capacity for him to think he is doing me some kind of service by thinking I am not perhaps intelligent enough to figure out how to do a simple Internet search for information. I am more than capable of doing it. I would suggest that is something every single woman in the House is capable of figuring out, so I take a significant amount of offence at that, because I do not need someone talking down to me as if I am an absolute—

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I certainly was not trying to suggest that because of the particular

member's gender she was not able to find that. All I was trying to do was suggest to the House, and I brought this up with a male NDP member earlier, how easy it is to find the information if one is trying to seek it out.

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:** Mr. Speaker, I think the answer and that point of order demonstrate the fact that the member does not believe that those in this chamber are capable of doing a basic Google search, and I think that is absolutely shameful. People in my riding do not trust the current government when it comes to a lot of what it has done. The Auditor General's report was pretty scathing on its actions when it comes to disaster recovery, and that is something that is near and dear to my heart coming from Fort McMurray—Cold Lake. I am sorry, but I am not going to take any advice from that member.

• (1730)

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I really am enjoying my colleague's speech today. One thing I want to raise is with respect to the national council on reconciliation. It is so important to have measurements, timelines and commitments from the government, but they need to be followed up with action. My hon. colleague and I have been working together and calling on the government to deliver on its promise of a \$4.5-billion mental health transfer of new money, which it has not delivered.

Call to action 19 cites:

We call upon the...government, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities....

It includes mental health.

Through you to my colleague, does she feel that the government is living up to its responsibility when it comes to the calls to action, and even today with respect to the spirit of delivering to indigenous peoples to close those gaps and deliver on those outcomes?

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:** Mr. Speaker, of course I think it is absolutely unfortunate the government made a promise during its election campaign and has woefully failed to deliver on it, which was to provide the Canada mental health transfer that would do so much to help all Canadians. It would do a lot to help indigenous people on and off reserves in Métis settlements and communities all across this country, and would make a meaningful difference.

Yesterday in committee I pressed the government on this issue over the fact that people are going to the emergency rooms because they have no other option for many mental health crises. I think that is absolutely shameful and would love to see that fixed.

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to speak today in support of Bill C-29, which would establish a national council for reconciliation.

*Government Orders*

It was, of course, the previous Conservative government that first launched the TRC, along with other measures that sought to better the outcomes and the lives of indigenous Canadians, especially indigenous youth, the fastest-growing group of young people in Canada.

Unfortunately, it must be said that the Liberals took far too long to bring in this bill, given they have been in power for seven years and that the Prime Minister claims the relationship with indigenous people is the most important to him.

That is why Conservatives pushed an amendment to ensure that it is the Prime Minister who will respond to the national council's annual report, as the TRC's call to action says, unlike the Liberals' original draft, which delegated this responsibility to a minister.

That was just one improvement of the 19 substantial amendments from Conservatives to uphold the principles of transparency and independence, to increase accountability and accelerate the timelines for government responses, and, most importantly, to implement concrete, measurable targets and outcomes.

What is crucial is ensuring that good intentions and well-meaning words deliver actions and better outcomes. It is a testament to the good will, spirit of collaboration and shared aspirations that all parties supported 16 of the 19 Conservative amendments.

I am proud to represent nine indigenous communities in Lakeland, just as I am proud to represent every Canadian in the 52 communities across the region. As always, those people and those communities are foremost on my mind, so, like my neighbour from Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, I will address an extremely consequential Conservative amendment that was inexplicably rejected by the MPs of all the other parties. Conservatives wanted to ensure that one seat on the board of directors of the national council would be filled by an indigenous economic national organization.

It makes little sense to talk about mutual commitments between governments and citizens to tell the truth about historical, systemic and paternalistic injustices for societal reconciliation but to also simultaneously reject entrenching economic reconciliation as a priority so communities can move from managing poverty to generating prosperity. There are so many ways that can help resolve the disproportionate socio-economic challenges that indigenous people and communities face as a consequence of generations of oppressive and discriminatory government policies and programs.

This especially matters when it comes to ongoing challenges for indigenous leaders and entrepreneurs who want to secure jobs and create jobs, equity ownership, mutual benefit agreements and other economic opportunities in natural resources development. These are a main source of employment, and often the only source, for communities in rural and remote regions. It also matters in the public policy debates and duties around definitions of decision-makers, roles in consultation, consent and consensus, identity and local impacts.

In Lakeland, four of the nine indigenous communities are Métis settlements, half of all the settlements in Canada. They are unique to Alberta, with legislated Métis land bases, local governments and infrastructure costs, like water treatment facilities, roads and schools. They pay taxes, including carbon taxes.

For years I have pushed for their recognition, and I was finally able to get an indigenous and northern affairs committee report to cite them as “distinct entities with unique needs”.

In September I urged the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations to include the settlements in Bill C-29, because it is an obvious hindrance to reconciliation if they are excluded from meaningful participation in the council, but I am still waiting for a response.

Representatives of the settlements in Lakeland often tell me they feel abandoned and forgotten by the government. Lee Thom, a Kikino Métis Settlement councillor, says that the Métis settlements must have a seat at that table to advocate for their indigenous communities, which are stand-alone and not a part of existing Métis nations in Alberta and nationally.

Still, the settlements have never been mentioned in a federal budget and are often excluded from federal initiatives. To me, this remains a glaring omission.

It is particularly relevant to the pursuit of economic reconciliation because the Métis settlements in Lakeland, along with most of the first nations, are currently, and have been, heavily involved in energy and natural resources development for decades. Many have previously met all their community needs with their own source revenue from their businesses and contracts.

The NDP's and Liberals' anti-energy agenda and aim to phase out oil and gas, which have already driven away investment, cost over \$150 billion in lost projects and hundreds of thousands of jobs, have hit indigenous communities as hard as everyone else.

● (1735)

Last year, the indigenous and northern affairs committee tackled barriers to indigenous economic development. We heard from dozens of witnesses and one thing was clear: Empowering indigenous communities to set up businesses, develop their natural resources and create wealth for their communities and surrounding areas is crucial.

In later work, witnesses said that housing, health care, governance, infrastructure and emergency preparedness challenges all come back to the core concept of economic reconciliation. Several elected leaders from Lakeland participated.

### *Government Orders*

Chief Gregory Desjarlais, of Frog Lake first nation, talked about the importance of access to capital to get projects built, like the carbon capture proposal led by Frog Lake and Kehewin, both in Lakeland. Frog Lake is heavily involved and invested in energy operations, whether through jobs or their community-owned Frog Lake Energy Resources Corp.

The benefits of indigenous-owned businesses are many. As Chief Desjarlais put it:

Look at these projects.... Look at indigenous ownership. If you involve the first nations, you allow them to build homes. You allow them to send kids to school. You allow them to send people to treatment. You allow them to deliver water to these homes. You allow them to remove mould. That's problem-solving. That's a take-away, instead of all the money leaving Canada and still having poorer first nations living on CFAs and begging for handouts.

These benefits were echoed by Stan Delorme, chair of the Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement, as they would help to meet their major infrastructure needs for the disproportionate number of unemployed youth and to lift Buffalo Lake's average annual income of \$27,000 a year.

The ever-increasing carbon tax hurts them even more, as the cost of lumber, fuel, and home heating skyrockets, and the accessible oil and gas jobs that used to exist for them have disappeared because of the Liberals' anti-energy agenda. Lee Thom says, "Our settlements are communities—living, breathing—with roads, schools and water, with everything that comes with a small municipality and are in dire need of funding."

Those are three of the nine indigenous communities in Lakeland who are now part of the 23 communities that are now all proud owners of over a billion dollars' worth of pipelines in the Athabasca region.

Many other indigenous-led and indigenous-owned projects and partnership projects have been outright killed by this anti-energy government, like the Prime Minister's unilateral veto of the northern gateway pipeline, which destroyed the aspirations of and all the work of 31 communities, which had mutual benefit agreements, and he did that without consultation, or all of the projects that are at risk by anti-energy policies and activists who threaten projects and are often not even from the locally impacted area.

The outright cancellation or the deliberate policy-driven delays to force private sector proponents to abandon major natural resources development and infrastructure projects have all been major concerns, and often totally devastating to numerous indigenous communities, leaders and business groups.

Those projects are opportunities for economic reconciliation. They are tools for indigenous communities to meet their core social and economic needs, invest in their cultures, and preserve and nurture their heritage and their languages for future generations.

For example, Chief Councillor Crystal Smith from Haisla Nation opposes Bill C-48, the shipping and export ban, and supports Coastal GasLink as a way to bring her community out of poverty.

Last week, Calvin Helin, an indigenous author and entrepreneur, said that what really irks indigenous Canadians involved in responsible resource development is the meddling and interference from "eco-colonialists", these groups whose only interest is in stopping

projects, and government interference where the government is only listening to the side of the project that supports their politics.

There are countless examples of the Liberal government trampling on indigenous Canadians' work and hope, roadblocking their pursuit of self-determination, including Eva Clayton of the Nisga'a, whose LNG export facility is on hold because of Liberal red tape; Natural Law Energy, 20 prairie first nations who lost a billion-dollar investment opportunity when Keystone XL was cancelled due to Liberal inaction; the Lax Kw'alaams, who are litigating against the Liberals' Bill C-48 export ban, which violated their rights and title and ruined their plans for a deep-water port and oil export facility without consulting them; and the 35 indigenous communities with the Eagle Spirit Energy Corridor proposal, whose work and hopes for economic benefits were quashed by Bill C-69, the no more pipelines act.

The Liberals and the anti-energy activists' anti-resource, anti-business and anti-energy agenda, usually outside and far away from the local indigenous communities, sabotages all their efforts to benefit from natural resources development and to participate in their local economies.

These actions look a lot like those of a centralist, colonialist government imposing its views against the goals and priorities of the majority of directly impacted indigenous people and leaders, like those in Lakeland.

While Conservatives will support this bill, the Liberals still need to fix their own paternalism that prevents economic reconciliation to ensure that indigenous voices, not just those that align with Liberal political priorities, are all represented in reconciliation efforts.

● (1740)

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP):** Madam Speaker, when I think about the importance of this bill and how incredible the opportunity is for indigenous people to finally see a national council for reconciliation, it is unfortunate that we have to debate this because that means we actually need accountability. This body is tasked with that because the government is unable to monitor and track which calls to action are truly there.

I want to turn directly to the challenges that reconciliation faces. We see a challenge in my home province of Alberta right now. There is a premier there, Premier Danielle Smith, who, with her tabling of the sovereignty act, is harming and putting at risk indigenous treaty rights. The treaty chiefs and their members in Treaty 6, Treaty 7 and Treaty 8 along with many Métis communities have stated openly their opposition to the sovereignty act.

*Government Orders*

It is important that across the country we stand united with indigenous people and we stand united with the chiefs. What would the member say to the chiefs?

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:** Madam Speaker, I am proud to represent my colleague's many friends and relatives in a Métis settlement in Lakeland.

I agree with the member about the importance of establishing this national council for reconciliation. I wonder what he has to say, though, about the Liberals' creating this federal bill for this national council for reconciliation in federal jurisdiction, which is our responsibility as elected members of Parliament in the federal Parliament of Canada. I wonder also what he has to say to the Liberals, whom he is propping up in a coalition, about their exclusion of the Métis settlements from this bill as well as the rejection of the Conservatives' amendment to include the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, representing off-reserve and urban indigenous Canadians right across the country.

I think he should push his partners in the Liberal Party a little harder to get them all involved in actual reconciliation efforts.

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais:** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. colleague for mentioning the importance of holding the government accountable. That is exactly what New Democrats do every single day in this House. We are here and were elected on a promise to make sure that we actually make things better for our province back home.

I will ask my question very directly. What does the member say to the united chiefs of Alberta in Treaty 6, Treaty 7 and Treaty 8 who oppose the terrible bill of the sovereignty act tabled by the United Conservative Party? What does she say to those chiefs? She is a federal member of Parliament. She has an obligation to stand up to ensure that indigenous rights are upheld in our province. Every treaty chief in the entire province that we represent has opposed it.

Will the member stand up for treaty rights and will she stand with the chiefs?

• (1745)

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:** Madam Speaker, a fundamental core principle that I believe in is respecting provincial jurisdiction and the jurisdiction of provincial governments. Therefore, I will leave that conversation to Albertans and to the Government of Alberta.

I suggest that what the member should do is focus on our work here in the House of Commons and the changes that he can directly impact as a federal member of Parliament. I would hope to see his focus on improving this bill, Bill C-29, establishing this national council for reconciliation, which is an aspiration that I know the member and I both share. I look forward to seeing the member bring the exact same passion and dedication and steadfast advocacy here to the House of Commons on federal legislation and federal issues in his federal role as a member of Parliament, and maybe actually hold the Liberals to account instead of being in partnership with them and propping them up.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her

speech. I am very pleased to see that there is a consensus in the House, that everyone pretty much supports this bill.

I would like to know if she believes that the government has done enough since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada tabled its report. We know that a huge number of calls to action were published. This bill responds to a few of them, but there are many that have not yet been addressed.

Does my colleague believe that the government has done enough?

[*English*]

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:** Madam Speaker, I sure did enjoy working with the hon. member on the public safety committee. She is an extraordinarily talented member of Parliament.

This is the unfortunate thing about this conversation. We have a duty in this debate to ensure that actions follow all of the well-intentioned and good-spirited words that federal politicians and the government in particular share about our joint responsibilities in bettering the outcome and futures of indigenous people. Unfortunately, it is quite obvious that the Liberals have come nowhere near keeping the many promises they made to indigenous people and communities in this country. Therefore, it is our job to keep pushing—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I have to call for resuming debate.

Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The question is on the motion.

[*English*]

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 would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, we would request a recorded division.

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, the recorded division stands deferred until Thursday, December 1, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, I believe if you seek it you will find unanimous consent to see the clock at 5:55, so we can start Private Members' Business.

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

*Private Members' Business*

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

### BUILDING A GREEN PRAIRIE ECONOMY ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-235, An Act respecting the building of a green economy in the Prairies, as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

**Hon. Jim Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.)** moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** 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 would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

• (1750)

[*English*]

**Some hon. members:** On division.

(Motion agreed to)

**Hon. Jim Carr** moved that Bill C-235, An Act respecting the building of a green economy in the Prairies, be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, as always, it is a great pleasure for me to rise in the House on behalf of the people of Winnipeg South Centre. It is with particular passion and enthusiasm that I talk about this bill, which is so important to my region of the country and indeed the country as a whole.

I will begin with some words of praise about the committee process itself.

As my friend, the member for Winnipeg North, knows so well and as we experienced together in the Manitoba legislature, when we ask the public, when we ask witnesses to comment on a bill, every time they improve it. When we think that we have looked at every nook and cranny of a piece of legislation, all of a sudden, our oversights are picked up by others who may not be quite as immersed in the detail that we have been, in my case, for many months or, on another level, maybe many years. I do have to say that this bill was improved, and I want to thank the witnesses for making these improvements possible.

Also, I am thankful for the tone and tenor, which is sometimes partisan. It is sometimes difficult, particularly for those of us who have some pride of authorship, to know that perfection is elusive. There are oversights, and there are better ways of doing things. Indeed, the process of the committee itself indicated that in a way that I think was very important. There have been amendments that have been proposed and agreed to by members of the committee, in some cases on division and in some cases not, and they are common-sense amendments.

For example, the original bill talked about an 18-month timeline for the framework to be developed. However, things take too long around here. Sometimes the pace of change is more important than the change itself. To move the period from 18 months to 12 months made a lot of sense, and it was immediately accepted.

Also, there was not enough thought given to the role of the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, which is an essential part of the prairie region with our capacity to grow and with the importance of taking what we grow and moving it internationally. For example, the province of Saskatchewan is the most trading province of all. More than 60% of what is produced in Saskatchewan is exported internationally. Increasingly, it is not just the natural resource or the product. It is the value-added production, which is creating jobs right across the region and making a difference for the producers who are actually the essential lifeline.

Speaking of lifelines, the work of committees is the lifeblood of Parliament. It is where some of the heavy lifting is done. It is where parliamentarians come together, seek common cause and seek to align aspirations in the national interest, which is precisely the essential element of this bill. There was not any reference to jurisdictional creep, because there is none. This is respectful of constitutional jurisdictional divisions in Canada, which are the essential note of Canadian federalism. It moves from time to time and is in constant flux as circumstances change.

However, I am very happy to report that, through witnesses and other ways in which we could discern public opinion, such as through letters, conversations and the associations that came forward to make their views known, this bill has been substantially improved. I am very grateful for that and for the capacity of the committee. Through representing all kinds of opinion across the country, we were able to align essentially in the same place, which I think is so important.

The framework adds leaves to the national table. It reaches out to people and says, "You should be here." Who are the "you"? It is provincial governments, indigenous communities and leadership, NGOs, unions and municipalities. To invite people to tables where they have never been invited before, in itself, is major progress in the way in which our federalism grows. Sometimes it happens at a pace that makes some of us feel impatient, but if we are patient we will end up in a better place than where we began.

• (1755)

That is the story of how we were able to move this bill along incrementally, but in ways that are impactful and will be, it is my hope, not just for tomorrow and next month but for years to come. When I am asked by people what impact I think this bill, if passed into Canadian law, would have on the way in which we do business as a nation, my answer is, from zero to changing the way we do business as a nation.

The missing ingredient is political will. The political will would have to come from implicated ministers within the Government of Canada and within their own jurisdictions. However, to have the value-added from provinces, municipalities and indigenous communities is the missing ingredient. They would have to report back, and do it within 12 months.



We can debate what number is the best number, but what should not be debatable is that there must be accountability. If a group of people is given a job to do but no timeline and no way in which to be accountable for the work they do, it is pretty empty. This bill is not empty. It is full of promise.

Here is snapshot of some of the problems we face on the prairie. I had hoped to travel in traditional ways, by airplanes, railways and buses, to give speeches in Saskatoon and Edmonton, and points south and west. However, I am glad we changed our minds and made it a virtual tour. If I had relied on airplanes, I would have had to wait for the only plane from Saskatoon to Edmonton. I would have been on the ground and sitting on an uncomfortable chair for seven and a half hours.

It is outrageous, in a dynamic region of our country that produces so much wealth, that we cannot figure out a way to move people by any mode of transportation. That is an outrageous reality. It is a snapshot in time. It is one example of many, but it is a real one that affects people every day of their lives as they try to move around this dynamic region.

What about the prairie region itself? We have been creating wealth since we became a nation, and since the western provinces became part of Canadian Confederation. In a dynamic region where wealth is created, we love to have endless debates about how we are going to distribute the wealth in our country. My colleague thinks there should be more spent on health care. My other colleague thinks it should be spent on education. Frankly, I want a lot more money for symphony orchestras. We have to talk more about cement infrastructure. We have to talk about the poet, the artist and the musician. This is what is really distinctive about who we are.

Any discussion about the prairie region goes well beyond the traditions of infrastructure and bridges, or even support for producers and value-added production. It has to extend to wealth creation, which is the job of the private sector. Government is better at determining how we distribute the wealth, for which it should be accountable. As a Liberal who feels very comfortable with this balance between distribution and creation, I think it is an important distinction to make.

• (1800)

I want to thank the institutions of Parliament, which I think in this case have produced exactly what they ought to produce. Hopefully, it will be a result that will make people feel even more comfortable with the prairie region. The beauty of the bill and the template that is implicit in it is that it is equally applicable to other regions. Who is going to argue against this kind of inclusion of putting leaves in the table with the knowledge that people have been asked? If we do not ask, then we will not benefit from the wisdom that they no doubt will be able to share with the rest of us.

I rise here with a sense of gratitude to the committee, to colleagues, knowing that it is going to come back. There will be accountability and there will be measurement. I am so pleased to have had the opportunity to move along this notion of the next chapter of federalism and wealth creation. For that I am grateful.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I know for myself, representing a northern part of

### *Private Members' Business*

Vancouver Island and a more northern part of the mainland in my riding of North Island—Powell River, that we have the best solutions for our area. One of the challenges is sometimes having those smaller communities be able to have a loud enough voice for different levels of government to hear them, understand them and to respond accordingly. I really appreciate the member talking about bringing everyone together and having that collective coordinated voice.

I am wondering if the member could talk a little bit about how important it is for the government to listen to smaller regions that may not have a big population but often are very much the creators of this country's wealth.

**Hon. Jim Carr:** Madam Speaker, we will not progress in sustainable ways, and I use the word carefully, if we ignore those voices. I remember many, many years ago when I was on the board of directors at the CBC and I was interested in regional broadcasting and to understand how expensive it sometimes is in this far-flung nation to get to the last 5%. It is way more expensive.

Back in the 1960s and 1970s especially, when we would use microwave in order to hit remote northern communities, was it worth it? Of course it was worth it. How do we develop a public broadcaster if no single Canadian has the opportunity to witness what is on that radio dial or that television dial? It is the cost of the geography of being Canadian.

Is it worth it? Of course it is worth it. What would be the cost if we did not reach them, if we did not attempt that last mile? For smaller communities, absolutely. Then what do we do with what we hear? Listening and attempting to listen are really important, but if one does not take what one hears and rolls it into action that actually affects the lives of people, then it is pretty empty.

This bill recognizes that and I hope addresses it.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Madam Speaker, representatives from the governments of the three provinces involved came to testify that they did not want this bill. I think we need to respect provincial jurisdictions. This bill does not affect Quebec, but we call on the federal government not to interfere in our jurisdictions.

What does my hon. colleague have to say about that?

*Private Members' Business*

• (1805)

[English]

**Hon. Jim Carr:** Madam Speaker, there is no jurisdictional creep here. This is within the federal jurisdiction. The bill seeks input from those who have a stake in the result of deliberations within that jurisdiction. There have been accusations that it is bureaucratic heavy. No, it is not. There are accusations that it is overreach, jurisdictional creep. No, it is not. In any case, there are accountabilities built into the legislation that will report back.

I hear the opposition on the basis of that jurisdictional or even constitutional division. I just do not believe it is going to happen. It should not happen. In any event, there is always the check and balance of public opinion. We should never underestimate that power.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I wonder if the member could provide his thoughts on the individuals or groups that have played a critical role in the member bringing forward the legislation, as I know he has talked to a great number of people from the Prairies over the last number of years.

**Hon. Jim Carr:** Madam Speaker, that question drives at the heart of stereotypes in the sense that only one point of view is representative of the Prairies or of Alberta or Saskatchewan. It is not true. It has the same diversity as any other region in the country, and we know that.

I always like to use the example of Michael Houghton, a Nobel Prize laureate who works at the University of Alberta. When we think of Alberta and insist on a stereotype, let that be our stereotype for Alberta, and erase whatever other stereotypes we may have.

**Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in this chamber to speak in favour of good legislation and against bad legislation. This evening I am doing the latter.

Bill C-235 represents yet another top-down, Ottawa-knows-best approach to the western Canadian resource sector, continuing a legacy that goes all the way back to Pierre Trudeau's national energy program, and also includes more recent legislation, such as Bill C-69, the no more pipelines bill, and Bill C-48, the west coast oil tanker ban.

Opposition to this bill from elected politicians in western Canada should come as no surprise to even the most casual of political observers. This bill applies to the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba only. When we voted on this bill at second reading, of the 62 members from those three provinces, only 10 voted in favour; 51 voted against, and one MP abstained. Put another way, this bill is opposed by fully 82% of the MPs from the provinces to which it applies.

When this bill was being studied at committee, this opposition was echoed by our provincial counterparts. The committee heard from two of the three affected provincial governments, and they basically said the same thing, that this legislation was neither wanted nor needed. The only provincial government we did not hear back from was Alberta, because it was in the process of installing a new premier, who had just finished campaigning on a platform of asserting provincial sovereignty and resisting interference from Ottawa. I

am quite confident that if we had heard from Danielle Smith, her feedback would have been very similar to what we heard from her counterparts in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

I hope that the views of these provincial representatives are not lost on the members of this House from the other parties and from the other provinces when they are making up their minds about how to vote on this bill. Just imagine for a minute if there were a federal private member's bill about Hydro-Quebec or Quebec's aerospace sector that applied only to Quebec. If 82% of Quebec MPs voted against the bill, and Premier François Legault testified at committee against the bill, I cannot help but think that the MPs from the other provinces would take notice, and those MPs who voted in favour of the bill at second reading would be thinking that maybe they should reconsider before they vote for the bill again at third reading.

The stated objective of Bill C-235 is “the building of a green economy in the Prairies”. While the bill never defines the term “green economy”, I think that in general, the term “green” has become synonymous with “environmentally friendly”. However, the bill does not seem to recognize the good, environmentally friendly work already being done in the prairie provinces independently of the federal government.

In addition to hearing from provincial government representatives, the committee also heard from municipal representatives, organized labour, the mining sector, oil and gas workers, farmers and ranchers. They all spoke in considerable detail about the work that is already being done on the Prairies to be more environmentally friendly, often because being good environmental stewards makes good economic sense as well. In fact, about the only people the committee did not hear from were representatives of Canada's indigenous peoples. I will leave it to the proponents of this bill to explain why they were not consulted.

Particular concerns were raised about paragraph 3(3)(b), which focuses on fostering job creation and skills transfer in regions that rely on traditional energy industries. It is implied that these actions will be necessary because of the Liberal government's continued opposition to the development of the western Canadian resource sector and the continuation of the Liberals' policy of leaving Canadian oil and gas in the ground where it does not do anybody any good.

In any case, at committee, Mr. Bill Bewick cautioned against transitioning workers out of the oil and gas sector too quickly and argued in favour of recruiting more workers to the sector to increase production. I would like to quote what Mr. Bewick said at committee. He said, “If you really care about the environment, the single greatest thing Canada can do to reduce emissions is to get LNG flowing in copious amounts off our west coast.”

*Private Members' Business*

• (1810)

Mr. Bewick went on to explain that Canadian liquefied natural gas should be exported to China, which would enable that country to shelve its plan to dramatically increase coal production and energy generation from coal. Doing so would save emissions equivalent to the size of Alberta's oil sands. This would be far preferable to landlocking Alberta's oil sands, as some Liberals have advocated for in the past.

The war in Ukraine was also discussed. Here we are, more than nine months into Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, and the images on our TV screens are just as disturbing as when the war began back in February. Vladimir Putin and his thugs continue to commit genocide against their peaceful neighbours. Where does Vladimir Putin get the money to buy all the tanks, missiles and artillery that make up the Russian army? Even the most high-level analysis of the Russian economy will show that it is heavily dependent on oil and gas exports to western Europe. Instead, if we could export ethical Canadian oil and gas to western Europe, we could seriously inhibit Russia's ability to wage war against Ukraine or any of its other neighbours.

This next point is very important. Even if the war in Ukraine were to end tomorrow, and even if Vladimir Putin decided that he wanted to be friends again with the international community and to give everyone a big group hug, it would be profoundly irresponsible for the international community, and Canada in particular, to allow western Europe to once again become dependent on oil and gas from Russia. The world needs more Canadian oil and gas, but we cannot do this if we are transitioning workers out of the oil and gas sector, and this is why Bill C-235 is so problematic.

Finally, I would like to touch on the issue of Senate reform. If there are any political science students watching this debate, let me tell them right now that if they ever have to write a paper about Senate reform in Canada, Bill C-235 should be one of their examples. This bill applies to Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba only, and the vast majority, 82%, of MPs elected from those provinces voted against it.

Unfortunately, this bill is probably going to become law, because unlike bicameral legislatures in other countries, Canada does not have an elected Senate with equal representation from all provinces. This is a problem that is not experienced by our American neighbours south of the border. If there were ever a bill in the U.S. Congress to take all of the money from North Dakota, South Dakota and Montana and give it to, say, California and Texas, such a bill may very well pass in the House of Representatives, but it would not pass in the Senate.

That is because, although the seats in the House of Representatives are allocated by population, in the American Senate, every state, large or small, has the same number of senators, and every senator is elected. That means the large states like California and Texas cannot gang up and enact legislation that is detrimental to the small states, because any such bill would be defeated in the Senate.

Sadly, there are no such safeguards in the Canadian parliamentary system. The larger provinces, namely Ontario and Quebec, can outvote the smaller provinces, in this case Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and there are no safeguards in the Senate to stop it.

However, given that I am almost out of time, my thoughts on Senate reform will have to wait for another day.

In conclusion, Bill C-235 represents an additional, unnecessary layer of federal government bureaucracy that will only get in the way of the good work already being done by provincial governments and the private sector. The only provinces affected by this bill, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, did not ask for it. They do not want it, they do not need it and they are better off without it. I would encourage all members to vote against Bill C-235.

• (1815)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I want to begin by thanking the member for Winnipeg South Centre for the quality of work he did in moving his bill through the House of Commons. He put his heart and soul into it. It is with reluctance that I have to say that the Bloc Québécois will not be supporting the member for Winnipeg South Centre's bill.

Of course, preparing an action plan to promote the transition to a greener economy in the Prairies is certainly necessary. It is a timely move, and we support any initiatives that promote and power such a transition. However, we are against the federal government interfering in the jurisdictions of the provinces and Quebec with regard to their economic and environmental choices and directions, which are their own. We are worried that this will set a precedent, which is why we will not be supporting it.

I do not want to point fingers, but I think it is important to mention that, currently, one Albertan emits as much greenhouse gas as six Quebeckers; one Saskatchewanian emits as much as seven Quebeckers. This is an enormous challenge, and the Bloc Québécois agrees 100% with the member for Winnipeg South Centre's statement that the central provinces absolutely have to go green. Even so, it is wholly inappropriate for the House to force the government's hand to legislate any directive whatsoever, because it is up to the provinces to choose when and how they begin that shift. Are these provinces truly on board with switching from fossil fuels to renewable energy? I am not so sure.

One thing we do know is that the prairie provinces will need a lot of help to achieve that. That is what the government is for. Without encroaching on provincial jurisdiction, the government should provide financial and organizational support as well as incentives. Above all, it should give them the means to undertake this transition, which can be highly destabilizing if not underpinned by support measures commensurate with the challenges these provinces are facing. That is key to making any radical change socio-economically palatable.

*Private Members' Business*

It is 2022. It is high time a plan was developed to accelerate the shift to a green economy in the Prairies, and the member for Winnipeg South Centre, who was the natural resources minister from 2015 to 2018, knows that this is an enormous undertaking and that he would have to mobilize a massive amount of resources. He also knows that an economy based on oil and gas development is not sustainable in the long term and that these provinces are facing decline unless they diversify their economies and begin the energy shift. The sooner they start, the less painful it will be. It is up to the government and its institutions to support the Prairies in that regard but not by imposing a law that will have the stifling effect of centralizing federal powers.

The fact that the member for Winnipeg South Centre and former natural resources minister introduced this bill says a lot. If he wants to force his government to develop an action plan to promote the transition to a greener economy in the Prairies, it is because he knows that the government currently has no such plan. He feels obligated to propose a bill to force the government to do so. We understand that and we commend him for it. We admire him because we share his concerns; however, we want to prevent government interference and that is the most important factor in our position.

That being said, the extent of the challenges our friends in the Prairies are facing is enormous. In economics and regional development there is a concept called intrusive rentier syndrome. That is what a region experiences when a major employer that pays high wages is operating in a sector in decline. It drags the entire community into that decline and prevents it from being competitive. That is the story of oil because it governs all the rules and levers, hence the scope of the challenge and the insecurity around change.

The approach in the bill is interesting. It proposes sitting down with everyone, which I like, and determining the economic strengths outside fossil fuels and creating favourable conditions for their development. Whether it is infrastructure, training or regulations, a development plan calls for coordination. It calls for the public's participation because the economy has to serve the people. Getting everyone on the same page from the get-go is hardly a waste of time. Doing so saves the proponent from constantly going back to the drawing board because the initial proposal lacks social licence. We save time by getting everyone around the same table from day one. That is truly one of the strong points of the bill.

● (1820)

My colleague's reasons and arguments are interesting. It is a good premise, but it clearly represents interference in provincial jurisdictions. I would like to remind members that over the years, it was the decisions of both Conservative and Liberal governments that made it possible to develop the oil sands.

Let us look back. There was Pearson's energy policy. Then budgetary policy fostered the development of oil. In 2009, under the Harper government, Canada made a commitment at the G20 to eliminate its inefficient fossil fuel subsidies. However, there has been no progress since then. The Auditor General and the commissioner of the environment indicated in three reports that 13 years after the G20 commitment, the government is still unable to define what it considers to be an inefficient subsidy. Therefore, it is not getting rid of those subsidies.

The Bloc Québécois has long called for an end to support for fossil fuels. We would be very pleased if the money and subsidies that are currently being spent on fossil fuels were instead redirected to the western provinces' transition to renewable energy. Given the magnitude of the challenges they will face, we think that is a good idea.

We believe that the energy revolution we face will be on the same scale as the industrial revolution. That is quite significant. The revolution would never have happened if it had to rely solely on government legislation. It happened because all the actors in the economy, in particular the financial sector that enables investments, contributed to it. The same holds true for the renewable energy revolution and the green economy. Developing this sector of the future will mean relying on the strength of the financial sector and the experts in the field.

In 2021, Greenpeace published a study on investments in fossil fuels. Since late 2015, when the Paris Agreement was signed, Canada's five big banks have pumped nearly \$700 billion into fossil fuels. That makes no sense. To this day, even though several banks say they are committed to the 2050 net-zero goal, there is no indication that the banking community is looking to shift away from fossil fuels: Investments have increased from \$122 billion in 2016 to \$160 billion in 2019, and the trend keeps going strong. Canada's five big banks are all on the list of the world's top 25 investors in fossil fuels. I find that disturbing.

The oil and gas sector is set to decline, for both environmental and fiscal reasons, both here and abroad, and stock market trends are also following the green trend in finance. Unfortunately, this trend has not had much influence on Canadian banks. The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre seems to be aware of that. It is up to the House to send a clear message to the financial sector, where something could be done. This is more likely to increase the chances of a successful transition to a green economy in the western provinces, which is what the member for Winnipeg South Centre is calling for. Given the magnitude of the challenges faced by those provinces, they will need help and motivation, not a framework imposed through legislation that interferes with provincial jurisdictions.

I was recently fortunate enough to connect with economists and actuaries in California, where incentives for green investment are already well established. These same experts are actively moving forward and giving speeches to financial organizations around the modern world. I wonder if Canada is doing anything like this. I am simply asking the question. I would be happy to put the government in touch with these proactive firms, which have already helped implement a financial system that is firmly committed to responsible investments that will save the world. It is up to us in the House to support the redirection of funding and fossil fuel subsidies towards green financing to help the provinces that need it most.

We all know it. We all see it. The evidence is clear. Fossil fuels are killing the planet and all the life upon it. Many are suffering the terrible consequences of our cowardice in the face of deteriorating planetary ecology. The maritime provinces and the Magdalen Islands just went through hurricane Fiona. That was right here at home, not halfway around the world. The Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans is currently studying how hurricane Fiona affected the Maritimes. We all know there is no escaping this. It is real. It is happening, yet investments are still being made in Bay du Nord. Investment in natural gas is being tolerated and even promoted, but there is no move toward creating incentives to direct funding toward sustainable development.

• (1825)

In closing—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Order. I am sorry, but I have to interrupt the member because her time is up.

The hon. member for North Island—Powell River.

[*English*]

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am very happy to be here to speak to Bill C-235, an act respecting the building of a green economy in the Prairies. I want to thank the member for Winnipeg South Centre for bringing this forward.

As a person who lives on the coast, I do not have the experience of living in the prairie region. However, I do connect to this very important issue, because I live and have grown up in more rural and remote communities. I recognize that when one lives in those environments, there is a very different way of being in the world.

We are a lot more connected to our communities. We often have a harder time getting to other places. I really appreciated the member talking about flying places and then having to wait many hours. I know when I come here, often I get to fly to one part of the country and then wait a few hours before I can get to this part of the country.

That is just the reality that we experience. It is something we all know we need to do better, especially when we are thinking about how we are going to make sure those spaces are more accessible. We think about making sure they are part of our communities across the planet and across this country, and they have an economic viability. That can sometimes be a challenge for more rural and remote communities.

This bill talks a lot about how to bring people together to talk about how we can see more of a green economy. It is something I really believe in. When we stand in a place like this, where we collectively represent the whole country, the stories from each region are unique, yet there is a common ground, especially when we talk about rural and remote communities.

We know they often go through a cycle of boom and bust. One moment it is going well, the economy is strong and people are doing well, but then it changes quickly. It is these communities that have built this country. Their resources and people have given so much in taxes and resources to this country, and often a lot of urban

### *Private Members' Business*

centres are built on the labour of more rural and remote communities. They are not included in a way that is meaningful.

In the last Parliament, I was happy to table Motion No. 53 on the principles for a sustainable and equitable future. It talked specifically about having solutions locally that looked at what the resources were, what our skill set was and how we were going to make ourselves more sustainable in rural communities. Then we can have a more stable economy but also address the issue of climate change, because we are in an emergency and things are changing very rapidly.

I can argue at a later date about what I think the government is doing, because I have to say, quite frankly, it is not moving in the direction I would like to see it move. We are pushing really hard to get some of those actions. When it comes to emissions and addressing climate change, we have a lot more proactive work to do.

Part of that conversation has to be looking at these communities in the Prairies, looking at rural and remote parts of Canada and asking what is sustainable in those communities. What are the skill sets in those communities? How do we bring people together? That is what this bill is about. How do we bring all those different voices together to make sure there are meaningful solutions going forward?

In my last job, I worked with newcomers to Canada. One of the things I found interesting was the amount of research that has happened in Canada and across the whole planet on how to create the best solutions. It is said again and again that with more diversity at the table and with more people with different opinions at the table, it can actually be worked through. It takes longer. There is no doubt.

When we are trying to figure out how to get from one place to another, and we have a lot of people around a table with differing opinions, it is going to take longer to get to that. The research has proven repeatedly that once we get there, even though it takes longer, the other side of that is a lot more coordinated, the solutions are a lot more innovative and they are long-lasting.

It is something we should be looking at and addressing, and that is what my motion talked about. How do we bring people together? How do we have a regional approach? When we look at what is happening in our environment, when we look at the challenges and concerns around stable employment, how do we not fight against each other? We need to come together and create solutions that are going to make sense and make sure there are good jobs in our region, but also address the climate crisis in a meaningful way.

• (1830)

We have to do that work. We have to do it with an urgency, so I appreciated the member talking about making that timeline shorter.

*Private Members' Business*

In his speech, the member said that the pace of change is too slow. I agree. When we are looking at the challenges that we are facing today, we cannot wait. We cannot sit here in this place and have big discussions. We need to give resources to local regions and communities and say to them that they are the experts in their area, that they tell us the criteria and the next steps they are going to take.

The NDP will be supporting this because I think it is important to look at those solutions, to look at local responses and to look at regional responses. They can profoundly make a difference.

When I look at my area, a lot of things are being ripped out of the earth, in one way or another. They are being shipped off to somewhere else, often outside of the country, to be changed into something, which is sent back to us and then we buy it. I am really concerned about that.

When I think about local solutions and when I look at the environmental crisis that we are in, we need to see more value-added production in our communities and in our regions. This is something that I think the bill will touch on. I hope that every person in this place will take it under consideration. If we do not start seeing more production with our own resources in our own country, we are going to continue to see wealth being here for a short time but it will not stay here permanently.

Last Friday, I was in Campbell River. A lot of people came together to talk about the housing crisis we are experiencing right now. Of course, inside of that issue, like every issue across the country, the climate crisis was brought up, how people without homes are having to live on the streets and what that means when we are having incredibly unpredictable weather and how we deal with these issues. We also talked about the vulnerability of seniors who live in our region. Our region usually does not get very hot but we are seeing this huge increase in heat, and then, during the winter, there is the very high cost of energy for people to stay warm and what that means for folks.

I think of Cortes Island, a small community in my riding, which is two ferry rides away from where I live. That community is working together. They are actually fundraising, as they have a high level of poverty in their senior population, so that they can all have heat pumps. The community itself is recognizing this huge challenge and they are collectively working together to deal with the climate crisis and also honour and respect the seniors in their communities by trying to find a solution.

In closing, we have to recognize the dynamic approach of our smaller communities. We have to work with them so that they have more opportunities. We have to understand that while the federal government has a very important role, sometimes its important role is to make sure that the resources are there so that the local communities can do the work that needs to be done.

I cannot say enough about that. When I look at economic development and when I look at addressing the climate crisis, we need to see those communities recognized, honoured and listened to. Sometimes bringing them together is really going to make a long-term difference, so that we can get to a solution that we can sustain.

• (1835)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will start off with a bit of a different perspective. I genuinely appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill C-235, which has been sponsored by a dear friend of mine, the member for Winnipeg South Centre. The member and I go back to 1988, actually. I have heard a great number of speeches from my friend.

Over the years, one of the things that I have really appreciated, and I think we need to put this into the context of the legislation that we are debating, is that the member for Winnipeg South Centre is very much a visionary. Virtually from day one since I have known him, he has brought forward ideas that can really make a difference.

This legislation is something which the member is very passionate about, because he understands the needs of the Prairies. The member has met with many mayors, councillors, stakeholders, not only in our home province of Manitoba but also throughout the Prairies.

There is a bit of a mindset that some like to say about people from the Prairies and that is, yes, we are all about economic development but the climate is an afterthought—

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:** Madam Speaker, based on my count, we are at 16 people in the chamber, which is well below quorum. I would like to call a point of order on quorum.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** There is a quorum call. We will count the members.

*And the count having been taken:*

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** We have quorum.

The hon. member may proceed.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, one might question the actual timing of that particular quorum call, knowing full well that members are, if not here, in the MP lobbies. I would think this would not be done, at the very least out of respect for the fact that we are talking about private members' legislation.

The point I was attempting to make, prior to the quorum call, was the fact that what we have before us is something to enable a strong and sustainable prairie economy. Some might try to give a mindset that the people on the Prairies are only concerned about the economy, which is somewhat of a false impression. People from the Prairies are also concerned about the environment and recognize that climate change is indeed very real.

There are two points I want to emphasize with regard to the legislation. One is that I do not believe there is any form whatsoever of jurisdictional creep. This is about a framework. It is not about jurisdiction. It is about bringing people together in order to establish a framework so that the Prairies could move forward on the issue of a strong, sustainable prairie economy.

For people who would try to suggest that it is anything other, I would really encourage them to meet with the member for Winnipeg South Centre. He would be able to alleviate those concerns. In 2019, we had a wonderful organization. It used to be Western Diversification. There were a number of prairie members of Parliament, and I like to think I was one, who wanted to establish PrairiesCan, as opposed to Western Diversification.

The Prairies is something I am very familiar with. It is very unique in its very nature. PrairiesCan brought together over 125 experts to deal with the issue of water management. They were brought together in the city of Regina, and it involved a wide spectrum of stakeholders, from the federal government, the provincial government, municipalities, indigenous community members, labour, industry reps and others.

At the end of the day, what we saw was a compilation of ideas and thoughts dealing with the issue of water management. In fact, I think out of that group came a report that has been referenced in many ways from many different jurisdictions.

I would suggest that we are better off as a region as a result. I can say, as I have heard many from the Prairies say, water, and the flow of water, does not respect jurisdictions. Water management issues in the Prairies are a prairie issue.

This bill recognizes that climate change is real. This bill recognizes that the future of the prairie economy is immense. The potential, and I know the member for Winnipeg South Centre would be able to elaborate in great detail, is equal to or greater than any other region of Canada.

• (1840)

I remember consistently over the years that the member would talk about having lots of wheat and many different types of resources coming from the Prairies, but it is the processing that gives us the jobs people in the Prairies want. When we talk about a greener economy, as this legislation is referencing and wanting us to move toward, the prairie provinces, as a region, need to continue to invest in that.

Clean energy and clean tech are absolutely critical for the future growth of our Prairies. Whether they are big corporations or new start-up companies, all of them recognize that the future means clean energy and moving towards an economy that is greener. People of the Prairies do not fear that.

The bill recognizes the need for the Prairies to come together, bring the stakeholders and establish that framework. We have many bright people on the Prairies. The member for Winnipeg South Centre highlighted a Nobel Prize winner from Edmonton.

Whether it is from Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon or the many municipalities in between, and I have lived in all three provinces and am proud to say I am from the Prairies, I believe the future is there, and we should not be fearful. It is not a jurisdictional issue to establish a framework of prosperity, and that is what this bill would do. I commend the member for Winnipeg South Centre for taking the initiative and once again providing a vision, not only for people in the Prairies, but for the entire country.

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

• (1845)

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have appreciated listening to the various speeches on this subject, and as someone who is very proudly an Albertan, which is part of this area, I think it is commendable in the effort, but the follow-through and the actual bill fail to meet the mark.

One thing I have heard exceptionally clearly from my constituents, and it does not matter whether they are from far north in Fort Chipewyan, down south in Cold Lake or anywhere in between, is that they do not believe an “Ottawa knows best” approach is correct. One of the major problems with the piece of legislation as proposed is that it would impact only Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, yet we heard, when it came before committee, that Saskatchewan's and Manitoba's governments do not support it. They do not want to see it go forward. They do not believe it is in the best interests of their provinces, and I can speak with pretty decent certainty, being an Albertan, that the Alberta government is definitely not keen when the federal government puts its part on provincial jurisdiction.

Therefore, something critically important to highlight is that while the bill has good intentions, good intentions pave the way to a lot of places, and not all of them are good. I would suggest the bill does not meet the mark and is not good enough. It is not going to serve the Prairies in a positive way, and I would urge everyone that, if they think what they are doing is helping the Prairies, they are part of a paternalistic structure that is telling the Prairies it knows best and those provinces do not know the best thing for their own area, because those provinces have made it exceptionally clear they do not support the bill.

Something the government needs to do a better job of is listening to provincial governments when they tell it that enough is enough, and acting on that. That is not something we have seen—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I have to interrupt the hon. member.

We have come to the end of the time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business. The hon. member will have eight minutes when the bill next comes to the House. The order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

### IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Madam Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to come back to my question for the immigration minister about challenges being faced by members of my community seeking to reunite with loved ones, and needing to work with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to do so.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

One example is refugee claimants and permanent residents who first came here as refugees and who are now seeking to travel outside of Canada to be with family. In question period, I asked about Ataklti, a permanent resident in my community who applied for a travel document last February to join his wife in Sweden for the birth of their daughter. Ten months later, Ataklti's request has still not been processed and he is yet to even meet his daughter.

There are so many others in similar positions in Kitchener. Naima, for example, was sponsored by a local church in 2019 and came solo to Canada with her three young boys. Her husband is awaiting sponsorship by the same church group. She applied for a travel document for herself and her boys to visit her sick mother in a hospital overseas back in January. In February, the file was marked as urgent, and while Naima got her travel document, her children's applications have not been finalized yet so she cannot visit. For the past three months, Naima has been calling IRCC every two weeks to request updates. Will she ever get to visit her sick mom?

My team and I have been advocating to IRCC for both Ataklti and Naima without success to date. For my team and me this feels unjust. There is a gap between the two standards that exist in Canada. One is for people like me with citizenship. We can travel. I was just in Egypt, for example, for the annual climate negotiations a few weeks ago. However, those who came to Canada as refugees, like Ataklti and Naima, are being denied the same opportunity, even in life-or-death situations, with no timeline and seemingly no accountability.

This lack of a timeline and accountability also extends to other requests made by neighbours of mine to IRCC as we try to bring families back together. I have more examples.

Angeline is in Canada and is attempting to sponsor her husband Pouya to join her. They have been waiting since 2019. Since my office first inquired on their behalf, we have received no updates. Their file has been relegated to so-called non-routine status, which means that normal processing times simply do not apply.

Two other neighbours, Jess and her husband, are waiting to be reunited with their sons, who are now eight and 11 years old. Their applications for permanent residency for their sons were submitted back in 2019. All assessments have passed except for eligibility, which is under further review, so normal processing times do not apply. They have not received an update since 2020.

I know the Government of Canada can solve these issues. One example of this was the improvements made to processing passports, which was a significant concern back in the spring and has since been brought under control. People like Ataklti, Naima, Angeline and Jess and dozens more in my community have a right to travel and to be reunited with their loved ones.

I would like to know what the minister is doing to address systemic issues at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada—

• (1850)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as the member knows, Canada has faced a number of events that let to IRCC having a large volume of files that are being treated in timelines outside of processing standards.

The global pandemic led to the closure of borders and offices around the world. As Canada is among the top destinations in the world for immigrants and refugees seeking a new life, demand continued to grow during this time. When travel restrictions were lifted, there was a massive number of applications to come to Canada. While tackling the growing demand, the government also faced a back-to-back humanitarian crises in Afghanistan and Ukraine. Thankfully, our government was able to step up quickly and offer much-needed support to those who were the most vulnerable.

Our government also responded well to each challenge as they came up because we know that immigration is critically important for our country's economy. That is why we have been investing to make sure that our immigration system works well. The fall 2021 economic and fiscal update announced \$85 million in funding for IRCC and federal partner organizations to reduce the inventories and support a return to service standards. In the fall 2022 economic and fiscal update, an additional \$50 million was committed to continue to address the application backlog and speed up processing times. These investments are already yielding significant results.

As of October 31, the department has hired over 1,000 new employees and is expected to add up to 400 more by the end of March 31, 2023. Over 850 of those employees have already been trained and are fully operational. Further, we have implemented technology-based solutions and streamlined processes; improved policy; re-examined our risk tolerance; and leveraged provincial, territorial and other partners to ensure we are able to respond quickly and effectively to client concerns.

Here are some very telling statistics for 2022 compared to 2021: IRCC has processed over 135% more PR applications, nearly three times more work permits, nearly one-third more study permits and nearly five times more temporary resident visas.



We have been taking concrete steps to reduce the number of applications in the system that have been in the inventory for longer than service standards. Our government knows that the wait is too long for those hoping to come to Canada to start their new lives, reunite with loved ones or further their education, and for business owners seeking valued foreign workers.

We are working hard to address the challenges and return to the service standards that our clients expect, and that is what Canada's future students, workers, permanent residents and citizens expect. I am proud to stand on behalf of our government and reassert our commitment to improve processing, reduce backlogs and ensure that our immigration system works for everyone.

● (1855)

**Mr. Mike Morrice:** Madam Speaker, I am glad to hear of more resources being allocated. I hope to see those resources lead to improved outcomes for the people in my community who are separated from loved ones who may be sick or who may have had a baby and are waiting to meet their child for the first time. However, I would like to know better how the resources are being allocated to these so-called “non-routine” cases, which are the most time-intensive and heartbreaking that we deal with.

Could the parliamentary secretary share more about whether enough time and resources are being given to these non-routine cases and what percentage of cases are non-routine, as those are the ones having the most challenging situations, so that Ataklti can meet his daughter, and so that Naima can visit her sick mom?

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** Madam Speaker, as the hon. member knows, each and every case is different, and immigration officials are working hard to address the delays while ensuring the safety of Canadians.

Immigration has faced significant global challenges, including the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and Ukraine, a pandemic-generated backlog and a surge in demand for people wanting to come to Canada. We did not create these challenges, but we do have a plan to address them, and our plan is working. We have invested to increase processing capacity and are adopting new technologies to improve our system.

We know, as the member mentioned, what too many clients face, and the wait time is too long. We are committed, as always, to ensuring that we return to our service standards.

#### ELECTIONS CANADA

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, CSIS advised the Prime Minister that when it comes to foreign interference, the policy of the government should be grounded in transparency and sunlight, and that foreign interference should be exposed to the public. When it comes to Beijing's interference in our elections, the Prime Minister has been anything but transparent. Let us look at the facts.

On November 7, Global News reported that last January, the Prime Minister was briefed about a vast campaign of interference by Beijing in the 2019 election directed by Beijing's Toronto consulate involving 11 candidates. For two weeks, Conservatives asked the government what the Prime Minister did with that information.

#### *Adjournment Proceedings*

Did he report it to Elections Canada, to law enforcement, or did he sit on his hands and cover it up?

For two weeks our questions were met with silence by the Prime Minister. Suddenly, after two weeks, the Prime Minister broke his silence and essentially said “nothing to see here as it pertains to me,” claiming that he was not briefed, but using very carefully chosen words that he was not briefed about candidates receiving money from China. That is not what Global News reported on November 7 that the Prime Minister was briefed about. The Prime Minister was reportedly briefed about a vast campaign of interference by Beijing, directed by the Toronto consulate. It was reported that those candidates received money but, again, it was never alleged that that money directly came from China, that a cheque was written from China to 11 candidates.

It was telling yesterday when the Leader of the Opposition asked a pertinent question of the Prime Minister: Was he briefed about electoral interference by Beijing? Not once, not twice but on five occasions, the Prime Minister refused to answer. Today I asked the Prime Minister whether he had been briefed about electoral interference by Beijing specifically involving any candidates. Again, the report pertains to 11 candidates and a vast campaign of interference. Again, there was no answer from the Prime Minister.

What we have is the opposite of transparency. We have a smoke-screen from the Prime Minister, a prime minister who is answering questions no one is asking, denying allegations no one is making, all while avoiding answering the question that needs to be answered, namely, was the Prime Minister briefed about electoral interference by Beijing? Specifically, was the Prime Minister briefed about electoral interference by Beijing involving candidates? I ask again, was he, yes or no?

● (1900)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am sorry the member feels as though his question has gone unanswered, but sitting through the same question period as he has on a number of occasions, I have heard some fairly direct answers, which I will attempt to provide to the member once again. Perhaps he will take them from me.

The reality is that at a time when democracy is challenged worldwide, Canada's electoral system is healthy and robust, and Canada continues to rank among the healthiest democracies. However, there is no question that with the rise of authoritarianism, what we are seeing in other countries around the world today, with an increase in both the public's and the media's focus on foreign interference, protecting Canada's national and economic security requires strong action. That is exactly what the government has done since 2015.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

As the Prime Minister has said very clearly and the Minister of Public Safety has repeated, our government has put in place an independent process of experts, chaired by the Clerk of the Privy Council, something that the previous Conservative government had not thought important enough to do. That group of experts, chaired by the Clerk of the Privy Council, which includes the heads of Canada's security and intelligence agencies, was given the important responsibility of ensuring that Canadian elections were free and democratic. The good news, which I hope would excite the member opposite, is that experts have confirmed both elections were exactly that: free and democratic.

It is important to remember that witnesses we heard in the PROC committee, on which the member who asked the question and I sit, including the Chief Electoral Officer and CSIS officials, commented on the fact that attempts to influence democratic elections do not equate to causing actual influence, nor is this a new phenomenon in Canada or around the world. The information the Conservatives are asking for is already made available in unredacted form to independent experts, as well as to members of the NSICOP committee, which the previous leader of the opposition, I would remind the member, removed his Conservative caucus members from in 2020.

This is in addition to the current study being undertaken by the PROC committee. Again, the member and I both sit on that committee and are both fully aware of the opportunity to ask these questions. The work being done by committees like NSICOP, by CSIS and by national security experts strengthens the democratic process and Canada's elections, and the Conservatives are undermining this important work rather than offering a more productive contribution to the discussion of security in elections.

Canadians should be asking what the Conservatives have to gain by instilling fear and division among electors in an effort to convince them that our elections are unfair and influenced by foreign actors.

• (1905)

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Madam Speaker, no one is questioning the overall integrity of the last two elections. That is not the issue.

There is a specific report of specific interference involving 11 candidates, and it was further reported that the Prime Minister was briefed about that interference. It is important that the Prime Minister be transparent. That was the advice he had received from CSIS. I do not understand why the parliamentary secretary is unwilling to answer that very straightforward question, so I will ask it again.

Was the Prime Minister briefed about electoral interference by Beijing last January, and specifically in respect of candidates?

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, I would refer the member to the answer to that exact question that the Prime Minister gave today when he answered that question.

Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, the member just said himself that no one is questioning the electoral integrity. If that is the case, why is the member continuing to ask? Maybe he needs to be more clear on exactly what he is accusing the Prime Minister of, so we can then try to address his question.

If the member wants to be direct and transparent, as he is suggesting is so important right now, maybe he should be direct and transparent in what exactly he is suggesting that the Prime Minister has done, because he just said, by his own admission, that apparently nobody is questioning, including Conservatives, that there was any electoral interference. Then why the charades and why keep going on and on about this?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The motion to adjourn the House is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:08 p.m.)





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