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# House of Commons Debates

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Wednesday, February 1, 2023

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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, February 1, 2023

The House met at 2 p.m.

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*Prayer*

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• (1405)

[*English*]

**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*]

### FREEDOM OF RELIGION

**Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the recent hate crime on Gauri Shankar Hindu Mandir in Brampton is just one of the many attacks in recent times against Hindu temples in Canada by anti-Hindu and anti-India groups. As with Islamophobia and anti-Semitism, resulting in hate crimes against our mosques and synagogues and causing pain to our Muslim and Jewish brothers and sisters, Hindu Canadians are experiencing the same pain due to rising Hinduphobia. As predicted by a study, Hinduphobia on social media is now graduating to physical attacks.

I call upon Canada to take serious note of this alarming trend and respond appropriately. As Canadians, we practise, celebrate and share our many different religious faiths and heritage peacefully. Let us pledge to continue to do so.

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[*Translation*]

### SEAN BÉRUBÉ

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we will be witnessing a magical moment over the next few days when a team of young Ukrainians participates in the Quebec international pee-wee hockey tournament.

This all goes back to March 2022, when Sean Bérubé, a former hockey player who trained in Ukraine from the age of 14 to 17, decided to host his former coach and his coach's wife when war broke out and Russian tanks were five kilometres from Kyiv. At that point, he reached out to an old Ukrainian teammate for help. Mis-

sion accomplished, and the refugees are now safe and sound. That was not the end of the story for Mr. Bérubé though, because his teammate had an idea. He wanted to make a dream come true for Ukrainian kids and make it possible for them to play in the Quebec International Pee-Wee Hockey Tournament. They joined forces and figured out how to give these kids, whose fathers are still at the front, a chance to lace up their skates for the first time since the war began in February 2022. He organized everything to bring these kids to Quebec City.

Today, I would like to use this opportunity to put Sean Bérubé in the spotlight. His humanitarian action will give kids a unique, magical experience. I am grateful to Sean Bérubé, and I would like to welcome the Ukrainian pee-wee players to Quebec.

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[*English*]

### RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I am going to dedicate my first statement of 2023 to recognizing someone special from my constituency who has served us all for many years.

[*Translation*]

Lise Séguin, a resident of Orléans, is a nurse counsellor with the House of Commons occupational health and safety department. Throughout her career, she has served members of Parliament, senators, employees of the Parliamentary Protective Service and several other departments.

[*English*]

She has been recognized for her professionalism, her compassion and her prompt and resourceful service. After 33 years of her selfless service to the House, Lise is retiring. She is here today with her family and her team. We want to thank Lise for helping and supporting everyone for so many years.

[*Translation*]

I thank all those who work in the health care sector for their dedication and passion.

*Statements by Members***PARLIAMENTARY SIMULATION AT SHAWNIGAN LAKE SCHOOL**

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Emma Hill, a student at Shawnigan Lake School, in British Columbia, who proudly represented Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia during a parliamentary simulation. Emma contacted me to learn more about my region and the values of the Bloc Québécois. She proudly told me that the MPs had introduced and passed a bill to abolish the monarchy. Yes, Quebec values and the desire to break free from a foreign monarch have made their way to western Canada. Still, the highlight of that simulation was undoubtedly the election of a Bloc Québécois prime minister. Imagine the Bloc Québécois leading a Canadian government; I am not making this up, but it certainly brings a smile to my face. It shows that the idea of deciding one's own fate and honouring one's identity transcends the borders of our beautiful Quebec. I thank Emma and her classmates for representing our political party so well. Their intelligence, ambition, openness to the world and thirst for independence are inspiring. I congratulate them and I thank them.

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[English]

**RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS**

**Ms. Lisa Hefner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a true Hamilton icon, Denise Christopherson, retired in December as CEO of YWCA Hamilton, where she created countless opportunities for women to lead, to excel in non-traditional spaces like science, trades and politics, and to find safety for themselves and for their children.

Under Denise's leadership, YWCA Hamilton built the first affordable housing residence in our city specifically for women and children. As chair of the Hamilton Status of Women Committee, Denise pushed the city council to adopt an equity, diversity and inclusion framework. Among her many acts of advocacy for the women she served, Denise also stood before the Standing Committee on the Status of Women to address the needs of senior women in Canada.

Denise personifies one of her own favourite statements: "When you invest in a woman, you invest in the entire community." Denise Christopherson is a force in Hamilton, and I wish her a hearty congratulations on her retirement.

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**CRIME, MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION**

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, crime, mental health and addiction are top priorities on the minds of many who live in Kelowna—Lake Country, and it was a top issue of importance during the last municipal elections across British Columbia. At our downtown constituency office, we see these complex issues in front of our windows every day.

Kelowna's RCMP superintendent commented how the revolving door needs to stop spinning and stated, "Being compassionate and concerned about mental health and substance use doesn't mean we have to accept repeat criminal behaviour."

Our Conservative leader called on the government to end "catch-and-release bail" for dangerous, violent repeat offenders.

I have introduced the "end the revolving door act" where those sentenced to federal penitentiaries could receive a mental health assessment and curative addiction treatment and recovery.

Criminal justice, mental health and addiction are complex issues and we need to use many tools, including helping people recover from addiction, and ultimately help the communities they come back to be safer.

**The Speaker:** I want to remind hon. members that statements are being made and we all want to hear what is being said. So, if members are talking, they could maybe whisper among themselves and not talk too loud. It would certainly be appreciated by all of us.

The hon. member for Oakville North—Burlington.

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● (1410)

**BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, 28 years ago, Canada's first Black woman elected to Parliament, the Honourable Dr. Jean Augustine, was responsible for the House of Commons designating February as Black History Month in Canada.

Every February and throughout the year, we honour the legacy of Black Canadians, past and present, whose contributions have helped to make Canada the prosperous, compassionate and multi-cultural nation it is today. It is also a time to reflect on, and to remove, the inequities that still exist for Black Canadians.

Join me in participating in Black History Month events in Oakville North—Burlington, as well as digital spaces, while learning more about our community's rich Black history.

The Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton, Halton Black History Awareness Society, Sheridan College, Black Mentorship Inc. and many other organizations are hosting events and community programming taking place this month and throughout the year.

I wish everyone a happy Black History Month.

## IRANIAN ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISTS

**Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Sepideh Kashani and her husband, Houshan Jokar, have been imprisoned, tortured and beaten in Iran simply for wanting to protect Iranian wildlife and conduct legitimate environmental research. In a rare letter from prison, Sepideh writes that she perseveres for her country, for the women of her country, for young people and for all the wounded injustice.

I rise here, alongside my York Region Liberal caucus colleagues, in sponsorship of Sepideh Kashani, Houshan Jokar and five other environmental activists wrongly imprisoned for loving their country. We come together to amplify their voices and to advocate for universal human rights in Iran, as we stand with and alongside the movement of Women, Life, Freedom.

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## PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, violent crime in Canada has increased by 32% since the Prime Minister took over. Gang-related homicides have increased by 92%, and this is happening here in Canada.

Many women have tragically fallen victim to the violence, and violent crime is raging out of control in our cities. Some women are afraid to take the train. On June 17, a Toronto woman in her twenties died of her injuries as she was brutally set on fire while taking public transit. On December 8, a 31-year-old woman was fatally stabbed on a Line 2 train at High Park Station. Crime rates continue to rise, and women continue to be targeted.

The government has had eight years, and under the Prime Minister violent crime is rising. For the protection of women and children, I implore the Prime Minister to take responsibility, protect our communities and reform our bail system.

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## LUNAR NEW YEAR

**Mr. Wilson Miao (Richmond Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the first day of the lunar new year started on January 22. Asian Canadian communities in Richmond Centre and many around the world began their 15-day celebration to welcome the Year of the Rabbit.

This year, many Canadian families and friends are finally able to gather safely together to celebrate this significant festival. I was grateful to join with many of my constituents as we counted down to the lunar new year and celebrated with street parades and lion dance performances. We even invited Asian Canadians from across our country yesterday to come to our nation's capital to commemorate this joyous occasion with my fellow members of Parliament and our Prime Minister.

During this celebration, let us take time to recognize the immense contributions Asian Canadians have made and remind ourselves how vibrant and multicultural Canada is.

I wish everyone success, prosperity and good health in the Year of the Rabbit.

## Statements by Members

### THE ECONOMY

**Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals seem to have forgotten that taxes, deficits and inflation are all determined by policies set by the federal Liberal government. Eight years ago, the Liberals inherited a fiscal house in order. Conservatives delivered lower taxes to Canadians. We also eliminated a deficit while increasing health transfers to the provinces. Conservatives made sure those who are struggling to make ends would pay no federal income tax, and we cut the GST.

Today, in contrast, taxes are going up. Canadians across the country have energy bills they cannot pay and cannot afford because of the carbon tax. Rent and mortgage payments are excessive because of rising interest rates.

Canadian households are living through the worst cost of living crisis in 40 years because of the Liberal government. Canadians have a choice to continue on the ruinous path the Liberals have us on or to follow the Conservatives so that families will not just get by, but they will get ahead.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

### ETHICS

**Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Liberal government, what do we have? We have corruption and we have incompetence. The Prime Minister is routinely found guilty of violating the ethics laws of this country. The Minister of Public Safety backdates documents to cover up for himself, and the Minister of International Trade gives juicy contracts to her close personal friends.

Let us talk about incompetence. The Minister of International Trade finds the time to approve a contract for her personal friend, but what she does not find the time to do is to stop the importation of goods made with forced labour from the Xinjiang region of China. That is right. They have not stopped a single shipment. Despite the ban, nothing has been stopped. The Americans have seized billions of dollars of goods. It is gross incompetence.

However, do not worry. There is hope on the horizon. A Conservative government under our new leader will sweep away the corruption and incompetence and will deliver a government all Canadians can be proud of.

*Statements by Members**[Translation]***MONIQUE DAUPHIN**

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Hochelaga, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today marks the start of Black History Month, and I would like to take this opportunity to celebrate the life of an extraordinary woman.

On January 21, Monique Dauphin died in a tragic incident in Montreal. Ms. Dauphin was born in Haiti and arrived in Montreal in 1969. She was involved and engaged with the Haitian community and indigenous communities her entire life. She was a women's rights activist and a feminist. Because of her work, she was actively involved, for 10 years, with Maison d'Haiti and especially with women and young girls. She leaves behind her children, Laurie, Melissa and Patrice, her friends and an entire community.

I would ask all my colleagues to take this opportunity to stop and take some time to learn more about the culture and history of our Black communities. Systemic racism and discrimination still exist and are part of the daily lives of far too many people.

Monique Dauphin called out and fought against anti-Black racism and she would certainly agree with that, because learning more about others is the perfect antidote to prejudice and racism.

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*[English]***HEALTH CARE WORKERS**

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last week I hosted a health care round table in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith and heard from health care professionals, including nurses. Nurses are the backbone of our health care system, yet the government has not been treating them as such. We know that nursing, frontline care work and all forms of care are dominated by women, BIPOC and new immigrants.

Despite the vitally important work they do, nurses have been consistently undervalued, underpaid and overworked. They have reached their breaking point. They need fair and safe working conditions that value the important profession it is. They need a real commitment from the government that help is on the way to ensure health care workers are recruited and retained.

We must see all care work, whether paid or unpaid, work that mainly falls on the strong shoulders of women, to be properly compensated. Nurses need more than empty words. They need a lifeline and deserve respect. We owe it to them and all women to value the care that they give us all.

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*[Translation]***RENÉ LAURIN**

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, our community of Joliette has been in mourning since we learned of the passing of René Laurin.

René Laurin was mayor of Joliette from 2001 to 2013, as well as the director general of the school board and a municipal councillor. To me he stands out as the first Bloc Québécois MP from the riding

of Joliette from 1993 to 2000. Quebec finally had a voice in Ottawa, and in Joliette that voice was René's.

Highly respected by everyone, René was a team player, hard-working, meticulous, community-oriented, funny and exceptionally musically talented. Every Christmas people would ask him to sing some of the classics. At a reception to mark the closure of Centre Block, we talked about what it was like to be an MP in his day and about the changes he had seen in recent years.

René would have been 83 in a few days. To his wife, Suzanne, to his whole family and the entire population of Joliette, I offer my deepest condolences.

Thank you, René.

\* \* \*

● (1420)

*[English]***TRANSPORTATION**

**Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, under the Liberal government, everything is broken, and nowhere is that more evident than in the travel sector.

Last summer, thousands of Canadians were stranded in airports due to cancelled and delayed flights and lost luggage. With summer vacations ruined, many Canadians said to themselves that things could not possibly get any worse, but when the Liberals are in power, things can always get worse.

In the following months, the transport minister accomplished absolutely nothing. Over the Christmas and new year travel season, thousands more Canadians were stranded in far-flung destinations due to the Liberals' inability to approve work permits for airline workers and to hold airlines accountable for service standards. The minister did not even bother to phone the airline executives until weeks later.

After eight years of the Liberal government, it is time for the Liberals to take a permanent vacation and for the Conservatives to clean up what they have ruined.

**HAZEL MCCALLION**

**Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I cannot begin to describe what it was like to grow up in Mississauga with a woman like Hazel McCallion as our mayor. She won her election 45 years ago, at a time when many thought it was unthinkable for a woman to seek office. Hazel proved them wrong, and over her 36 years of service, she was a shining example of what a woman in leadership is capable of.

Fearless and compassionate, she was a force to be reckoned with, a hurricane. Even after retiring, she spent her later years continuing to give back to the city she loved and that loved her in return. Last weekend, with 101 years under her belt, Hazel McCallion passed away. She blazed a trail that so many women will continue walking for generations to come.

Thanks to Hazel. She ran so that we could run with her. May she rest in peace.

**The Speaker:** I want to point out that S. O. 31s are limited to 60 seconds. One of the hardest parts of being Speaker is having to cut someone off because they have gone over the 60 seconds. I think all who gave their S. O. 31s today as none went over one minute. It is appreciated.

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**ORAL QUESTIONS**

[Translation]

**PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight years in office, how much money has the Government of Canada given to McKinsey in contracts?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we understand how important it is for Canadians to get value for money.

I have asked the ministers involved, the President of the Treasury Board and the Minister of Public Services and Procurement to follow up on all of these contracts to make sure that all the rules have been followed and all the parameters are being met. They know they need to be open with the committees about what was done and how it was done.

[English]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know why the Prime Minister needs a review. Can he not just ask how much his own government spent on contracts to this company? I mean, we are talking at least \$120 million. I asked him this question five times the last time he was in the House, and he was unable to answer. Perhaps the number is too high to count, but this is a company that is engulfed in scandals in France, that helped kill people in the United States and possibly in Canada through the opioid crisis, and helped foreign governments suppress their own people.

Surely the Prime Minister would know how much he paid this company after eight years. How much?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as these contracts were, for the large part, signed and negotiated

*Oral Questions*

by the public service, it is important that we actually be able to have clarity on the answers, which is why I have asked the Minister of Public Services and the President of the Treasury Board to look in carefully to make sure Canadians did get value for money and that all the rules and procedures were appropriately followed. The ministers of course will be sharing that information with committees and with all parliamentarians. It is important Canadians see exactly how government is investing their money.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, he says that the public servants recruited McKinsey and its managing director, Dominic Barton. That is not what he said before, and I quote, "I met the leaders of major corporations from around the world, and one thing they all had in common? They all knew Dominic. I came to appreciate, maybe even envy, Dominic's contact list, so we recruited him." That is far from having public servants do it. In fact, public servants say they have no idea what McKinsey actually did for all this money.

Given that he recruited this company, how much did he pay it?

• (1425)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, over our time in office, I have been touched by seeing how many Canadians of extraordinary backgrounds have put their hands up and offered to serve their country, to contribute to Canadian success and contribute to government. Dominic Barton has certainly served his country in many ways, including by being an outstanding ambassador to China.

In regard to contracts assigned to McKinsey by the public service, as I said, we are following up on how those contracts were chosen, allocated and fulfilled.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, he always blames everybody else for his actions. After eight years in government, he never takes responsibility, so now he is blaming the public servants for paying over \$120 million to his friends at McKinsey.

Here is what the public servants told the media, "We had a few presentations on very generic, completely vapid stuff. They arrived with nice colours, nice presentations and said they would revolutionize everything. In the end, we don't have any idea what they did." What they did is get over \$120 million. We still do not know exactly how much.

What was the total?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said, the ministers are appropriately looking into it to make sure all rules were followed.

### Oral Questions

As we move forward, we are focused on Canadians right now and the need to support Canadians who are going through a really difficult time, whether it is grocery prices, whether it is gas or whether it is paying their rents. That is why we have stepped up with direct supports for Canadians. We will continue to, and we certainly hope the Conservatives, putting aside their opposition to more support for Canadians who are renting or more support so people can send their kids to the dentist, will step up and support on child care, disability and other investments that support Canadians.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, well, after eight years in power, rents have doubled from \$1,000 to \$2,000. Monthly mortgage payments have doubled from \$1,500 to well over \$3,000. One in five Canadians is skipping meals, and half of Canadians are cutting groceries because of the food price inflation that his carbon tax has caused.

Where is the money going? There was \$15 billion for high-priced consultants like McKinsey. When he hired McKinsey, he announced that it was for one dollar a year, up to at least \$120 million a year.

How do you explain that? It is just inflation?

**The Speaker:** I just want to remind the hon. members to place their questions through the Speaker not to the Speaker, and you cannot do indirectly what you cannot do directly.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, while the Conservative Party focuses on schoolyard taunts, we are going to stay focused on being there for Canadians.

We have stepped up with investments that have helped Canadians significantly through this difficult time. We know people are facing tough times, and that is why we continue to step up with a doubling of the GST credit over six months, with moving forward on support for low-income renters and so that all families can send their kids to the dentists.

Unfortunately and inexplicably, despite all of his rhetoric, the Leader of the Opposition stood against those last two measures.

We are hoping that they are going to see that investing in and supporting Canadians, not abandoning the middle class, is what we need from them.

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[Translation]

### DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in light of recent events and the tensions surrounding the arrival of the representative chosen by the Prime Minister, whom I met today at noon, in light of past and perhaps regrettable comments—it is not for me to judge—and in light of the polarizing effect this is having on Quebec and Canada, if the Prime Minister's objective is mutual understanding between communities, will he recognize that he went about it the wrong way?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that we have to have some difficult conversations as a society. It is always important to have those difficult conversa-

tions, whether it is to address systemic racism across the country or to stand up for fundamental rights and freedoms. There are always difficult and important conversations that need to happen, and I think people understand that rhetoric and exaggeration on either side do not help. That is why we appointed a special representative on combatting Islamophobia, who I know will lead these conversations so that we can build bridges the right way.

• (1430)

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I agree that that is important, but it does not have to be this difficult. To reduce polarization, to really work on getting to know each other and mitigate the serious impact of these recent decisions, will the Prime Minister smooth things over and stand in the House and admit that Bill 21 is not Islamophobic?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for years, I have been expressing my concerns about the fact that some laws, including Bill 21, may violate fundamental civil liberties. I know not everyone shares that perspective, but I hope, based on the emotion shown by my hon. colleague and the wishes he has expressed, that we will be able to have the difficult but responsible conversations on these issues so that we can bring people together rather than stirring up trouble and sowing division.

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[English]

### HEALTH

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, when one or one's loved one falls sick, or one's mom needs a surgery, one needs nurses in the hospital to provide that care. When the Prime Minister was elected, the shortage of nurses was 5,800, and the shortage of nurses is now 29,000 positions.

The situation has gotten a lot worse, not better. The Prime Minister promised to hire more nurses but has not done that. When Conservative premiers want to privatize, for profit, our services, he encourages it and celebrates it.

Why has the nursing shortage gotten worse and not better with the Prime Minister?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, through the depths of the pandemic, this federal government stepped up with over \$72 billion in extra investments in health care across the country, on top of the \$40 billion or so a year we send to the provinces for delivery of health care, to hire nurses and to ensure proper health care delivery across the country.



One of the things we saw during the pandemic was that there was a need to continue and even to increase working together to ensure that Canadians get the best possible medical services across the country.

That is why we will be sitting down with the provinces next week to talk about the future of health care services across this country.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister took office, there was a shortage of 5,800 nurses. Things are now five times worse. He promised to hire more nurses, but he broke his promise. He thinks the provincial premiers' move to privatize our health care system is innovative.

Why is the Prime Minister making the crisis worse instead of improving our health care system?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, when we saw the challenges Canadians were dealing with during the pandemic, the federal government stepped up with \$72 billion in extra investments in health care, on top of the \$40 billion we send the provinces every year for health care delivery. We know it is going to take more.

We are going to sit down with the provinces next week to talk about how to boost investment and co-operation to provide better health care to Canadians across the country, within our public system, of course.

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[*English*]

#### GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we know that the insiders at McKinsey got rich, and we know that Canadians got 40-year highs of inflation. However, after eight years of the Prime Minister and \$15 billion for consultants, what did Canadians get? They got record food bank visits, he doubled their rent and he doubled their mortgage payments. The Prime Minister says that things have never been better, and for him and his friends, that is true. However, over here in the real world, Canadians are struggling.

Will the Prime Minister show some humility, admit there is a problem and start working for ordinary Canadians?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that might be a little more credible coming from the Conservatives if they had not voted against benefits for low-income renters just a few months ago, and if they had not voted against extra supports so families who could not afford to send their kids to the dentist could finally send them to the dentist.

What we hear from the Conservative Party is promotion of cuts and promotion of austerity, instead of stepping up and actually investing in the support that Canadians need. We manage to deliver targeted supports in a way that maintains our strong fiscal position so that we are coming through these difficult times by leaning on each other as we always do.

#### Oral Questions

• (1435)

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I know that the Prime Minister does not want to talk about his friends at McKinsey. The only person in Canada who thinks things are good is the Prime Minister. After eight long years and the billions that he is bragging about, he has given Canadians long lineups at airports, long immigration backlogs with numbers into the millions and long wait times for passports. SNC-Lavalin, WE Charity, McKinsey and the list goes on and on. At every point, he is working for well-connected insiders and leaving the middle class behind.

Will he finally take responsibility for that?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as Conservatives continue to blame the government for everything from COVID-19 to the war on Ukraine, we are going to continue to be there to invest in Canadians and to support people through the difficult times they are going through.

That is why we have consistently stepped up to invest in Canadians, despite Conservatives screaming every day that we were doing too much for Canadians and that we were helping too much through this pandemic. The reality is that we stepped up and our economy bounced back strongly. We are going to continue to step up as Canadians face difficult times with inflation and rising interest rates. We will be there for Canadians, despite the Conservatives calling for cuts.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

#### PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what do we know about the McKinsey case?

We know that the Prime Minister, the Finance Minister and Dominic Barton are very close friends. We know that their friendship is also one of the reasons Mr. Barton has been able to secure over \$117 million in federal government contracts for McKinsey over the past eight years. We know that all of the contracts given to McKinsey were for work that our public servants could have done in-house, and now we know that the Prime Minister does not trust our public servants.

Why?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said, the two ministers involved are following up to make sure that Canadians got value for their money, that these contracts followed all the rules, and that they followed the parameters that are set up to ensure that contracts awarded by the public service are the right ones.

We are going to continue being transparent with the public and investing in the middle class.

Given that they oppose help for dental care and low-income renters, the question is why the Conservatives have abandoned the middle class.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is trying to change the subject, but the question is clear. The government has lost confidence in its public servants. Moreover, the Prime Minister appointed Isabelle Hudon as the president of the Business Development Bank of Canada. The first thing Ms. Hudon did was award a \$4.9-million contract to McKinsey to do work that BDC's team could have done. Her employees were so frustrated that they went to the media with their concerns.

Why does the Prime Minister let people like Ms. Hudon or anyone else award contracts to McKinsey when the work could be done by public servants?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have already answered these questions.

The reality is that Canadians are going through tough times. As the government, we are there to help Canadians. We are there to help them by doubling the GST credit for six months, by providing assistance for dental care to families that cannot afford it and by providing support to low-income renters. Unfortunately, the Conservative Party voted against these initiatives. It would rather support austerity than investments that help Canadians get through these tough times.

[English]

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today the Prime Minister's friend Dominic Barton will appear before the government operations committee. Over the last eight years, Canadians have been struggling, but Dominic Barton's former company has cashed at least \$100 million worth of government cheques for consulting services.

I will be asking Dominic Barton about his involvement in the opioid crisis. While Mr. Barton was advising the Prime Minister and while his company was collecting Canadian government contracts, they were advising Purdue Pharma on how to turbocharge opioid sales.

During their time working together, did the Prime Minister ever ask Dominic Barton about his work turbocharging opioid sales?

• (1440)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know Mr. Barton is looking forward to appearing at committee and answering any and all of those questions.

What I will highlight is that, as a government, we will continue to stay grounded in science, facts and data as we address the terrible opioid epidemic across this country. Where Conservatives dig into random conspiracy theories and ignore science and evidence on how to keep people safe through the opioid epidemic, we are going to continue to step up with a harm reduction approach, with an approach that puts science first and keeps Canadians safe through this terrible ordeal.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, McKinsey's involvement in the opioid crisis is not a conspiracy theory. It is in *The New York Times*. The Prime Minister should read the stories about how, under Dominic Barton, McKinsey incredibly advised Purdue Pharma on a scheme to pay pharmacists for overdoses.

I asked a specification question of the Prime Minister about his conversations with Dominic Barton, and I think families deserve an answer. Did the Prime Minister ever ask Dominic Barton about his work with Purdue Pharma, yes or no?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with so many conspiracy theories rattling around the Conservative caucus one can understand where the member would misunderstand me. I was referring to the approach that the Conservative leader is taking against harm reduction, against science and evidence in supporting people facing the tragedies of the opioid epidemic.

We need to put a public health lens on this. We need to be grounded in science and data as we look to care for the most vulnerable, not have a criminal approach, and not be grounded in things that sound good but actually would be harming the most vulnerable people. That is what I was calling out on the Conservative side.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS**

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, since it is a question of building bridges, since some of his MPs are going to the front lines in Quebec to defend the most indefensible decisions, and since some MPs, specifically the member for Honoré-Mercier and the member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain, have expressed concerns, I would like to know what the Prime Minister said to his members from Quebec, other than that he supported his own appointee nothing short of 100%.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to be a member of the Liberal Party of Canada's Quebec caucus, and I can say that we are here to have difficult conversations with one another, with our colleagues and with Canadians. I know that the issue of Islamophobia is a sensitive topic all across the country. It exists everywhere, not just in Quebec. That is why we are here to dialogue with our colleagues, to talk about how we can create more harmony across the country and continue to be there for each other. I was very proud to be in Sainte-Foy on Sunday night, and we will continue to be there for the Muslim community.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, if we make a distinction between secularism and racism, and because what he proposed or announced falls somewhere between “not very good” and “really bad”, and without judging what anyone has to say since that is not really up to us, given that public opinion will take care of that, and without impugning anyone, I have a tough conversation to propose to the Prime Minister.

Why not meet with me so that we can come up with an alternative to what seems to be a mistake?

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, opposition parties have a responsibility to oppose what the government is doing. Sometimes we manage to see eye to eye, other times we are in disagreement.

On this side of the House, we know that we made the right choice in appointing Amira Elghawaby as special representative on combatting Islamophobia, and we support her in the important work she has ahead of her in the months and years to come.

\* \* \*

[English]

**GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight years under the Prime Minister, mortgage payments have more than doubled, going from \$1,500 a month to over \$3,000 a month. After eight years under the Prime Minister, rent has more than doubled, going from about \$950 to over \$2,000. After eight years under the Prime Minister, a fifth of Canadians are skipping meals or cutting groceries because they cannot afford the inflationary carbon tax he has imposed on our farmers. After eight years, 30,000 people have died of the hopelessness of drug addiction.

Egged on by McKinsey, which promoted the opioid crisis in this country, why does the Prime Minister keep governing for the super rich instead of the ordinary Canadian?

• (1445)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, over the past eight years, we have consistently stepped up for the middle class and people working hard to join it, with the Canada child benefit that Conservatives voted against, with child care agreements across the country that Conservatives campaigned against, with investments in rental benefits for low-income renters and with investments so that all families could take their kids to the dentist.

These are the kinds of things that we have invested in. They have not only benefited Canadians but also created a strong and growing economy. The Conservatives have had nothing to offer but a recommendation around Bitcoin.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a strong economy? It is like the Prime Minister is telling Canadians that they have never had it so good. Why does he not talk to the 1.5 million Canadians going to food banks in a given month? Some of them are asking food bank presidents for help committing suicide, not because they are sick but because they are too hungry.

It is as though he has not spoken to the nine in 10 young people who do not own homes and believe they never will because mortgage payments have doubled under his watch. It is as though he has not spoken to the 30,000 families who have lost loved ones because of the record overdoses that have happened under his watch.

Why will the Prime Minister not take responsibility for this disaster?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have been very clear that the Liberal government is very aware of the difficult times Canadians are facing right now.

That is why we have stepped up with direct, targeted supports for people who need it and why we continue to invest in Canadians, despite Conservative politicians continuing to call on us to do less, to spend less and to support people less. That is why Conservatives voted against support for the lowest-income renters just a couple of months ago. That is why they voted against support for families who could not afford to send their kids to the dentist.

We will stay on the side of Canadians while Conservatives abandon the middle class.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is the middle class that is left paying the bill.

He has doubled our national debt by adding more debt than all other prime ministers combined, causing the inflation rate to spike to the highest levels in 40 years. The more he spends, the more Canadians pay. It is “justinflation”, and Canadians are paying the bill.

What do we get? We get more people visiting food banks, more people living in poverty, and more money for his friends at McKinsey.

How much did McKinsey get?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I notice that the Conservatives do not mention the pandemic when they talk about the challenges that Canadians have faced over the past few years.

Perhaps that is because, if the Conservatives had had their way, we would not have invested to support Canadians during the pandemic. Without that help, thousands of small businesses would have closed their doors, and thousands of Canadians would not have received the support they needed to get through the pandemic.

While they sowed doubt about vaccination, we made investments that helped Canadians get through the pandemic.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is not me who says that the Prime Minister overspent; it is Bill Morneau. Do members remember him? My old friend Bill Morneau is the one who said the Prime Minister spends too much. The future Liberal leader, Mark Carney, is the one who, along with the current Governor of the Bank of Canada, says that this overspending is contributing to inflation. Forty per cent of the spending had nothing to do with COVID. In fact, much of it went to Liberal cronies and Liberal friends, nearly doubling the amount of money that goes to high-priced consultants like McKinsey.

If he has nothing to hide, then he has one more chance to tell us: How much did he pay McKinsey?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, you know the Conservative leader is stumbling over himself when he starts quoting random Liberals.

The reality is that we will continue to move forward on investing in Canadians—

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

**The Speaker:** Order. Members should please listen to their whips.

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

• (1450)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, we are not able to lift the Conservatives out of the funk they seem to be in.

We are going to continue to stay focused on investing in Canadians. We are going to continue to stay focused on being there for people. While Conservatives continue to push austerity and cuts and criticize us for having supported people through the pandemic, we are going to demonstrate our understanding that building a strong economy involves investing and supporting people, which is why, apparently, they voted against support for renters and support for dental care for young kids.

These are things that we disagree with them on. They will continue to try to fling mud. We will continue to stay focused on Canadians.

\* \* \*

**HOUSING**

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, everyone in this country should be able to find a home that meets their family's needs and that is in their budget. Sadly, that is not the case. People are struggling to find a home they can afford, and rent under the Prime Minister, since he has taken office, has gone up by 60%. It is a massive increase, and people are struggling. The Prime Minister has not built the homes he promised he would build, nor has he tackled speculation that is driving up the cost of housing.

Why has the housing crisis gotten worse, not better, under the Prime Minister?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know that housing affordability is a real concern, and we continue to be committed to tackling it. This is why we have intro-

duced the first-time homebuyer incentive. It is why we committed over \$82 billion to the national housing strategy and supported the creation and repair of almost half a million homes. We announced a rent-to-own program. We have helped more than 2.6 million families get the housing they need, and we are working to ensure that every Canadian has an affordable place to call home.

We understand there is more to do, but we are continuing to do it.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, everyone should be able to find affordable housing. Sadly, that is not the case. It is getting harder and harder for people to pay their bills and their rent. Since the Prime Minister took office, rent has gone up by 60%. That is a massive increase. The Prime Minister promised to build more affordable housing, but he has not done so.

Why has the housing crisis gotten worse under the Prime Minister?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are well aware that many people are worried about the cost of housing crisis, and we are firmly committed to continue working to solve this problem.

That is why we introduced the first-time home buyer incentive. We invested over \$82 billion in the national housing strategy. We supported the construction and renovation of almost half a million housing units, and we announced a rent-to-own program. We have helped over 2.6 million families get the housing they needed, and we will continue to do everything we can to meet the housing needs of all Canadians.

\* \* \*

*[English]***THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. Charles Sousa (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when I talk to my neighbours in Mississauga—Lakeshore, they say they expect their government to have their backs during tough times in a responsible way. They want us to promote economic growth to sustain programs that are important to them. They certainly do not want indiscriminate Conservative cuts that put them in harm's way.

Can the Prime Minister please tell this House what our plan is to support the middle class and continue growing an economy that works for all Canadians?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to congratulate the member for Mississauga—Lakeshore for becoming the newest member of this House. His constituents can rest assured that we will take no lessons from the Conservative Party's record of austerity and cuts when it comes to supporting people.

While the Conservative leader promotes Bitcoin to Canadians dealing with inflation, we have cut child care fees in half across this country. We have eliminated the interest on student loans. We have made sure parents do not have to choose between buying groceries and taking their kids to the dentist. These are all measures the Conservatives voted against.

\* \* \*

• (1455)

### FINANCE

**Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, eight years of the Prime Minister's overspending has led to the current inflationary crisis. Canadians have never struggled more with paying for food, fuel and shelter. Former finance minister Bill Morneau, former Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney and current Bank of Canada Governor Tiff Macklem all agree that the Liberals have overspent and Canadians are suffering as a result.

When will the Prime Minister rein in his inflationary spending so that life in Canada can once again become affordable?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that was the excuse Conservatives gave when they voted against rental benefits for the most vulnerable renters. That was the excuse they gave when they said, “no, we are not going to make sure that all families can send their kids to the dentist in this country”. They said, “oh, no, that is too much spending”.

We have the strongest balance sheet in the G7. We have an enviable fiscal position. This government is choosing to use that to support Canadians in targeted ways that are going to help them through these difficult times while Conservatives stand there and vote against it.

We will take no lessons from them.

**Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister should learn the lesson that he has not acted in the best interests of Canadians, with eight years of wasteful inflationary spending. Now the government wants Canadians to just trust it and give it a blank cheque for \$2 billion to invest in a company that does not even exist. Well, we heard that before when the government wasted \$35 billion on an infrastructure bank that has not completed even one project in six years.

Will the Prime Minister admit that because his government wasted billions—

**The Speaker:** The right hon. Prime Minister.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one of the areas in which I know the member opposite feels we wasted money over the past years is in procurement of vaccines, in trusting science and evidence in our approach to keeping people safe right across the country. Indeed, it has been shown that the approach she was pushing during the pandemic would have resulted in tens of thousands of deaths more than we actually had, as well as a much slower economic recovery.

We made the choice during the pandemic to step up, to follow science and to be there for Canadians. That is exactly what we did. We can understand how she—

### Oral Questions

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### THE ECONOMY

**Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this government, Canadians are struggling. Every month, inflation takes more and more of their paycheque, and 1.5 million people used food banks in one month. Students are living in shelters. Mothers have to choose between feeding the child they have or the child they have on the way.

What is this out-of-touch government telling us? It is saying that Canadians have never felt so good. What will it take for the Prime Minister to see and hear that Canadians are suffering?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Nothing could be further from the truth, Mr. Speaker. We know full well that Canadians are facing tremendous difficulties and that is why we have brought in initiatives such as help for low-income renters and help so that families can bring their children to the dentist.

Unfortunately, despite the rhetoric and comments from my colleague across the way, she voted against those clear-cut measures to prevent mothers from choosing between sending their child to the dentist or buying groceries. That is not responsible leadership. That is what we are doing. We will always be there for Canadians.

**Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we do not need to spend more, we need to spend better.

According to the Food Price Report, an average family of four will have to pay \$1,065 more for groceries in 2023. Canadian families are already struggling to get by. In 2023, more and more families simply will not make it.

Can the government that has been in power for eight years, as I like to keep saying, look Canadians in the eye and tell them they have nothing to complain about?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague just suggested that money needs to be spent wisely, not on helping families send their children to the dentist. That is certainly a debate we could have, but it is not the one they chose to have.

The Conservatives are hoping that Canadians do not find out that they voted against helping send kids to the dentist. Instead, they are talking about austerity and cuts and saying that is the way to address the challenges facing Canadians.

*Oral Questions*

We on this side of the House disagree with that. We are going to continue to be there for Canadians despite the austerity that the Conservatives are pushing.

\* \* \*

• (1500)

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Quebec, the provinces and the Bloc Québécois have been demanding this for years, and now the Prime Minister is finally inviting his counterparts to a meeting to discuss health transfers on February 7.

The Prime Minister does not have the right to turn this meeting into a PR stunt. February 7 should mark the beginning of the end of the crisis. On February 7, the Prime Minister needs to prove to both patients and care providers that fixing health care starts now, not in 2024, not next spring, but now.

Will the Prime Minister bring his chequebook on February 7?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yes, we will be there with additional investments in our health care system. That is what I have been saying for months—years, even.

What matters to Canadians is getting quality health care. We need more family doctors, more mental health support and more ER staff, and that means investing in the health care system. I am looking forward to sitting down with provincial representatives to move forward on this so we can help Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

**Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ)** Mr. Speaker, what the Prime Minister cannot seem to understand is that health transfers are not a strictly political issue, but rather a human issue.

Burned-out nurses thinking about quitting their jobs, people on waiting lists who are worried about their health, people who are unable to see a doctor for treatment: these people are waiting for a concrete solution that includes a substantial and recurring increase in federal funding, not a PR stunt or political ploy.

After Tuesday's meeting, will the Prime Minister put an end to his chronic underfunding of health care?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what Canadians do not want is bickering between the provinces and the federal government. What Canadians want is for us to work together to deliver the best health care service, and that is exactly what we are doing.

Yes, there will be more money, but we also want to see results for Canadians. We want more family doctors, more help for mental health care, more help in our emergency rooms, and fewer delays for essential surgeries.

We all know what Canadians need. We will work together to get it done.

[English]

**JUSTICE**

**Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight years of a soft-on-crime Liberal government, Canada's justice system is badly broken. A young police officer was shot and killed by someone with a lifetime firearms ban and a serious criminal history, yet they were out on bail. The Liberals' broken bail system is putting Canadian lives at risk, yet the justice minister refuses to answer the call of all 13 premiers, and police associations across the country, to reform the bail system.

Will the Prime Minister take the opportunity today to do what his justice minister has refused to do and commit to reforming the Liberals' broken bail system?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the increase in violence in so many of our communities is heart-breaking to see and continues to be a priority for us to respond to. We will always look at what more we can do alongside the provinces, territories and municipalities.

The Minister of Justice and Attorney General met with his counterparts and discussed this issue just this past fall, and experts at the federal and provincial levels have been working together on bail reform since. The minister has asked these experts to do whatever they can to speed up this work to make sure we are doing everything we can to keep Canadians safe.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last fall the Liberals celebrated eliminating mandatory prison time for those convicted of sexual assault. Now a man convicted of raping a Quebec woman will get zero days in prison and, instead, will serve his sentence from the comfort of his home.

After eight years of Liberal government, Canada has become a place where men who rape women get zero days in prison. This is not justice. Will the Prime Minister bring back mandatory prison time for rapists?

• (1505)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one of the strengths of our justice system is that there is a possibility for appeals and for opinions to be scrutinized and reversed. We trust our justice system in this case and in all cases.

We are going to continue to ensure that we are keeping people safe across this country. We continue to make investments. Where Conservatives cut investments in policing and in our justice system, we are going to continue to invest in solutions that are going to keep people safe.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for eight years we have heard the Prime Minister falsely proclaim that he is a feminist. After eight years, violent crime against women has never been higher.

*Oral Questions*

A Crown prosecutor in Quebec had the courage to speak out after a rapist received a 20-month sentence that he could serve at home, in the community, because Bill C-5 had been passed in the House by the Liberals with the help of the NDP and the Bloc.

This prosecutor said that the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice “will have to answer to the victims of sexual assault”.

Can the Prime Minister look victims in the eye and tell them that he is satisfied with the sentence that was handed down?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have an independent justice system in this country, which provides for appeals and legal recourse when people disagree with an outcome.

It is not up to politicians to say what they think, it is up to them to create the conditions for public safety. That is exactly what we are doing and will continue to do with laws that will keep people safe and protect public health and public security.

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**SENIORS**

**Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the pandemic has highlighted long-standing systemic challenges in Canada's long-term care system.

Can the Prime Minister tell us how our government is ensuring that seniors have access to safe, reliable, high-quality long-term care facilities across Canada?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Madawaska—Restigouche for his question and his hard work.

In fact, the pandemic has made us realize the extent of the problems facing our seniors in long-term care facilities across the country.

That is why, in 2021, I mandated the Minister of Health and the Minister of Seniors to develop national standards for safe long-term care to ensure that seniors receive the care they deserve.

With this important step taken, I look forward to seeing their bill introduced in the House when it is ready.

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[English]

**ETHICS**

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this Prime Minister, Canadians have never had it so bad, but Liberal insiders and high-priced consultants and friends of the Prime Minister have never had it so good.

We can just look at the Minister of International Trade. While Canadians were lined up at food banks, she had her BFF lined up to receive lucrative contracts that turned out to be illegal. That is a record fifth ethics violation for the Prime Minister and members of his cabinet.

Canadians want accountability. When will the Prime Minister ask for that minister's resignation?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we support and respect the commissioner and the work his office does. The minister in question has taken responsibility and has apologized.

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, now it is time to respect taxpayers and Canadians and have some ministerial accountability across the aisle. That means resignations of ministers who break Canadian laws. It is not a surprise from the Prime Minister because he has twice been found to have broken the ethics laws of this country to help out his buddies and Liberal insiders.

After eight years of this Prime Minister, people can bet that, if they are a Liberal insider, things are looking pretty great, but this is not so for the rest of Canadians. Therefore, when will the Prime Minister and the Liberals finally put Canadians first and put the corruption and law-breaking aside?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, while Conservatives engage in attacks, we are engaging in supporting Canadians directly with things that Conservatives have opposed, including things like delivering rental supports to the lowest-income renters, which Conservatives voted against. We have stepped up with help so that all families can send their kids to the dentist. Unfortunately, Conservatives stood against that too.

No wonder they talk about anything other than their abandonment of the middle class. We are going to continue to be there to support Canadians throughout.

● (1510)

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, that was another bad answer from a random Liberal.

After eight years of the Prime Minister, Canadians are struggling like they never have before, but if one is a Liberal lobbyist or a high-priced consultant, it has never been better.

For the fifth time, these Liberals have been found guilty of breaking our ethics laws, which was done twice by the Prime Minister. This time, the trade minister was caught shovelling money to her good friend and CBC pundit Amanda Alvaro, who was also on the trade minister's campaign team.

Will the Prime Minister fire the trade minister and make her pay back the \$17,000 she gave to her BFF?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the minister has taken full responsibility and has apologized.

*Oral Questions***INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY**

**Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, quantum science and technologies have incredible untapped potential in fields as diverse as drug design, climate forecasting, navigation and clean technology. Canada is a world leader in quantum, and we know that additional investments in this innovative sector will help foster even more cutting-edge research and innovation.

Could the Prime Minister kindly update the House on how investments in quantum lead to economic growth and job creation?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Brampton North for her hard work.

Last week I was immensely pleased to be able to visit Toronto's Xanadu Quantum Technologies Incorporated. Through our federal investment, its new quantum computing project is expected to create 530 new highly skilled positions. Whether it is projects like the one at Xanadu, or those of the companies I visited across the country, whose workers are building electric vehicles and batteries, we are creating and securing well-paying jobs that will help grow the Canadian economy for all Canadians.

\* \* \*

**GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES**

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, instead of spending \$100 million to help Canadians, the Prime Minister spent \$100 million to give contracts to his friends at McKinsey. This is millions of dollars given to a firm that advised American hospitals how to maximize profits by billing sick patients. This is the firm that advised Purdue Pharma how to sell more opioids.

Why is the Prime Minister spending millions of dollars on his friends rather than spending it on helping Canadians through this difficult time?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the opioid epidemic is heartbreaking for Canadians right across the country, which is why we have consistently stepped up with evidence-based policy to protect Canadians, moving this into a public health space rather than a criminal justice space, where the Conservatives continue to want it to be.

We know there is more to invest. There is more support for our frontline workers. There is more support for vulnerable Canadians living with addiction right across the country. We will continue to be there, working with our colleagues, provinces and territories, and municipalities to support Canadians with the best science and evidence.

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**FINANCE**

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, as the budget is in the drafting stage, I remind the Prime Minister of previous Liberal election promises as a useful guide. For example, it could reduce spending by stopping the spending on fossil fuel infrastructure, cancel the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline, cancel the purchases of the F-35 fighter jets, cancel the fossil fuel subsidies across Canada, deliver on promises on pharmacare, fund

the disability benefit, fund an independent Canada water agency and deliver on promises to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Will the Prime Minister use this budget to deliver on his promises?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are facing a difficult time right now, which is why we are going to continue to be there for them, investing in them responsibly to make it through these tough times and get to the brighter future ahead.

We know our investments in building a cleaner economy and the good jobs that go with it, our investments in reconciliation and our investments in science and research are all things that are helping Canadians through these difficult times. We will continue to put Canadians at the heart of everything we do.

\* \* \*

● (1515)

**PRESENCE IN GALLERY**

**The Speaker:** I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. David Eby, Premier of British Columbia. He is accompanied by several cabinet ministers for the Province of British Columbia: the Hon. Niki Sharma, Attorney General; the Hon. Josie Osborne, Minister of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation; the Hon. George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy; the Hon. Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Housing; the Hon. Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation; and the Hon. Brenda Bailey, Minister of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** I would also like to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Rajan Sawhney, Minister of Trade, Immigration and Multiculturalism for the Province of Alberta.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

There have been consultations, and I hope that if you seek it, you will find consent for the following motion: That, given that all elderly Canadians face the same rising cost of living and greedflation, the recent 10% increase to the old age security be applied to all qualifying seniors regardless of age.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.



## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### CANADA EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE ACT

The House resumed from January 31 consideration of the motion that Bill C-35, An Act respecting early learning and child care in Canada, be read the second time and referred to a committee

**The Speaker:** It being 3:16 p.m., pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, 2022, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at the second reading stage of Bill C-35.

Call in the members.

• (1525)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 246)

### YEAS

#### Members

|                    |                                      |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Aboultarif         | Aitchison                            |
| Albas              | Aldag                                |
| Alghabra           | Ali                                  |
| Allison            | Anand                                |
| Anandasangaree     | Angus                                |
| Arnold             | Arseneault                           |
| Arya               | Ashton                               |
| Atwin              | Bachrach                             |
| Badawey            | Bains                                |
| Baker              | Baldinelli                           |
| Barlow             | Barrett                              |
| Barron             | Barsalou-Duval                       |
| Battiste           | Beaulieu                             |
| Beech              | Bendayan                             |
| Bennett            | Bergeron                             |
| Berthold           | Bérubé                               |
| Bezan              | Bibeau                               |
| Bittle             | Blaikie                              |
| Blair              | Blanchet                             |
| Blanchette-Joncas  | Blaney                               |
| Block              | Blois                                |
| Boissonnault       | Boulerice                            |
| Bradford           | Brassard                             |
| Brière             | Brock                                |
| Brunelle-Duceppe   | Calkins                              |
| Cannings           | Caputo                               |
| Carrie             | Casey                                |
| Chabot             | Chagger                              |
| Chahal             | Chambers                             |
| Champagne          | Champoux                             |
| Chatel             | Chiang                               |
| Chong              | Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek) |
| Collins (Victoria) | Cooper                               |
| Cormier            | Coteau                               |
| Dabrusin           | Dalton                               |
| Damoff             | Dancho                               |
| Davidson           | Davies                               |
| DeBellefeuille     | Deltell                              |
| d'Entremont        | Desbiens                             |
| Desilets           | Desjarlais                           |
| Dhaliwal           | Dhillon                              |
| Diab               | Doherty                              |
| Dong               | Dowdall                              |
| Dreeshen           | Dubourg                              |
| Duclos             | Duguid                               |

### Government Orders

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry) | Dzerowicz                           |
| Ehsassi                                  | El-Khoury                           |
| Ellis                                    | Epp                                 |
| Erskine-Smith                            | Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)     |
| Falk (Provencher)                        | Fast                                |
| Fergus                                   | Ferreri                             |
| Fillmore                                 | Findlay                             |
| Fisher                                   | Fonseca                             |
| Fortier                                  | Fortin                              |
| Fragiskatos                              | Fraser                              |
| Freeland                                 | Gaheer                              |
| Gallant                                  | Garneau                             |
| Garon                                    | Garrison                            |
| Gaudreau                                 | Gazan                               |
| Généreux                                 | Genuis                              |
| Gill                                     | Gladu                               |
| Goodridge                                | Gould                               |
| Gourde                                   | Gray                                |
| Green                                    | Guilbeault                          |
| Hajdu                                    | Hallan                              |
| Hanley                                   | Hardie                              |
| Hepfner                                  | Hoback                              |
| Holland                                  | Housefather                         |
| Hughes                                   | Hussen                              |
| Hutchings                                | Iacono                              |
| Idlout                                   | Ien                                 |
| Jaczek                                   | Jeneroux                            |
| Johns                                    | Joly                                |
| Jowhari                                  | Julian                              |
| Kayabaga                                 | Kelloway                            |
| Kelly                                    | Khalid                              |
| Khera                                    | Kitchen                             |
| Kniec                                    | Koutrakis                           |
| Kram                                     | Kramp-Neuman                        |
| Kurek                                    | Kusie                               |
| Kusmierczyk                              | Kwan                                |
| Lake                                     | Lalonde                             |
| Lambropoulos                             | Lametti                             |
| Lamoureux                                | Lantsman                            |
| Lapointe                                 | Larouche                            |
| Lattanzio                                | Lauzon                              |
| Lawrence                                 | LeBlanc                             |
| Lebouthillier                            | Lehoux                              |
| Lemire                                   | Lewis (Essex)                       |
| Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)                | Liepert                             |
| Lightbound                               | Lloyd                               |
| Lobb                                     | Long                                |
| Longfield                                | Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)         |
| MacAulay (Cardigan)                      | MacDonald (Malpeque)                |
| MacGregor                                | MacKinnon (Gatineau)                |
| Maguire                                  | Maloney                             |
| Martel                                   | Martinez Ferrada                    |
| Masse                                    | Mathysen                            |
| May (Cambridge)                          | May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)          |
| Mazier                                   | McCauley (Edmonton West)            |
| McDonald (Avalon)                        | McGuinty                            |
| McKay                                    | McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam) |
| McLean                                   | McLeod                              |
| McPherson                                | Melillo                             |
| Mendès                                   | Miao                                |
| Michaud                                  | Miller                              |
| Moore                                    | Morantz                             |
| Morrice                                  | Morrison                            |
| Morrissey                                | Motz                                |
| Murray                                   | Muys                                |
| Naqvi                                    | Nater                               |
| Ng                                       | Noormohamed                         |
| Normandin                                | O'Connell                           |
| Oliphant                                 | O'Regan                             |
| O'Toole                                  | Patzer                              |
| Paul-Hus                                 | Pauzé                               |
| Perkins                                  | Perron                              |
| Petitpas Taylor                          | Plamondon                           |

*Private Members' Business*

|                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 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               |
| Schmale               | Seeback                |
| Serré                 | Sgro                   |
| Shanahan              | Sheehan                |
| Shields               | Shipley                |
| Sidhu (Brampton East) | Sidhu (Brampton South) |
| Simard                | Sinclair-Desgagné      |
| Singh                 | Small                  |
| Sorbara               | Soroka                 |
| Sousa                 | Steinley               |
| Ste-Marie             | Stewart                |
| St-Onge               | Strahl                 |
| Stubbs                | Sudds                  |
| Tassi                 | Taylor Roy             |
| Thériault             | Therrien               |
| Thomas                | Thompson               |
| Tochor                | Tolmie                 |
| Trudeau               | Trudel                 |
| Turnbull              | Uppal                  |
| Valdez                | Van Bynen              |
| van Koeverden         | Van Popta              |
| Vandal                | Vandenbeld             |
| Vecchio               | Vidal                  |
| Vien                  | Viersen                |
| Vignola               | Virani                 |
| Vis                   | Vuong                  |
| Wagantall             | Warkentin              |
| Waugh                 | Webber                 |
| Weiler                | Wilkinson              |
| Williams              | Williamson             |
| Yip                   | Zahid                  |
| Zarrillo              | Zimmer                 |
| Zuberi — 323          |                        |

## NAYS

Nil

## PAIRED

## Members

Chen Villemure— 2

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

● (1530)

*[English]*

Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

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

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

*[English]*

## UIGHURS AND OTHER TURKIC MUSLIMS

The House resumed from January 30 consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

**The Speaker:** Pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, 2022, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment of the member for Vancouver East to Motion No. 62 under Private Members' Business.

● (1545)

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

*(Division No. 247)*

## YEAS

## Members

|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Aboultaif                            | Aitchison                                |
| Albas                                | Aldag                                    |
| Alghabra                             | Ali                                      |
| Allison                              | Anand                                    |
| Anandasangaree                       | Angus                                    |
| Arnold                               | Arseneault                               |
| Arya                                 | Atwin                                    |
| Bachrach                             | Badawey                                  |
| Bains                                | Baker                                    |
| Baldinelli                           | Barlow                                   |
| Barrett                              | Barron                                   |
| Barsalou-Duval                       | Battiste                                 |
| Beaulieu                             | Beech                                    |
| Bendayan                             | Bennett                                  |
| Bergeron                             | Berthold                                 |
| Bérubé                               | Bezan                                    |
| Bibeau                               | Bittle                                   |
| Blaikie                              | Blair                                    |
| Blanchet                             | Blanchette-Joncas                        |
| Blaney                               | Block                                    |
| Blois                                | Boissonnault                             |
| Boulerice                            | Bradford                                 |
| Brassard                             | Brière                                   |
| Brock                                | Brunelle-Duceppe                         |
| Calkins                              | Cannings                                 |
| Caputo                               | Carrie                                   |
| Casey                                | Chabot                                   |
| Chagger                              | Chahal                                   |
| Chambers                             | Champagne                                |
| Champoux                             | Chatel                                   |
| Chiang                               | Chong                                    |
| Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek) | Collins (Victoria)                       |
| Cooper                               | Cormier                                  |
| Coteau                               | Dabrusin                                 |
| Dalton                               | Damoff                                   |
| Dancho                               | Davidson                                 |
| DeBellefeuille                       | Deltell                                  |
| d'Entremont                          | Desbiens                                 |
| Desilets                             | Desjarlais                               |
| Dhaliwal                             | Dhillon                                  |
| Diab                                 | Doherty                                  |
| Dowdall                              | Dreeshen                                 |
| Dubourg                              | Duclos                                   |
| Duguid                               | Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry) |
| Dzerowicz                            | Ehsassi                                  |
| El-Khoury                            | Ellis                                    |
| Epp                                  | Erskine-Smith                            |
| Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)      | Falk (Provencher)                        |
| Fast                                 | Fergus                                   |
| Ferreri                              | Fillmore                                 |

*Private Members' Business*

|                                     |                           |                       |  |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Findlay                             | Fisher                    | Rodriguez             | Rogers   |
| Fonseca                             | Fortier                   | Romanado              | Rood   |
| Fortin                              | Fragiskatos               | Ruff                  | Sahota   |
| Fraser                              | Freeland                  | Sajjan                | Saks   |
| Fry                                 | Gaheer                    | Samson                | Sarai  |
| Gallant                             | Garneau                   | Savard-Tremblay       | Scarpaleggia   |
| Garon                               | Garrison                  | Scheer                | Schiefke   |
| Gaudreau                            | Gazan                     | Schmale               | Seeback  |
| Généreux                            | Gentus                    | Serré                 | Sgro   |
| Gerretsen                           | Gill                      | Shanahan              | Sheehan  |
| Gladu                               | Goodridge                 | Shields               | Shipley  |
| Gould                               | Gourde                    | Sidhu (Brampton East) | Sidhu (Brampton South)   |
| Gray                                | Green                     | Simard                | Singh  |
| Guilbeault                          | Hajdu                     | Small                 | Sorbara  |
| Hallan                              | Hanley                    | Soroka                | Sousa  |
| Hardie                              | Hepfner                   | Steinley              | Ste-Marie  |
| Hoback                              | Holland                   | Stewart               | St-Onge  |
| Housefather                         | Hughes                    | Strahl                | Stubbs   |
| Hussen                              | Hutchings                 | Sudds                 | Tassi  |
| Iacono                              | Idlout                    | Taylor Roy            | Thériault  |
| Ien                                 | Jaczek                    | Therrien              | Thomas   |
| Jeneroux                            | Johns                     | Thompson              | Tochor   |
| Joly                                | Jowhari                   | Tolmie                | Trudeau  |
| Julian                              | Kayabaga                  | Trudel                | Turnbull   |
| Kelloway                            | Kelly                     | Uppal                 | Valdez   |
| Khalid                              | Khera                     | Van Bynen             | van Koeverden  |
| Kitchen                             | Kmiec                     | Van Popta             | Vandal   |
| Koutrakis                           | Kram                      | Vandenbeld            | Vecchio  |
| Kramp-Neuman                        | Kurek                     | Vidal                 | Vien   |
| Kusie                               | Kusmierczyk               | Viersen               | Vignola  |
| Kwan                                | Lake                      | Virani                | Vis  |
| Lalonde                             | Lambropoulos              | Vuong                 | Wagantall  |
| Lametti                             | Lamoureux                 | Warkentin             | Waugh  |
| Lantsman                            | Lapointe                  | Webber                | Weiler   |
| Larouche                            | Lattanzio                 | Wilkinson             | Williams   |
| Lauzon                              | Lawrence                  | Williamson            | Yip  |
| LeBlanc                             | Lebouthillier             | Zahid                 | Zarrillo   |
| Lehoux                              | Lemire                    | Zimmer                | Zuberi— 322  |
| Lewis (Essex)                       | Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk) |                       |  |
| Liepert                             | Lightbound                |                       | <b>NAYS</b>  |
| Lloyd                               | Lobb                      | Nil                   |  |
| Long                                | Longfield                 |                       | <b>PAIRED</b>  |
| Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)         | MacAulay (Cardigan)       |                       | Members  |
| MacDonald (Malpeque)                | MacGregor                 |                       |  |
| MacKinnon (Gatineau)                | Maguire                   | Chen                  | Villemure— 2   |
| Maloney                             | Martel                    |                       | <b>The Speaker:</b> I declare the amendment carried.   |
| Martinez Ferrada                    | Masse                     |                       | The next question is on the main motion as amended.  |
| Mathysen                            | May (Cambridge)           |                       | If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes that the motion as amended 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. |
| May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)          | Mazier                    |                       | <b>Mr. Sameer Zuberi:</b> Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.  |
| McCauley (Edmonton West)            | McDonald (Avalon)         | ● (1600)              | (The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)  |
| McGuinty                            | McKay                     |                       | <i>(Division No. 248)</i>  |
| McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam) | McLean                    |                       | <b>YEAS</b>  |
| McLeod                              | McPherson                 |                       | Members  |
| Melillo                             | Mendès                    |                       |  |
| Mendicino                           | Miao                      |                       |  |
| Michaud                             | Miller                    |                       |  |
| Moore                               | Morantz                   |                       |  |
| Morrice                             | Morrison                  |                       |  |
| Morrissey                           | Motz                      |                       |  |
| Murray                              | Muys                      |                       |  |
| Naqvi                               | Nater                     |                       |  |
| Ng                                  | Noormohamed               |                       |  |
| Normandin                           | O'Connell                 |                       |  |
| Oliphant                            | O'Regan                   |                       |  |
| O'Toole                             | Patzer                    |                       |  |
| Paul-Hus                            | Pauzé                     |                       |  |
| Perkins                             | Perron                    |                       |  |
| Petipas Taylor                      | Plamondon                 | Aboultaif             | Aitchison  |
| Poillievre                          | Powlowski                 | Albas                 | Aldag  |
| Qualtrough                          | Rayes                     | Alghabra              | Ali  |
| Redekopp                            | Reid                      | Allison               | Anand  |
| Rempel Garner                       | Richards                  | Anandasangaree        | Angus  |
| Roberts                             | Robillard                 | Arnold                | Arseneault   |

*Private Members' Business*

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

*Private Members' Business*

Viersen  
Virani  
Vuong  
Warkentin  
Webber  
Wilkinson  
Williamson  
Zahid  
Zimmer

Vignola  
Vis  
Wagantall  
Waugh  
Weiler  
Williams  
Yip  
Zarrillo  
Zuberi— 322

## NAYS

Nil

## PAIRED

## Members

Chen  
Villemure— 2**The Speaker:** I declare the motion, as amended, carried.

\* \* \*

● (1605)

[Translation]

## CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from January 31 consideration of the motion that Bill C-291, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to other Acts (child sexual abuse and exploitation material), be read the third time and passed.

**The Speaker:** Pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, 2022, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill C-291 under Private Members' Business.

● (1615)

[English]

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

(Division No. 249)

## YEAS

## Members

Abouttaif  
Albas  
Alghabra  
Allison  
Anandasangaree  
Arnold  
Arya  
Atwin  
Badawey  
Baker  
Barlow  
Barron  
Battiste  
Beech  
Bennett  
Berthold  
Bezan  
Bittle  
Blair  
Blanchette-Joncas  
Block  
Boissonnault  
Bradford  
Brière  
Brunelle-Duceppe

Aitchison  
Aldag  
Ali  
Anand  
Angus  
Arseneault  
Ashton  
Bachrach  
Bains  
Baldinelli  
Barrett  
Barsalou-Duval  
Beaulieu  
Bendayan  
Bergeron  
Bérubé  
Bibeau  
Blaikie  
Blanchet  
Blaney  
Blois  
Boulerice  
Brassard  
Brock  
Calkins

Cannings  
Carrie  
Chabot  
Chahal  
Champoux  
Chiang  
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)  
Cooper  
Coteau  
Dalton  
Dancho  
Davies  
Deltell  
Desbiens  
Desjarlais  
Dhillon  
Doherty  
Dowdall  
Dubourg  
Duguid  
Dzerowicz  
El-Khoury  
Epp  
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)  
Fast  
Ferrerri  
Findlay  
Fonseca  
Fortin  
Fraser  
Fry  
Gallant  
Garon  
Gaudreau  
Généreux  
Gerretsen  
Gladu  
Gould  
Gray  
Guilbeault  
Hallan  
Hardie  
Hoback  
Housefather  
Hussen  
Iacono  
Ien  
Jeneroux  
Joly  
Julian  
Kelloway  
Khalid  
Kitchen  
Koutrakis  
Kramp-Neuman  
Kusie  
Kwan  
Lalonde  
Lametti  
Lantsman  
Larouche  
Lauzon  
LeBlanc  
Lehoux  
Lewis (Essex)  
Liepert  
Lloyd  
Long  
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)  
MacDonald (Malpeque)  
MacKinnon (Gatineau)  
Maloney  
Martinez Ferrada

Caputo  
Casey  
Chagger  
Chambers  
Chatel  
Chong  
Collins (Victoria)  
Cormier  
Dabrusin  
Damoff  
Davidson  
DeBellefeuille  
d'Entremont  
Desilets  
Dhaliwal  
Diab  
Dong  
Dreeshen  
Duclos  
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)  
Ehsassi  
Ellis  
Erskine-Smith  
Falk (Provencher)  
Fergus  
Fillmore  
Fisher  
Fortier  
Fragiskatos  
Freeland  
Gaheer  
Garneau  
Garrison  
Gazan  
Genius  
Gill  
Goodridge  
Gourde  
Green  
Hajdu  
Hanley  
Hepfner  
Holland  
Hughes  
Hutchings  
Idlout  
Jaczek  
Johns  
Jowhari  
Kayabaga  
Kelly  
Khera  
Kmiec  
Kram  
Kurek  
Kusmierczyk  
Lake  
Lambropoulos  
Lamoureux  
Lapointe  
Lattanzio  
Lawrence  
Lebouthillier  
Lemire  
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)  
Lightbound  
Lobb  
Longfield  
MacAulay (Cardigan)  
MacGregor  
Maguire  
Martel  
Masse

*Routine Proceedings*

|                                     |                       |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Mathysse                            | May (Cambridge)       |
| May (Saanich—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                              | Muys                  |
| 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                              | Schmale               |
| Seebach                             | Serré                 |
| Sgro                                | Shanahan              |
| Sheehan                             | Shields               |
| Shipley                             | Sidhu (Brampton East) |
| Sidhu (Brampton South)              | Simard                |
| Sinclair-Desgagné                   | Singh                 |
| Small                               | Sorbara               |
| Soroka                              | Sousa                 |
| Steinley                            | Ste-Marie             |
| Stewart                             | St-Onge               |
| Strahl                              | Stubbs                |
| Sudds                               | Tassi                 |
| Taylor Roy                          | Thériault             |
| Therrien                            | Thomas                |
| Thompson                            | Tochor                |
| Tolmie                              | Trudeau               |
| Trudel                              | Turnbull              |
| Uppal                               | Valdez                |
| Van Bynen                           | van Koeverden         |
| Van Popta                           | Vandal                |
| Vandenbeld                          | Vecchio               |
| Vidal                               | Vien                  |
| Viersen                             | Vignola               |
| Virani                              | Vis                   |
| Vuong                               | Wagantall             |
| Warkentin                           | Waugh                 |
| Webber                              | Weiler                |
| Wilkinson                           | Williams              |
| Williamson                          | Yip                   |
| Zahid                               | Zarrillo              |
| Zimmer— 323                         |                       |

## NAYS

Nil

## PAIRED

Members

Chen

Villemure— 2

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

(Bill read the third time and passed)

**The Speaker:** I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 59 minutes.

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**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[*English*]

**FEDERAL ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION**

**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 for the Province of Quebec.

[*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**

## AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

**Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food in relation to Bill S-227, an act to establish food day in Canada. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report back to the House without amendment.

Let me take the opportunity to recognize the work of Senator Rob Black, and indeed the member of Parliament for Perth—Wellington for sponsoring the bill here in the House.

The committee, of course, supports this and reports back accordingly.

\* \* \*

● (1620)

**NATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY STRATEGY ACT**

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-312, An Act respecting the development of a national renewable energy strategy.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to introduce the national renewable energy strategy act. I thank my colleague from Port Moody—Coquitlam for seconding this legislation and for her tireless advocacy in support of environmental justice.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has been clear that we must cut global greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050 to avert global climate change. The time for action is now. That means implementing solutions for clean energy and transitioning away from fossil fuels.

While we do this, we must ensure that workers are not left behind. Jobs in Canada's clean energy sector are projected to grow by nearly 50% by 2030, and the industry's GDP contribution is on track to reach \$100 billion by the end of the decade.

This legislation would accelerate our transition to a clean energy future by requiring that the Minister of Natural Resources develop and implement a national strategy to ensure 100% of electricity generated in Canada comes from renewable energy sources by 2030.

I call on all parliamentarians to support this vital initiative for our country and for our planet.

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

\* \* \*

### PETITIONS

#### MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

**Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I present this petition on behalf of over 6,400 Canadians.

In Canada, we have one of the highest rates of multiple sclerosis in the entire world, with an average of 12 Canadians diagnosed every day. It is a chronic autoimmune disease affecting the central nervous system, which includes the brain, spinal cord and optic nerve. Therefore, MS can affect vision, memory, balance and mobility. An estimated 90,000 Canadians live with the disease, and most are diagnosed, sadly, between the ages of 20 and 49.

Researchers believe that MS is caused by a combination of genetics, lifestyle and environmental factors. In a recent breakthrough landmark study, a research team at Harvard University provided the strongest evidence to date that shows an association between the Epstein-Barr virus and the onset of MS. Researchers found that the risk of MS increased 32-fold after infection with EBV, Epstein-Barr virus, a virus that causes infectious mono and has long been suspected to be a risk factor for MS.

Therefore, the undersigned citizens and residents of Canada call upon the Government of Canada to ensure multiple sclerosis is a primary research priority for Canadians, by committing to funding MS research in partnership with the MS Society of Canada to focus efforts to pursue MS prevention and therapeutic strategies targeting Epstein-Barr virus and to improve our understanding of EBV in the MS disease course.

#### CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of the good people of Perth—Wellington to table a petition signed by 228 constituents in Perth—Wellington calling on the government to adopt human rights and environmental due diligence legislation.

\* \* \*

### QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

### Government Orders

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

### MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1625)

[English]

### CANADA DISABILITY BENEFIT ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-22, An Act to reduce poverty and to support the financial security of persons with disabilities by establishing the Canada disability benefit and making a consequential amendment to the Income Tax Act, as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** There being no motions at report stage on this bill, the House will now proceed, without debate, to the putting of the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

**Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.)** moved that the bill be concurred in.

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

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

(Motion agreed to)

**Hon. Carla Qualtrough** moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

She said: Madam Speaker, before I begin I would like to seek unanimous consent to share my time with my friend and favourite parliamentary secretary, the hon. member for Windsor—Tecumseh.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to share her time?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

*Government Orders*

**Hon. Carla Qualtrough:** Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise today for third reading of Bill C-22, an act to reduce poverty and to support the financial security of persons with disabilities by establishing the Canada disability benefit.

I acknowledge that I am standing on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe peoples. I would like to begin by paying tribute to the late Hon. David C. Onley. David was many things, a journalist, an author, the 28th Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, a husband and a father. David was also a person with a disability and was a lifelong advocate for accessibility and disability inclusion.

To me and to so many of us in the disability community, he was a trailblazer. He was one of us. He showed us that we, too, could lead and make change happen. He showed us that we not only deserved a seat at the table, but that we had a right to be there. Our opinions and perspectives were not only valuable but they were necessary. Canada is a better place because of the late Hon. David C. Onley, and we miss him.

When I stood in the House to debate this bill at second reading, I declared that in Canada no person with a disability should live in poverty. There are more than 6.2 million people who identify as having a disability in Canada. That is one in five Canadians. The disability community is diverse, talented and innovative. We are family members, friends, neighbours and co-workers.

However, despite everything that the disability community has to offer our great country, the hard truth is that working-age persons with disability in Canada are two times more likely to live in poverty than persons without disabilities. The situation is even more precarious for persons with severe disabilities, women, indigenous people, LGBTQ2S+ and racialized Canadians with disabilities. This is compounded by the fact that persons with disabilities face higher costs of living to begin with. These are costs that make it harder for any person with a disability to save for their future.

This poverty has its roots in the historic and ongoing discrimination, bias and exclusion faced by persons with disabilities in our country. Another hard truth is that our systems, laws, policies and programs were not built with persons with disabilities in mind, nor were they built with persons with disabilities.

For many persons with disabilities, the first time they experience financial security is when they turn age 65. Why? At age 65 they start receiving OAS and GIS benefits. This is unacceptable, especially in Canada. This is the backdrop for Bill C-22. Bill C-22 is about poverty reduction. It is about financial security.

[*Translation*]

Bill C-22 gives us an opportunity to close the income gap for working-age people with disabilities in Canada. Financial security brings with it independence, dignity, autonomy and choice. The Canada disability benefit would build on the work we have done to make Canada more inclusive for all people with disabilities.

• (1630)

[*English*]

In 2016, we started a national conversation that led to the creation of the Accessible Canada Act. It is historic legislation with a

goal of creating a barrier-free Canada by 2040. The Accessible Canada Act, or ACA, enshrined accessibility and disability inclusion in law.

ACA principles are finding their way into other laws, including Bill C-22. These principles include equality of opportunity and barrier-free access. They also include the principle of “nothing without us”, that persons with disabilities must be involved in the development and design of laws, policies, programs, services and structures.

The Accessible Canada Act also created significant elements of a new system of disability inclusion in Canada. These include Accessibility Standards Canada, the accessibility commissioner at the Canadian Human Rights Commission, and the chief accessibility officer for Canada.

[*Translation*]

After laying the groundwork with the Accessible Canada Act, we then launched the first-ever disability inclusion action plan. Developed in partnership with the disability community, it includes a series of current and future initiatives to improve the lives of people with disabilities in Canada.

[*English*]

The action plan has four pillars, which were identified by the disability community as key priorities. These are financial security, employment, accessible and inclusive communities, and a modern approach to disabilities.

Bill C-22 is a foundational component of the first pillar. It would provide financial security for persons with disabilities, like the GIS does for seniors and the Canada child benefit does for children.

Bill C-22 would create the legal framework for the Canada disability benefit. The specifics of the benefit would be regulated in collaboration with the disability community and the provinces and territories.

[*Translation*]

This approach ensures more opportunities for the disability community to actively participate in the design and implementation of benefits, consistent with the principle of the Accessible Canada Act.



*Government Orders*

[English]

This approach also recognizes the jurisdiction of provinces and territories in the area of disability supports as well as the complexity and uniqueness of each provincial and territorial system. We have been working collaboratively with the provinces and territories on how this benefit would align with and complement their existing services and supports, and to ensure that benefit interaction would not result in unintended consequences, like clawbacks or disentanglement to existing services or benefits.

The Canada disability benefit is meant to be supplemental income, not replacement income. It is meant to lift people out of poverty and make them better off. I know that my provincial and territorial colleagues share a commitment to improving the lives of persons with disabilities across this country.

I reflected a lot on Bill C-22 and the Accessible Canada Act. The Accessible Canada Act received unanimous support from all parties in the House. Bill C-22 received unanimous support at second reading, and colleagues from all parties on the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities worked together to improve this bill thoughtfully and considerately. I am grateful for their collaboration, and I believe this bill is stronger as a result of their work. I am confident that there will be unanimous consent in the House at third reading as well.

Both the Accessible Canada Act and Bill C-22 are examples of us, as parliamentarians, at our very best. We rose above partisanship and came together to make generational change. I know that this same spirit will infuse consideration of this bill by the Senate. I know that senators are eager to begin their work on this bill. More than half of the Senate's members wrote an open letter calling for the urgent adoption of Bill C-22.

Canadians are also calling for the swift adoption of Bill C-22. Nearly nine in 10 Canadians support the creation of the Canada disability benefit. In an open letter to the Prime Minister and me, more than 200 Canadians, former parliamentarians, academics, business people, union leaders, economists, health care workers and disability advocates, expressed their support for the creation of this benefit. More than 18,000 Canadians signed an e-petition asking us to fast-track the design and implementation of this benefit.

All members of the House unanimously supported a motion from the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam to implement the Canada disability benefit without delay. I hear regularly from constituents, as I believe so many of us do, about the importance of this benefit, how it will be life changing for individuals and bring peace of mind to families.

In closing, I want to thank those from the disability community. This is their victory. They have had to fight every step of the way and nothing was handed to them. As much as we all know that there remains so much more work to do, they should take time to celebrate. Their advocacy and their unwavering determination are what got us here.

I will also end where I began, with reflection on the life and advocacy of the Hon. David C. Onley. David challenged us as leaders and policy-makers to address disability discrimination and to allow

each and every one of us to reach our full potential. He was among the many who have called for the swift passage of Bill C-22. As I vote in favour of this bill, I will be thinking about David, and I know that many here will as well.

● (1635)

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the minister spoke about getting this legislation through quickly and said there were a lot of people advocating for this over a long period of time. The minister and her party have been in government for eight years, and here we are eight years later now bringing forth a piece of legislation with few details. We know this exact same piece of legislation was tabled in the last Parliament and it died when the snap election was called.

How can the minister justify saying this is a priority and that the Liberals want to do this quickly, when they have had eight years?

**Hon. Carla Qualtrough:** Madam Speaker, this has been quite a journey for our government, for the disability community and for Canadians. We started, as I said, with the Accessible Canada Act, where we held the most inclusive and disability-friendly consultations any government in the history of our country has had. This led to the identification of priorities by the disability community and to the disability inclusion action plan that has brought us here to the Canada disability benefit. I am so very proud of the work this government has done and so very proud and grateful for the collaboration of the disability community. I look forward to keeping the momentum going as we continue to do big things and make big change.

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I want to start by acknowledging the minister for her commitment to equality.

My question is about the language around this being a supplementary benefit. I have heard from so many persons living with disabilities in Canada who say that even the poverty line is not enough to establish that they need help with the necessities of life. What will be the plan for the amount of this benefit?

*Government Orders*

**Hon. Carla Qualtrough:** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her partnership as we have taken this journey together toward the Canada disability benefit. It is absolutely imperative that, as we work with provinces and territories, we ensure provinces and territories do not treat this as replacement income and that they treat it as supplemental income. I am grateful for the member opposite's inclusion in the amended bill of a specific reference to the national poverty line, which is an important reference. This bill is fundamentally about poverty reduction. As we all move forward, we all need to do our part to make sure this moves through the Senate quickly and we deliver what we said we would deliver for Canadians with disabilities.

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Madam Speaker, while I appreciate the minister's leadership on this bill, as she knows, 10% of seniors with disabilities are living in poverty. She knows poverty does not magically end for Canadians with disabilities when they turn 65, and neither should the Canada disability benefit.

Can she explain why the governing party did not include seniors with disabilities living in poverty in this bill?

**Hon. Carla Qualtrough:** Madam Speaker, we have a robust social safety net in this country. Kids with disabilities have access to the Canada child benefit disability supplement until they are 18. Seniors with disabilities have access to old age security and GIS when they turn 65. However, there is a massive gap, a gaping hole in our social safety net. That is what the Canada disability benefit is meant to fill, that gap between the Canada child benefit disability and the OAS and GIS.

• (1640)

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by saying how proud I am to stand next to the hon. Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion. Her inspiring, collaborative leadership to usher this bill forward will be life-changing for so many Canadians in this country, and it certainly has been an honour of my life to be able to work alongside the minister on this incredibly important initiative for Canadians.

I am pleased to rise to participate in this debate on Bill C-22. I will use my time today to speak to the urgency of the situation that has led to the need for this bill.

Here we are. The fact is that the issue of the deep poverty experienced by persons with disabilities in Canada and the issue of MAID have become intertwined. It has been well established in this place and at the HUMA committee that persons with disabilities face higher levels of poverty than other Canadians. Living with dignity is a far-off hope for many in these circumstances, and some persons with disabilities have, unfortunately and tragically, chosen to apply for MAID in the past year, with poverty being the key driver. The sad fact is that eligibility for MAID has expanded faster than have the social supports that would lift persons with disabilities out of poverty and allow them to live with dignity.

This thought is shared by stakeholders. For example, Amit Arya, a palliative care physician on faculty at the University of Toronto and McMaster University, mentions in his urgent plea that, given

the critical impact on persons with disabilities, we need to prioritize Bill C-22.

There is a dire need for the Canada disability benefit, and it has strong public support. In fact, the public is applying pressure for us to act quickly. During and after the study of the bill at the HUMA committee, stakeholders had the opportunity to testify, submit briefs and share their opinions in the media. There was a consensus on the need to try to determine all the details of the proposed benefit in the legislation but not to perfect it, as the key objective is to move quickly to respond to the urgent need now. Allow me to amplify some of those testimonies.

Rabia Khedr, from Disability Without Poverty, underscores the urgency. In an article she said, "justice delayed is justice denied" and that if we wait for this legislative process to determine "all of the details of a perfect benefit, its arrival will be too late...".

Tom Jackman, also from Disability Without Poverty, echoes her words, saying, "Canadians with disabilities desperately need the bill to pass third reading and move through the Senate quickly [in 2023] so it can become law...".

Disability Without Poverty is supported in its view by numerous organizations like Community Food Centres Canada, Inclusion Canada, March of Dimes, Plan Institute and Finautonome, alongside philanthropists, unions and corporations like Maple Leaf Foods that are all asking us to do the right thing and hurry up.

During his testimony at HUMA, Gary Gladstone, head of stakeholder relations at Reena, underlined the point that amendments would slow down the bill. He said, "From what I understand, regulation at this point would be faster in making any changes... and the bottom line is that if they can be done appropriately and quickly, that's most important."

This was echoed by Neil Belanger, the chief executive officer of Indigenous Disability Canada. He said he has confidence in the process that will involve persons with disabilities at the regulatory stage, and his clients are urging us to move forward with the bill as it is.

*Government Orders*

Krista Carr, the executive vice-president of Inclusion Canada, affirms this point of view as well. She has heard about the requests by members for the bill to contain more details regarding the design of the proposed benefit, as well as other technical elements. While she says she understands the motivations behind this, she does not believe this is the best course of action. Her biggest fear is that we will get bogged down in the details and greatly delay the passage of the bill.

• (1645)

Allow me to quote directly from her testimony to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development on November 16, 2022. She stated:

With all due respect to the parliamentarians on this committee and beyond, in the spirit of “nothing without us”, we feel really strongly that it is persons with disabilities, their families and representative organizations who should be working arm in arm with government to design this benefit through the regulatory process....

My final plea to you as members of this committee is that if you truly want to make a historic impact on the lives of people with disabilities in this country, and I know you all do, you will do everything in your power to ensure that this bill passes as quickly as possible so that we can get...this benefit into the hands of people who desperately need it.

That is why certain amendments did not make it into the bill. Some were even dropped by the members who put them forward after they had heard the arguments from witnesses. For example, it is much better to have the disability community involved in shaping the regulations rather than have Parliament review each regulation as it is drafted.

That being said, certain amendments did make it into the bill, and I am happy to say the bill is stronger for it. For example, we have included the definition of “disability” from the Accessible Canada Act. In the interest of transparency, we have made it a requirement that the minister would publicize any agreements made with federal or provincial or territorial departments and agencies. New reporting requirements to Parliament on how persons with disabilities have been engaged on the regulations, as well as increased frequency of reporting to Parliament on the bill, would respond to some concerns members had around the role of Parliament. These amendments, along with other provisions of the bill, would provide Parliament with an ongoing check and balance on the proposed benefit going forward.

We have enshrined in the bill that the application process would have to be barrier-free, consistent with the vision of the Accessible Canada Act. A timeline is also enshrined in the bill. The act would have to come into force no later than one year after royal assent.

Bill C-22 has been on a journey through the HUMA committee. I thank the members for their diligence. The bill is stronger for their work, their input and their collaboration. However, as members of the disability community and their allies say, it is now time to act.

The bill before us today would establish the proposed benefit and start the clock on the creation of the regulations that would implement it. We would do this with the members of the disability community. As the minister of disability inclusion says, let us get it done.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my question is with respect to negotiations that will be going on with the provinces and also how this will affect existing fed-

eral programs. How can the member assure people with disabilities that there would not be clawbacks that might occur, whether in interactions with provincial or existing federal programs?

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk:** Madam Speaker, that is an excellent question and one of the central questions of this framework, which is working together with the provinces and territories, working together with the disability community and, frankly, working together with all Canadians to make certain that there would be absolutely no clawbacks on existing programs at the provincial or territorial level. That is central to the Canada disability benefit.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Madam Speaker, at the beginning of his speech, my colleague made a connection between the situation of people living with a disability and medical assistance in dying. He said that some people with disabilities would ask for MAID, or that MAID would be more accessible. First of all, the Bloc supports this bill. We believe that an individual impairment should not be regarded as a disability. Disability is a social construct.

That said, where is the member getting his facts? Medical assistance in dying providers do evaluations. No one who appeared before the Standing Committee on Health told us up front that the member opposite's claims are common practice. On the contrary, just because someone has a structural determinant, like poverty, does not necessarily mean they will be eligible for MAID. Where is the member getting this information?

• (1650)

[*English*]

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk:** Madam Speaker, we have been hearing from Canadians about tragic situations and stories where crushing poverty is sometimes a factor in someone making that very difficult and very personal decision. That should never be a factor. Obviously, we know that one in five Canadians have a disability, and we know that about one in five Canadians with disabilities live in poverty. This bill would have an immediate impact, lifting hundreds of thousands of Canadians out of poverty and improving the situation for many hundreds of thousands more Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

*Government Orders*

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I had a meeting with two of my constituents from Victoria. They are seniors with disabilities, and they came with two big questions when they heard about the disability benefit. One of them has already been asked: Why are they being left out? They are living below the poverty line. Even with the supports offered in old age, they are struggling to make ends meet, and they wanted to know why they were left out of this bill. How would the member respond to these two seniors with disabilities? They also brought up the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the importance not only of having income supports but also really creating a barrier-free Canada.

Does the government have plans to put into law some of the incredible provisions in that convention?

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk:** Madam Speaker, the Canada disability benefit is one piece of the puzzle as we seek to look after Canadians. Obviously this government has increased OAS by 10%, which is the first increase to OAS we have seen in well over 30 years. Therefore, we are putting in place programs that look after Canadians in all stages and all phases of life, from the very young to the very old.

At the same time, we are committed to implementing the measures and principles of the United Nations declaration. Whether we are working through the disability inclusion action plan or the Canada disability benefit, we advance the principles in the United Nations declaration.

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Order.

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 Port Moody—Coquitlam, Persons with Disabilities; the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Madam Speaker, first, I would like to ask for unanimous consent to split my time with the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to split her time?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to speak to Bill C-22 as the official opposition shadow minister for employment, future workforce development and disability inclusion.

Conservatives are committed to increasing support for Canadians living with disabilities. More than one in five Canadians live with a disability. This is not an insignificant number. In fact, this is not a number; these are people.

Disabled Canadians are underemployed. In 2017, Statistics Canada reported that approximately 59% of working-age adults with disabilities were employed, compared with around 80% of those without disabilities.

I have always believed in going to where people are. This is why I door knocked for the year leading up to the 2019 election, reaching more than 30,000 doorsteps in my community of Kelowna—Lake Country. One thing I will always remember is how many people I came across in their homes were people with disabilities. A family member would often tell me the story of their family. Truly, a disability is often a family journey.

Canadians living with disabilities may face high costs for assisted devices, equipment or prescriptions. One of the most onerous costs remains accessibility renovations and modifications to a home. This is especially onerous considering that the government's age well initiative fund did not include the home and vehicle modification program. These are not optional expenses. We are talking about life-saving items, necessities or items that can exponentially improve someone's standard of living. If someone is fortunate enough to have family support, this is often how they can manoeuvre as a family to try to get services and have the best quality of life.

While some challenges are beyond the immediate scope of this House, as parliamentarians, we owe it to Canadians living with disabilities to put forward legislation that will allow them to continue to survive, succeed and hopefully thrive.

While the intention to support the disability community remains, Bill C-22, the disability benefit act, will not ensure on its own that Canadians living with disabilities are not living in poverty. This is because the most important details of this bill, such as eligibility, payment amount, application process, provincial co-operation and how it will interact with other programs, which could potentially create clawbacks, are left to be determined by regulation.

Essentially, we are debating a benefit that has not been determined yet. Canadians living with disabilities deserve legislation that is committed to them through concrete action, not promises. I want to make sure this legislation moves forward, but I want to be very clear and on record that the government has been lazy and taken the easy way out; getting disability benefits to people who need them has not been a priority.

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Regardless of what the minister and the other Liberal MPs announce and say, the facts speak for themselves. The Liberals have been in government for eight years, and they had all that time to consult and come up with legislation. Although the Liberals have said they consulted with affected persons and advocacy groups, they tabled the exact same piece of legislation in the previous Parliament. It died when the Liberals called the unnecessary, expensive snap election in the summer of 2021. Moreover, this is Bill C-22. That means there were 21 bills before this one in this Parliament, even though this bill is exactly the same as it was in the last Parliament. A disability benefit act has not been their priority. This is how the Liberals govern: make big announcements with photo ops but with no substance, action or results. They have a track record of governing through regulations.

There are few assurances of what this legislation will achieve. The regulations will be drafted behind closed doors. There will be no debate in Parliament; there will be no voting in Parliament. There will be no scrutiny at committees. This is the Liberal way of governing by regulations.

The only policy decision this bill does clearly define is that more than one-third of Canadians living with disabilities over the age of 15 will not receive this benefit, regardless of how poor they are. It is estimated that more than half a million Canadians have invisible disabilities. Just because someone appears to be in good health does not mean that they may not face hardships. We do not know if people with invisible disabilities or those with episodic disabilities will be eligible under this disability benefit act. It is one of the many questions.

• (1655)

People living with a disability do not always fit the traditional mould. We know that there will be an appeals process for Canadians living with disabilities who have been denied supports and benefits. The amount of the benefit remains unclear.

I am very concerned about potential clawbacks. Conservatives attempted to put an amendment in this legislation at the committee stage to potentially address federal benefit clawbacks. However, the Liberals did not support our amendment. The minister told us that she is trying to negotiate agreements with provinces so that there will be no clawbacks. The problem is that these agreements may not be enforceable, and since there is nothing in Bill C-22 to confirm this, in its current form, it would not provide any safeguards against clawbacks.

This is the opposite process to what the Liberals are championing with their child care bill. There, they negotiated with the provinces and signed deals and then came to Parliament with legislation. With this disability benefit, there are literally no details in the legislation, and the Liberals are going to the provinces to work out the agreements. The cost of living is not the same across Canada, and this legislation on its own would not provide the assurance that there would be no provincial or regional disparity.

Some questions remain. How would the benefit be impacted if there were provincial changes to disability supports? Who would qualify? What would the amounts be? Who would deliver the benefit? Would the benefit count as income? How would the benefit be paid? Would it disqualify people from provincial supports? Would

it disqualify people from federal supports? These are all questions that the government has failed to answer.

I have seen disability affect my family, like many people. My mom had one week of respite in 30 years of looking after my dad, who had MS. She is the strongest person I know, and there are many people in Canada living through these types of situations in their families.

At the Standing Committee on Human Resources, we heard from individuals and organizations, both testifying in person and writing in. They represented thousands of persons with disabilities across the country. One of the most heartbreaking things I heard was that people were considering MAID because they could not access services or afford to live. People said they could not afford to buy healthy food and follow the Canada food guide, which the Liberals announced with great fanfare in 2019. The current Liberal government does not realize the desperate situation many people are in because of the 40-year high in inflation.

To conclude, as I mentioned earlier, the level of disability poverty in Canada remains a prominent issue, and we have a responsibility to do better. Conservatives are committed to increasing support for Canadians living with disabilities. Therefore, I can say that we are all in agreement that the Canada disability benefit act must be passed, although there are so many unanswered questions. The Liberals have set this up such that they are doing everything in a non-transparent way behind closed doors, and neither parliamentarians nor the greater public through committee will have a say as to what the final regulations will be. Conservatives will remain vigilant in holding the government to account on promises it has made to persons with disabilities.

• (1700)

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I was listening carefully to the hon. member across the way to see her support, which I believe I saw in some of her commentary.

I spoke with a constituent in my riding in January; she told me she was on the Ontario disability support program. She was on "rent geared to income". She was accessing food bank services and really struggling to have things come together financially so that she could get through another month. Could the hon. member comment on the urgency of our getting this through the House through all-party support, as well as including the disability community in getting direct input on how we can avoid clawbacks and other things that would negatively affect them?

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**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Madam Speaker, yes, we agree that we absolutely need to get supports. At the committee level, we worked really hard with all committee members to make sure that we moved this legislation forward with some meaningful amendments. However, the government made it very clear that pretty much everything would be determined in regulations, so that is where it is.

That being said, we were supportive at committee with moving forward and making some amendments, which we did, and we worked with everyone. Talking about clawbacks, they are definitely a concern. This is an issue that the current government has not been able to determine, even though it has had eight years to come to the point where we are tonight.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I know that I talk a lot in this place about having a bar of dignity that no one falls beneath in this country, and I think what we are seeing across the board is a lot of folks who are falling below that bar of dignity.

Persons with disabilities have been very clear. I have to say that I appreciate their advocacy and I am really sad that they have to fight so hard just to be treated with proper human decency and respect.

We know for a fact that, even though I will support this bill and have done everything I can, along with my colleagues, to make sure that this gets through, it will still take about a year until the benefit is even out the door to people living with disabilities.

I have talked to folks in my communities who are living with disabilities, who are living in housing where they do not even have a stove or anything, with a tiny fridge, so they are trying to find a way to feed themselves. They cannot do things because it is a lot of work for them with their mobility issues.

I am just wondering if the member could talk about how important it is that this government work hard to make sure that there are no clawbacks from territorial or provincial governments.

• (1705)

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Madam Speaker, absolutely, it has to be a priority. It is something that we talked about a lot at committee and it absolutely has to be a priority to consider that individuals do not have clawbacks.

I see my colleague here from the NDP who is on our committee. It was Conservatives and other opposition members who were making sure that, even though we wanted to move things along at committee, we did have enough time to hear from people. It was really important for all of us to make sure of that, because we knew that there were a lot of individuals and a lot of groups who wanted to testify, who wanted to bring in written submissions. We wanted to make sure that what we were receiving was inclusive and that we had enough time. We heard from hundreds of organizations and people.

I just want everyone to know that they were heard. I, myself, personally read every single one of the written submissions that came in and that was definitely part of the consideration for where our comments came from.

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Madam Speaker, I want to start by thanking the member for Kelowna—Lake Country

for her support of important amendments at committee from myself and others. It was an incredibly constructive process.

As she states, if this bill passed, nothing would change until the governing party funds the Canada disability benefit. I would love to hear from her if she and others in her party will be putting pressure on the governing party to fund the Canada disability benefit in budget 2023.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Madam Speaker, I think one of the biggest revelations that came out early on, when we were questioning the minister at committee, was how long they were expecting the regulation time frame to take place. They kept talking about the fact that they had been doing consultations already and they wanted to move things along.

Once we started to have a discussion, I said at committee that this actually sounds like it is going to be a year after royal assent when in fact things are finalized, and it would be more than a year before people receive benefits. That was acknowledged by the minister at committee and I think we were all quite surprised by that. We definitely were quite shocked to hear that information, that it would take that much longer.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of Canadians living with disabilities in the Ontario Winter Games-hosting riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

Bill C-22, the false hope bill, meets the Liberals' net-zero goal. There is net-zero benefit to Canadians living with disabilities. After eight years of incompetence and corruption, the Liberal approach is to deny, delay and deflect. If dragging their feet were an Olympic sport, the Liberals would sweep the podium.

In 2015, with unanimous support, the House passed my private member's bill to protect Canadians living with disabilities from predatory vulture companies. These vultures offered to help Canadians living with disabilities complete the disability tax credit form. After completing a one-page form, these companies charged up to 30% of the tax credit intended for Canadians facing additional living costs due to disabilities. Thousands of Canadians lost millions of dollars to these vultures.

Sadly, for Canadians living with disabilities, my bill was passed shortly before the Liberals took power. Whether out of partisan spite or just Liberal indifference to Canadians living with disabilities, this gang took seven years to pass one page of regulations required to make the law actually work, seven years of predatory vulture companies taking a 30% cut of the disability tax credit. It took them seven years to pass regulations that can be printed on a single sheet of paper. It took them seven years to help Canadians living with disabilities. Now they are at it again.

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Bill C-22 was originally Bill C-35. It had to be reintroduced after the Prime Minister called his superspreader pandemic election campaign. Canadians living with disabilities need to remember that the political interests of the Liberal Party always come first.

It has been three years since this bill was introduced, but even if I could snap my fingers and pass the bill right now, Canadians living with disabilities would still not see any help from the government. That is because the bill is TBD, “to be determined”. How much will the benefit be? That is TBD. Will the benefits be clawed back? That is TBD. Who is even eligible to receive it? That is, again, T bleeping D.

At committee, the minister said that it would be at least a year before Canadians living with disabilities would have the answers to those basic questions. My private member's bill to protect Canadians living with disabilities from vulture companies required just one regulation, and the regulation was to set a maximum amount these vultures could charge. It took seven years to set the maximum at \$100.

Canadians living with disabilities waited seven years for one regulation from the Liberals, and now the Liberals are claiming they will pass the dozens of required regulations in one year. It would actually be a great relief to Canadians living with disabilities if the government admitted the delay in regulating vulture companies was out of partisan spite. If that was not the reason for the delay, it means the government is incompetent. It means Canadians living with disabilities could be waiting years for financial assistance, and that is unacceptable.

It is why Conservatives pushed for and successfully secured an amendment requiring the minister to report back in six months of this bill passing on the progress to pass the required regulations. The challenge is that this type of accountability measure only works in governments with the capacity to feel shame. Unfortunately, shamelessness is a defining feature of the Prime Minister and his government. I am not the first one to say the Prime Minister cares more about style over substance. Former finance minister Morneau literally wrote a book about it.

This disability benefit act might just be the purest form of the Liberals' style-over-substance problem. There are no dollars budgeted for this bill, yet to hear the government members speak, Canadians might think this bill has already passed and completely solved poverty. However, a press release is not policy, and the devil is always in the details. In the case of this proposed disability benefit, the devil is the clawback, and the details are the provinces.

• (1710)

My colleagues on the committee proposed an amendment to prevent the benefit from being clawed back. The Liberals voted against it. The minister claims a clawback is a red line when negotiating the creation of a benefit with the provinces, yet the Liberals voted against putting that into legislation. How can the minister claim a red line exists for the government when the Liberals voted against it?

If Canadians living with disabilities are worried about the government's track record on passing regulations, that should be doubly true with any required negotiations with the provinces. I know

some Liberals will point to the speed at which they “negotiated” with the provinces on \$10-a-day day care. That was some negotiating: “Here is some money. Go spend it on day care.” Negotiating the disability benefit will be much harder. In this case, the provinces have some actual leverage. How many Liberals will appreciate this leverage will depend more on the electoral fortunes of the Liberal Party in that particular province.

Inevitably, this will leave Canadians living with disabilities facing a patchwork of policies, depending on the province. Sorry, Madam Speaker, I misspoke. “Inevitable” means it is certain to happen, but when it comes to the government, nothing is certain except the pursuit of its own political interests. Canadians living with disabilities do not deserve to experience more uncertainty. They need our support to live full lives and participate fully in society, including in the workforce.

This was an urgent bill when it was first introduced three years ago. As Liberal spending fuelled the cost of living crisis, that urgency has only increased, yet for the Prime Minister, the most urgent matter was not passing the original legislation; it was calling his superspreader election.

After eight years of this corrupt Liberal government, Canadians living with disabilities are even worse off. Just as inflation has made it more expensive to live, the government is making it easier to die. We have heard testimony at committee of Canadians living with disabilities considering assisted suicide because the government spending is driving up inflation. It is only more chilling when the director of the Centre for Professional and Applied Ethics at the University of Manitoba said, “I was rather proud that Canada has done so well in terms of organ donation by MAID patients.”

Then we have the Minister of Justice claiming, “Remember that suicide generally is available to people. This is a group within the population who, for physical reasons and possibly mental reasons, can't make that choice themselves to do it themselves.”

When Canadians hear those quotes, they are right to think Canada is broken. We have a so-called ethicist celebrating organ harvesting, and a justice minister claiming a right to be killed through the help of the state. We have a Liberal government that will take seven years to pass one regulation to protect Canadians living with disabilities.

*Government Orders*

The urgency to pass legislation that delivers tangible benefits is real. Every minute the Liberals delay getting this money back into bank accounts puts lives at risk. The members across the aisle might roll their eyes, but 35% of Canadians who died by assisted suicide in 2021 felt they were a burden to their family, friends or caregivers.

The government was warned repeatedly of the danger that expanding assisted suicide posed, and the loudest warnings came from those living with disabilities. It is not because we live in a structurally ableist society. It is because the rhetoric from the government about helping Canadians living with disabilities never matches the money actually spent. What money we do provide will be clawed back the very minute they try to improve their financial situations, and that is why it is truly immiserating for Canadians living with disabilities. Structural impoverishment by government policy is a kind of hopelessness that drives people to commit suicide. It is a kind of despair that can only be fuelled by promises of benefits that never actually arrive.

• (1715)

We need to put ourselves in the shoes of someone who had reached that breaking point in late 2020. They are encouraged to hold on. They are told a benefit that will make a material improvement in their lives is on the way. They watch for any sign that relief is near. Their hope grows when they hear legislation is being introduced with all-party support. However, then there is the Prime Minister's urgent superspreader election.

**Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it was very interesting to listen to that speech on the bill we are debating, but most of the time was spent talking about the member's own bill, which was passed some time ago. It was bizarre to make this about herself, but I guess that is an occupational hazard in this place.

As the member is talking down this piece of legislation, I wonder if she could explain why she voted for it at second reading. Is she going to vote for this bill going forward? If so, why?

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Madam Speaker, that bill passed with all-party support and then the election happened, and people living with disabilities waited and heard that the government considers subsidies for television producers more important for Parliament to consider. Then the Liberals introduced their news media subsidy legislation, and we see that the Prime Minister considers money for bribing reporters more important than the disability benefit legislation. Finally, just so Canadians living with disabilities really understand where they rank among Liberal priorities, the government said harassing lawful firearms owners was more important than providing a disability benefit to those living with disabilities.

• (1720)

[Translation]

**Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her speech.

Although I have a completely different point of view, there is one thing we agree on, and I would like to ask her a question. I, too, am a member of the committee that did an in-depth study of Bill C-22.

What seems to be unique about this bill is that the amount of the benefit and the eligibility criteria will be established by regulations, without any parliamentary oversight on what the benefit level will be. Will this amount truly complement what is being provided in Quebec and the provinces? Will it meet its objective of reducing poverty? We moved an amendment in that regard in committee proposing that the eligibility criteria and the amount of the benefit be studied in Parliament and a decision be made. The amendment was not successful.

What are my colleague's thoughts on that? Would it have been a good idea?

[English]

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Madam Speaker, just before Christmas, I started receiving phone calls on Bill C-22, with people asking me to please vote for Bill C-22. I thought I better look and make sure I know what I am calling them about. When I looked at the bill and started scrolling through it, I thought my iPad was frozen because there was nothing there. I looked at it and it said "coming into force", but what was coming into force?

I can already hear the grumbling across the aisle. Those members will claim they care about Canadians living with disabilities, but how many of them were in the House eight years ago when we passed the Disability Tax Credit Promoters Restrictions Act unanimously? I know the member for Papineau was there. He, too, supported the legislation to help Canadians living with disabilities, but then when he became Prime Minister, it took seven years to pass one regulation. I pray that is not the case with the Canada disability benefit. Given the greasy slope this country seems to be on, we do not have another seven years to wait.

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I bring a bit of personal experience to this debate, as my youngest child lives with a disability. She is 27 years old, and we have been working with other parents in the disability community, so I know how important this disability benefit is.

I really share my colleague's comment that it is cruel to continue to make promises to this community and not deliver. However, I was in the House from 2008 to 2015, when her government, the Conservatives, sat back while millions of people with disabilities did not receive a benefit like the one before the House today. Curiously, that is about the same amount of time it has taken the current Liberal government.

First, what amount of benefit does the member think is appropriate to support persons with disabilities? Second, we have a dental bill before the House that would bring dental care to millions of Canadians living with disabilities. Can she tell the House why she voted against it?



**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Madam Speaker, the first question was about what we as Conservatives did when we were in power. I remember that our dearly beloved Jim Flaherty, who had two sons living with disabilities, brought in a number of disability savings accounts because he knew there would be a time when he and his wife would not be there to care for them. He not only put together a bill but implemented a savings plan so that people, when grown, would be able to have a disability benefit. However, not all families are fortunate enough to have money to put away.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-22, which seeks to establish a disability benefit.

I want to say from the outset that the Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of this bill. We will support it because we strongly believe that urgent action must be taken. Many people with disabilities and their advocacy groups, whom I have met with personally on several occasions, have stated unequivocally that the situation is serious for them.

If there is one thing we should remember, it is that people with disabilities have the right to be recognized, they are full-fledged members of our society and their rights and dignity should not be compromised because of their differences.

I am sorry that I did not think of it sooner, but I would like to ask for the unanimous consent of the House to share my time with our beautiful and beloved artist, the hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix.

● (1725)

[*English*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to share her time?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** Madam Speaker, the Bloc believes that the government must ensure that every citizen has a decent social safety net. That safety net is currently torn and we have to fix it. We will support the bill, but allow me to share some of my reservations. These are the same reservations that I shared here in the House at second reading of this bill, as well as in the committee of which I am a member.

We are all concerned about the convoluted way in which the government went about this. We fear that the minister is taking absolutely all the power by deciding on every single detail of the benefit by regulation. We are concerned that parliamentarians are being called to vote on a bill that presents good intentions, that is a major step forward, but is nonetheless a blank page. We are especially concerned that the regulations are being developed without any transparency and that at the end of the day, the benefit will not satisfy the need, which, let us not forget, is to lift persons with disabilities out of poverty.

Yes, we will support the bill because there is an urgent need for action. People with disabilities are in a precarious position, and we need to help them. Do not forget that people with disabilities also

### *Government Orders*

face additional costs related to their disability, such as home adaptations, food delivery, and medication. Being disabled costs more. On top of that, there is the pandemic and inflation, which have further impoverished this segment of the population.

Here is an example from the Journal de Québec:

...Paul Awad, a 57-year-old man struggling to make ends meet and get the basic services he needs to live with dignity. The livable income in Sherbrooke, the city where he lives, is \$26,299 per year. With his [income] of approximately \$1,200 a month, he often has nothing left at the end of the month. "I want to be free of the stress of having to choose between food and rent every month. I want to live a dignified life on my own terms," he says.

This benefit is of vital importance to him. Mr. Awad is one of many people with disabilities in the same situation.

That is why it is important to the Bloc Québécois to support creating this benefit. We believe the government's job is to redistribute wealth to level the playing field by creating a proper social safety net. However, as I said earlier, we have concerns. For one thing, we do not know a thing about what the government actually plans to put in the benefit.

Let us not forget that, in June 2021, during the 43rd Parliament, the government passed Bill C-35, which was essentially an empty shell. One election later, the government was back at it with Bill C-22, which is an exact copy of its predecessor and another blank slate.

For example, we have no information about the eligibility criteria. There is very little information about the amounts. Who is eligible? The government is failing to provide a clear definition of who will qualify for the benefit. People with motor, sensory or mental disabilities? People with a debilitating disease or permanent or temporary disability? All types of disability? We have no idea.

As for eligibility criteria, we have no idea how people with disabilities are supposed to apply. Will the government set up the simple, efficient process that many groups have asked for? There are no details about this.

We also have no idea how the federal government plans to coordinate with the provinces. Even the officials who appeared before the committee had a hard time explaining how the provinces handle this. What we do know is that no two provinces do the same thing. There is clearly a lot of work to do on that.

● (1730)

In her public statements and in committee, the minister has given a few hints about her intentions. For example, she said that the benefit would be similar to the guaranteed income supplement, that it would align with the provincial programs and that the process would be simple.

*Government Orders*

Those are fine words, but there is nothing in the bill to that effect. Basically, what she is telling us is to trust her and to vote for a blank page. That is a very worrisome and rather unheard of approach.

That brings me to another concern, which is the government's lack of consistency. Because the creation of this benefit is so important, we believe that it should go through the proper legislative process.

However, the government decided to call all the shots by doing everything through regulation. It is justifying its decision by saying that this is an urgent matter, but the Prime Minister did not seem to think it was too urgent when he decided to trigger an election in 2021 and let former Bill C-35 die on the Order Paper. We could have easily passed this law a year sooner, as advocacy groups wanted us to do. The government's argument does not hold water.

The right thing to do would have been to consult the groups, reorient the form and content of the bill, and submit it to parliamentarians. The other details could have been worked out later in the regulations. That is how the government would have proceeded if it had the least amount of respect for the work of parliamentarians.

Under the circumstances, in committee, I asked that the regulations, once drafted, at least be sent back to the House to be voted on. The governing party rejected my proposal. I think that is outrageous.

Under the circumstances, the Bloc Québécois will be on guard and closely monitor the development of this benefit. Certain things are non-negotiable. First, we are asking that the benefit meet the needs expressed by the advocacy groups. It will need to substantially improve the financial situation of persons with disabilities. We cannot accept a half measure that has no impact. We are also asking that during the development of its regulations, the government invite every relevant stakeholder to the table and that the process be open and transparent.

In committee, we received dozens of witnesses who all had important information to contribute to the debate. We need to listen to them. That is not to mention the hundreds of written submissions and briefs we were sent.

Let me share an example. As of January 2023, Quebec has introduced a basic income program, increasing the social assistance benefit for people with severe disabilities by 40%, as well as allowing for additional income.

Since there will be a virtually exemplary safety net, even if it is not perfect yet, how can we ensure that Quebec's superior social safety net does not get dragged down by the new benefit? How can we ensure that no one loses out on the benefits they are entitled to with the guaranteed income supplement? That is our concern.

That said, I think the majority of groups have said this is an urgent matter. People with disabilities need this support. We encourage everyone to move quickly on this and, most importantly, we ask that parliamentarians be updated on the progress and reality of this work.

• (1735)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, looking at the legislation we have before us, it is important to recognize that, whether today or during the pandemic, the government has recognized and supported our disability communities.

The minister and the parliamentary secretary made reference to the numbers and the impact it would have on millions of people. This is indeed progressive legislation, and it sets a framework to ensure that people with disabilities are provided with support.

Realizing that there is some ongoing work required to complete or complement the legislation, would the member not agree that this is a positive step forward? This is why we expect the legislation will pass, hopefully with support from all parties of the House.

[Translation]

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** Mr. Speaker, I said at the outset that the Bloc Québécois would support this bill. Yes, it is imperative and it is a step forward that could have been taken much earlier.

Our concern with this bill has to do with ensuring that it achieves the objective of lifting people out of poverty and that it does so in a way that complements, but does not duplicate, what is being done in the provinces. We have a humble suggestion to make. The government wants to decide on a benefit amount without any guidance and without parliamentarians being informed. How can we ensure that elected members get to provide oversight? That is what we are asking for. One more step is needed in the process.

This is unheard of. I defy anyone to show me another bill that commits money and sets eligibility criteria for claimants without any parliamentary oversight. That is the problem.

[English]

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the member for her speech. We sit at committee together and have collaborated together in opposition.

She did touch on this, but I wonder if she could expand a little bit further her thoughts on the fact that any of these items, whether it is how much people will receive, who will receive it, what the process will be and whether there will be clawbacks, will be done at regulation stage.

The work we did at committee will not be happening any longer. All of that will be behind closed doors, and nothing will be coming back to Parliament or committee for oversight. What are her thoughts on that?

*Government Orders*

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** Mr. Speaker, that is precisely the problem. In committee, we would have had that opportunity with the Bloc Québécois's amendment. It did not address the regulations as a whole, but focused on three elements: the eligibility criteria, which is not insignificant; the conditions under which the benefit will be paid or will continue to be paid; and the amount of the benefit or the calculation method.

This will all be established by regulation. In committee, I gave an example that may have seemed absurd. The government could decide that the new additional benefit would be \$5. We know that will not be the amount, however, given that the amount will be set by the regulations, there is no longer any control and these amounts and criteria could change. We find that to be unacceptable. We agree that the benefit must be made by and for persons with disabilities. However, ultimately, we must be able to ensure that the objectives are achieved. That is our job as parliamentarians. I invite the government to strengthen this objective in its bill.

• (1740)

[*English*]

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member and I certainly share concerns about the emptiness of the bill. I really appreciated the member's work at committee trying to get some of that oversight.

I wanted to ask the member about the risk of impacts on provincial benefits. Does the member have anything to share on what the risk could be of the loss of provincial benefits?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague. I really enjoy working with her at the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

I think we all have the same goal when it comes to Bill C-22, and that is to give it more teeth. Groups came to tell us how important it is to them to participate in this benefit. Yes, I think that the principle of “us” is there.

However, it is also important that we, as parliamentarians, become guardians of what the groups are looking for. There is an urgent need to act, and we could easily have combined the regulatory route with the parliamentary route.

When has the amount of the guaranteed income supplement for retirees ever been decided by regulation? Never.

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by acknowledging the invaluable and important work of my colleague from Thérèse-De Blainville. She cares a lot about the future of the people of Quebec and the entire community. She has done a tremendous amount of work on this committee. I think that all of our colleagues here and in committee have seen how competent she is. She has a lot of experience and has contributed a great deal to this committee, particularly during the study of Bill C-22. I want to sincerely thank her for that.

The Bloc Québécois will be voting in favour of Bill C-22, but we are not very optimistic about it, and understandably so. The bill is still a blank page that gives the Governor in Council the power to adopt any new regulations they deem proper. None of the amendments that were made change the fact that the benefit will be established solely by regulation. That is what we take issue with. Parliamentarians will have little or no control over the final product, despite the testimony, the opinions of advocacy groups and the time spent in committee. We are basically at square one. Of course, everyone agrees that we need to move as quickly as possible. However, it is not a good idea to move quickly just for the sake of doing so. We need to move quickly but still do things right.

We are once again seeing a great partnership between the NDP and the Liberals. That warms the heart, but it leaves us with mixed feelings about this approach, which is hasty and devoid of content.

Quebec having created its own social safety net that is the envy of many nations, it goes without saying that we support any effort to improve the lives of people with disabilities. However, it should be noted that the bill is still very short on details and could very likely be an intrusion into Quebec's jurisdiction. Our desire to support persons with disabilities is what drives us to support the bill in principle, but we are left with many concerns.

Our hopes fade, however, when we see the legal void in the legislation. There are many requirements that need to be met, especially in Quebec. Many people do not identify as having a disability and do not claim the help provided to persons with disabilities. There are many reasons for that.

Some people go through life without ever having any health problems and then suddenly end up sick overnight. They do not know where to turn to get help or do not want any help. Some people do not know that their condition is recognized as a disability. Others find the process too complicated.

Tax credits are non-refundable and some people do not even have enough income to claim them. Then we have the terms “*handicap*”, or disability, and “*invalidity*”, which do not mean exactly the same thing. Among francophones, there is confusion about what constitutes a disability. People are confused.

In a single year, 193,000 people in Quebec received the disability tax credit compared to 1,380,000 in all of Canada. These figures may seem high, but the reality is that only 60% of Canadians claim this credit. In Quebec, only 2.2% of the population claim it, even though 16% of Quebecers live with a disability and are eligible. The confusion is detrimental for Quebecers.

The federal government plans to conduct consultations over three years to establish the terms and conditions for the benefits. For individuals living with a disability, the needs are immediate and such lengthy consultations are not necessary. What are they going to do during the three years that discussions are being held?

*Government Orders*

I would like to talk about my friend Daniel. Daniel has been disabled most of his life. An artist at heart, Daniel left his hometown of Sept-Îles for Montreal before the summer of 1994. He studied to be a drama teacher at UQAM and did theatre studies at the Conservatoire Lassalle.

• (1745)

Daniel had plans.

In the summer of 1994, Daniel was in his early twenties when a tragic dive left him quadriplegic and put him in a wheelchair. It took a year of rehabilitation in Quebec City. He was not eligible for a disability pension because in the months before his accident he was a part-time student and worked part-time in a health care centre. Since he was partially self-employed, he had not contributed enough to qualify for a pension. As a result, he had to rely on social assistance for two years while he completed his rehabilitation.

Does everyone see how complex this can be? When someone is going through the worst experience of their life, these torments should not exist.

He then returned to Sept-Îles to regain some autonomy and return to his theatre projects. This was followed by years of volunteer work and involvement in schools in several regions, from Quebec City to Natashquan. He set up coaching workshops as a self-employed worker. He shares his skills with many artists in Quebec, including Simon Gauthier and Les contes de Petite souris. He founded the resto-bar Le Crapet-Soleil with his fabulous wife, Carol-Anne Pedneault. Over eight years, they presented more than 300 performances, including live music, theatre productions, improvisation and cultural events. He has an instinct for discovering emerging talent. Many such artists are now very successful because they first appeared on our friend Daniel's stage.

I would like to point out that he was the brilliant director of a musical called *La vie du Temps*, of which I was the humble author. Thanks to his talent, skills and dedication, it has charmed the likes of Jean Besré, Gilles Pelletier, Paul Buissonneau, Louisette Dus-sault, Johanne Fontaine and numerous others who have praised his exceptional work. I say this because Daniel did this while in a wheelchair and with no income.

Despite three bouts of cancer and a stem cell transplant, Daniel always wanted to be independent, to work to support his family. In 2008, he founded Noé productions, gave lectures and published a first book.

These new creative realms led him to a year-long tour of western Canada, where he offered theatre workshops in French-immersion schools. With the success of his performances, he used his time out west to direct Saint-Exupéry's *Le Petit Prince*, touring major cities in British Columbia.

Now more than ever, his health is a major issue and his survival a priority. He was richly rewarded. He and his partner brought a beautiful daughter into the world. Her name is Mika, and she is now 15 years old. She is living proof that Daniel's disability did not put an end to his ability, his plans and his dream of having a family. Two years ago, he applied for a disability pension and, for the first

time since his two years of rehab, he began to collect an income. That whole time, he got by without government help.

I wanted to share this because people with disabilities, whatever their disability, just want one thing. They want to live as authentically as possible in this world.

For people who lose their autonomy, a normal life is crucial. Daniel just made it through several weeks in intensive care, once again defying the gloomiest prognosis. He battled double pneumonia and resulting complications and prevailed. He dreams of wandering through the island forest and hopes to complete his writing projects, including a history of St. Lawrence schooners, an autobiographical novel, and a children's series illustrated by his partner, Carol-Anne, also known as Carococo.

Even with his disability, in his working life, Daniel was able to achieve what many able-bodied people have not. Without specific, adapted support, he was unable to benefit from the financial support that would likely have taken his career even further. Let us give everyone the chance to shine no matter what their circumstances.

• (1750)

Bill C-22 does not really do anything tangible for people with disabilities. The Bloc Québécois thinks that is unfortunate and will continue to ensure, thanks to my colleague, that things are the best they can be given the circumstances.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one thing is important for us to recognize. The member made reference to it, and I believe it is really important: The types of disabilities vary, obviously, with a very wide spectrum, and we need to acknowledge that in every aspect of our society, people with disabilities contribute in every way. When we talk about supporting people with disabilities, we should not in any way whatsoever infer that they are not contributing in a very wholesome way to Canadian society. What we are talking about is ensuring there is a basic level of support coming from the national government for people with disabilities.

I remind members that we should recognize the immense contributions people with disabilities make. A disability does not mean they are not capable of doing anything that any of us would be capable of doing, in many ways.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** Mr. Speaker, I want to say to my colleague that there are as many cases as there are people with disabilities. Every case is unique, and a flexible, adaptable law that is sensitive to the needs of individuals could help those individuals to grow in their own way and to get what they need to grow and to integrate into and succeed in society. Bill C-22 is not a law that will do that. We need to do better.

*Government Orders**[English]*

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned in her intervention the length of time the regulations are going to take. Here we are. We have legislation and it will go to the Senate, which will do its work, and then it will receive royal assent. We heard at committee that it will likely be at least a year before the regulations will be developed, so who knows how long it will be before benefits will actually get to people.

I am wondering if the member can expand a bit on the length of time these regulations are going to take to develop considering that the government has been in power for eight years, it had the same legislation in the previous Parliament and it sounds like it has not done much work to put regulations together.

• (1755)

*[Translation]*

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

I think that, during that year, people with disabilities will have to do what Daniel did, and that is to seek help—financial, moral and physical support—from their family, friends and loved ones so that they can keep going until they are finally told “yes” and the government produces comprehensive legislation that can respond to every situation, no matter how unique.

Let us hope that the people with disabilities in our society have a lot of support because, under the circumstances, they will not be getting any help from the government in the coming year.

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her speech. I share her concerns.

Can she elaborate on why it is so worrisome that this bill lacks details on how much the benefit will be, who is eligible and when they will start receiving it?

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** Mr. Speaker, I can answer my colleague's question with just a few words: lack of security, lack of predictability.

This has a profound impact on the strength that these people already need to summon. The most important thing, the thing we should make a priority for persons with disabilities, is to ensure that they have food security and the basic comforts so they can express themselves, get involved and fulfill their true potential in modern society. We live in a modern society. We are not living in the Middle Ages.

I think this is necessary and urgent, as my colleague was saying, and we absolutely must flesh out this bill with adaptable criteria.

*[English]*

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent to share my time with the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:** Mr. Speaker, I will start by thanking every disability organization, individual and ally for keeping up the pressure on the Liberal government to get Bill C-22 here today. Their work is invaluable and their ongoing collaboration in making regulations is key.

Let us take a minute to reflect on the process that has brought us to today.

In 2019, the Liberal platform included a promise for the Canada disability benefit. The government has been elected with a minority government twice over the past three-plus years, 1,200 days ago, yet there is still no Canada disability benefit. The Liberal government, 589 days ago, tabled the first iteration of the Canada disability benefit act, Bill C-35, and then called an unnecessary election, cancelling this legislation. After 232 days, the Liberals had still not tabled a bill for the Canada disability benefit in this session of Parliament, so the NDP used its power to force the Liberals to act.

On May 10, 2022, the NDP brought a unanimous consent motion for the Liberal government to introduce, without delay, a Canada disability benefit act to get this important legislation moving. It was only under that pressure that this bill finally came to the table.

The NDP is ready to move forward with this bill, even though it contains very few details, as many of my colleagues have stated, details like who will get this benefit, how much the benefit will be and when people living with a disability will start receiving it.

In the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, we studied Bill C-22, and there were frustrations around the lack of details expressed. Throughout the study, witnesses informed us that because the need for income support was so acute, they wanted this bill to get into law and wanted us to work on the details later.

The message was so clear: Income support is needed now. Too many persons with disabilities are living in poverty, and with skyrocketing costs of living, persons with disabilities are making impossible choices between food, medication, housing, transportation and more. The difficult conditions are even leading some to consider MAID.

That is why today, even with the lack of details in this bill, the NDP supports moving it forward quickly so that the Liberals can finally live up to their promise of realizing the needed Canada disability benefit and relieve unnecessary suffering, if they would just bring the supports forward.

*Government Orders*

One of the details the committee received from ESDC was a comparison between the highest poverty line per province and the standard amount of provincial disability supports. Not a single province provides income supports to persons with disabilities that are even close to the poverty line. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick show the highest gaps, at more than \$12,000 a year, while two of the most affluent provinces, Ontario and B.C., have gaps of nearly \$10,000 a year. Across Canada, the average annual gap for income support for person with disabilities is nearly \$9,000 in comparison to the poverty line.

These numbers were from 2020, and the gaps are surely higher now with inflation. Those gaps do not even include the additional costs of living with a disability in this ableist country. This is unacceptable.

Canada has an obligation to uphold the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to ensure dignity and full equality for all. Under this convention, we must adhere to article 28, which declares an adequate standard of living and social protection for persons with disabilities. That, along with other international and national obligations, is not being met in Canada. The government has other binding obligations, including the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to ensure that persons with disabilities have an adequate standard of living. The Liberal government must live up to these commitments.

As human rights lawyer Vince Calderhead said during HUMA testimony on Bill C-22:

...the government could very quickly ensure that its human rights obligations are met in a way that is not compromising and that meets those obligations.

No one should have to compromise with trade-offs to their human rights entitlements in order to ensure quick passage of the bill.

However, that is exactly what we are doing here.

● (1800)

With the Liberals' 1,200 days of delay and the declining standard of living for the almost one million Canadians with disabilities living in poverty in this country, the House feels the critical urgency to fast-track this empty bill, on the hope that the Liberals will collaborate with the disability community and do the right thing to ensure this new Canada disability benefit would be adequate and would ensure that no person with disabilities lives in poverty. The Liberals must do better.

Members can imagine closing that gap between provincial and territorial supports and the official poverty line and what a difference that would make for persons with disabilities. We can also consider the need to supplement that poverty line to truly accommodate the cost of a disability in this country, including accessibility aids, medication costs and transportation. The list goes on.

The NDP fought to get adequacy enshrined in legislation here, but the Liberals would not support it for consideration at committee. That is a real red flag, and it gives me great concern that the Liberals will not provide an adequate benefit.

For some protection, the NDP introduced an amendment in regulations that outlined a minimum benefit amount and that the benefit must consider the official poverty line. The NDP expects the benefit to be even greater than that. The NDP has also achieved some

other transparency amendments in the process of developing the bill's regulations at committee. The minister would now be required to table in the House a progress report, within six months of royal assent, on the engagement and collaboration with the disability community in relation to the development of future regulations. The NDP was also able to reflect the urgency of this benefit, ensuring it would come into force no later than the first anniversary of the day on which it receives royal assent.

During the HUMA committee's study on Bill C-22, we heard testimony from the Québec Intellectual Disability Society that it had taken four years to develop the regulations and framework for Quebec's new income project. This cannot happen with the disability benefit, so protections are now in place to limit the time the government can spend making these regulations.

However, even with those amendments out of committee, Bill C-22 would still rely on regulations to determine who would get the benefit, how much it would be and when they would get it. The Liberals have delivered just a framework that leaves those key decisions to be finalized behind the closed doors of cabinet.

Let me reiterate for the cabinet that persons with disabilities living in poverty in this country are relying on this new income support, and they need more than a framework to pay their bills. In good faith, the disability community believes in the Liberal promise of "Nothing Without Us" from the preamble of this bill. Do not disappoint them. Do not deny them their human rights. Canadians have heard a lot of promises from this minister and his government. This needs to be more than a promise.

I will close by saying that the NDP supports fast-tracking this framework and looks forward to its quick movement through the Senate. We expect the government to show a commitment to the urgency and an investment of significant funds in the upcoming budget for the Canada disability benefit.

To really solidify the House's commitment on the urgency of this bill, because we have heard it today in this House, if you seek it, Mr. Speaker, you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House, later today, at the conclusion of the time provided for Government Orders or when no member rises to speak, whichever is earlier, all questions necessary for the disposal of the third reading stage of Bill C-22, an act to reduce poverty and to support the financial security of persons with disabilities by establishing the Canada disability benefit and making a consequential amendment to the Income Tax Act, shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

*Government Orders*

• (1805)

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion will please say nay. Hearing no dissenting voice, it is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam's powerful speech and her strong support of strengthening Bill C-22 throughout the committee process.

My question is similar to a question I asked of a Conservative member earlier. As the member has also shared many times, it is not good enough to move this legislation ahead. The governing party needs to fund the Canada disability benefit. Could the member speak more to the ways that she and the rest of her party will continue to put pressure on the governing party to fund the Canada disability benefit?

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for all the work he has done on this bill since Parliament began to sit. This is a key area of the budget.

The NDP has been talking for a long time about supports for persons with disabilities, and not just on Bill C-22. It was because of the NDP that there were supports for persons with disabilities with CERB, so I can say NDP members have always been strong advocates for persons with disabilities, all the way back to Jack Layton. We will be pushing, like we have been for decades.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is important to recognize that genuine supports would be going out. We saw it during the pandemic, where the government came forward with one-time payments for people with disabilities. This legislation demonstrates a clear commitment to continue to provide supports.

One of the issues raised when we talk about federal supports going to people with disabilities is the issue of the potential threat of clawbacks at different levels of government. I am wondering if the member could provide her thoughts on ideas for potential safeguards or on issues related to the potential of other types of clawbacks from other jurisdictions taking place. Is there anything she would like to say on that particular point?

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives and the Liberals have been in government for decades. I would expect there is a clear framework of how the provincial government works with a federal government.

As a woman standing in the House of Commons, I would like to say that I would hope there will be much more information than what was shared at committee around gender equity in regard to this bill. I am very concerned the women in those households are going to have disproportionate negative impacts if the government does not get this right.

• (1810)

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the member and I sit on the HUMA committee together, and we have worked together in opposition to attempt to make parts of this bill better, even though it is still determined that almost everything will come out during regulations.

My question to the member is regarding the timeline after this bill potentially passes and receives royal assent. When we were at committee, in the questioning of the minister, she was asked to lay out the timeline, what the process would be for regulations, how long that would take and when people would eventually be receiving benefits.

I am wondering if the member could comment on the timeline and if she was surprised to hear at committee that it was going to take that long, considering a lot of the communication from the government on this made it sound like, once this bill was passed, people would be receiving some type of benefit very soon.

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:** Mr. Speaker, I really appreciated working with the member at committee.

I am concerned about timelines, and I am really concerned about not having good collaborative consultation with those in the disability community, who have said that they want to outline these guidelines. They want to be fully involved in the regulation, which is one of the reasons we respected, as a committee, limiting the amount of amendments we would bring in on that area of regulation.

I am really concerned. I am even concerned they might not meet the timelines outlined in this bill, so we need to work hard as opposition parties to really hold their feet to the fire on this one.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the government seems to feel that, because this is a noble cause, since it is about respecting the dignity of people living with disabilities, it can table a sloppy, amateurish bill, as we very often see with bills.

How does my colleague explain the fact that we do not know the criteria, the conditions, the amounts or the method of calculation? We are at third reading, but when I listen to the debates, I feel like we are only at the stage of debating the bill's principle. We are handing over a blank cheque, because the government is exploiting the vulnerability of certain people to justify its lax approach, as happens so often in the House.

[*English*]

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:** Mr. Speaker, the very strong voice of the disability community and its allies, with respect to wanting to be involved in the making of regulations, is a great way forward. I am really hoping that we can get this bill to the Senate as soon as possible.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to speak once again to this very important Bill C-22 around establishing the Canada disability benefit at third reading.

*Government Orders*

I would be remiss to not first take a moment to acknowledge the continuous work of my NDP colleague, the MP for Port Moody—Coquitlam, as well as so many in the disability community for their dedication to bringing the voices of those living with disabilities forward. Most of all, I want to acknowledge and thank all those living with disabilities for their endless perseverance to demand better.

I am in awe daily of the bravery shown by so many living with disabilities to share their stories and to push for their basic human rights, not only for today but also for generations to come. It is clear we need the government to act now and to implement this much overdue benefit.

While I am happy to be here today at third reading, I am beyond disheartened that people with disabilities still do not have the support they so desperately need and deserve. I feel it is worth reiterating that the supports those living with disabilities are asking for are those to meet the most basic needs, such as food on the table, a place to call home and heat to keep warm through the winter.

I would like to pose the question to all members of Parliament in the House, which is “how long is too long to wait for supports to meet basic needs? How long is too long to go hungry? How long is too long to go without a home?” I am sure all those in the House can appreciate that even one day going hungry, without a safe place to sleep at night, without heat to keep warm is too long.

We live in Canada, a country that prides itself on taking care of one another, yet the government continues to delay vital and life-saving supports for those living with disabilities. It has been seven years, to be exact, of delays. The Liberals have been in power for seven years and have taken no concrete action to date to lift people with disabilities out of poverty. My hope is that today this sad history will change.

I have said it in the House before and I will say it again that some of the strongest people I know are living with disabilities, exhibiting incredible strength despite being kicked down over and over again. People with disabilities are contributing members of our communities, like I have also heard in the House today, with their own unique stories, talents and skills. People living with disabilities have loved ones and hobbies and goals they are working on, just like all of us.

We know that more than 5.3 million Canadians live with disabilities, and of those 5.3 million, one million live in poverty. One million. Disability Without Poverty, a Canadian grassroots disability-led movement, stated that “We have a crisis of poverty in this country. Over 41% of people impacted are people with disabilities. This cannot be ignored anymore in a country like ours.”

Constituents in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith and across the country who are living with disabilities are reaching out, pleading for support. Will the government listen and ensure that those living with disabilities get the supports in place today? There is no more time to wait. Without action, we will continue to see people living with disabilities being legislated into poverty. This is a fact. For example, for someone living with a disability who is unable to work as a result, the support they receive at a time when they need it most does not provide the minimal supports required to make ends meet. It is shameful.

The words of Catherine, who is living with a disability, really summarize the experiences I have been hearing from so many, both on Vancouver Island at home, and across Canada. Her words are, “It has been truly dehumanizing living in Canada as a Disabled individual. I'd never wish my disease on anyone. The chronic pain and suffering that comes with my disease is awful enough on its own. But to then suffer extreme poverty adds a new level to the suffering for people with disabilities. Our basic needs are not met and yet we are told to be grateful for the pocket change we are forced to live off of.”

She goes on to say, “Bill C-22 has a mission to pass an act to reduce poverty and to support the financial security of persons with disabilities by establishing the Canada disability benefit and making a consequential amendment to the Income Tax Act. I hope this bill properly serves my community and saves lives. Please provide the help my community has been begging for. This issue is life and death. I hope it is rolled out urgently and with care.”

● (1815)

So many like Catherine are asking for supports to be implemented now for those who need them most and for us to ensure that the voices of those who are living with disabilities are part of the entire decision-making process from beginning to end.

Who better to identify the needs and challenges of those living with disabilities than those living with disabilities? How many times does the government need to repeat the cycle of a top-down approach before realizing that this does not work for anybody?

The Accessible Canada Act specifically recognizes the importance for those living with disabilities to be involved in the development and design of laws, policies, programs, services and structures in the spirit of “nothing without us”. “Nothing without us” means more than checking a box saying that consultation to the most superficial degree has been completed; it means having those with lived experience as an integral part of the development, design and implementation of these supports.

The current minimal disability supports have been further eroded by the affordability crisis and growing inflation, leading to increasingly dire situations every day for those living with disabilities and their families. I have spoken before about Jocelyn, a constituent in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith. Her story and experience are similar to those of far too many people living with disabilities whom I speak with day after day.



*Government Orders*

Jocelyn is a single parent of two young children who holds an education, work experience and a drive to contribute and give back to her community. Unfortunately, Jocelyn was in multiple accidents, leaving her unable to work and reliant on the minimal disability income provided to make ends meet. She described to me the challenges she experiences in covering just the basic costs of living. Jocelyn was very clear that all she was hoping for was the certainty that her children would have food on the table and a place to call home. Housing and food are certainly not luxuries for her and her children. These are basic human rights.

Legislating Jocelyn into poverty also means legislating her children into poverty. Despite her perseverance and incredible resiliency, she is set up for failure. At a time when her children need the best start to life, Jocelyn is struggling to provide the basics for them. It is clear that without the leadership required by the Liberal government, the impacts on those living with disabilities will continue to be felt for generations to come.

Bea Bruske, president of the Canadian Labour Congress, also shared with us her concerns about barriers to accessing necessary supports for those living with disabilities. Bea said:

From barriers to employment to affordable housing to access to care, so many people living with disabilities face unacceptable barriers to economic security... With rising costs making life even harder, we must make sure the bill is well designed and is a meaningful addition to existing federal, provincial and territorial supports, so help gets to those who need it.... People living with disabilities deserve to live in dignity.

Let me be clear. This is not the bill an NDP government would have put forward. As of today, we are looking at an empty bill without the specificity required to see real change. However, it is not too late for the government to make these changes. There is still time for the government, with the support of all members in the House, to move forward with a bill that provides an income that pulls individuals living with disabilities, at minimum, out of poverty. It can create a bill that clearly articulates who is eligible for the supports, what the benefit amount will be and when such supports will be made available and placed in the bank accounts of those with most need.

An issue compounding the struggles to make ends meet experienced by those living with disabilities is not knowing if there is any hope in sight. It is devastating to hear many people living with disabilities sharing that they are hopeless and that the only option left for them is to consider medical assistance in dying. When choosing to die is easier than trying to live, we know there is a deep-rooted problem with the decisions being made.

It is time for the Liberal government to step up to provide hope and move forward with a bill that contains the substance required to ensure those living with disabilities can live with dignity and respect. The first step is moving Bill C-22 forward to the Senate.

• (1820)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I agree with the last comment my colleague from the NDP made. It is time for this to pass, and I am glad to hear that a unanimous consent motion was adopted a few moments ago with regard to that. I know the NDP has been particularly critical in terms of the specifics within the bill, but when we look at it, a bill

of this nature really needs to have consultation with the stakeholders. One thing we do know is that the individuals who are going to be most affected by this want to and have to have a say in the various different supports that are there for them.

I realize there is a push to get this passed as quickly as possible to have those supports in people's hands. However, would she not agree that it is important to have that genuine feedback come through the proper framework development process in order to get it right?

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Mr. Speaker, yes, it is important that we talk about the specificity of the bill. I have a couple of thoughts on that: First, the Liberals have been in power for seven years. There has been a lot of time in which the consultation could have been done. Absolutely, people who are living with disabilities need to be involved in this process right from the very beginning to the very end. Who knows best but those living with disabilities?

We also need to recognize that it is time to move forward with action. Rabia Khedr, the CEO of DEEN Support Services and national director of Disability Without Poverty stated her position that people with disabilities need money now. They are sick and tired of being consulted. The government should know the problem by now and it is time to deliver.

Those are not my words. This is what we are hearing from those in the community, and they are saying that they need these supports now. That is coming from them, so it is time for us to listen.

• (1825)

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one of the comments the member made was that this is not the bill that the NDP would have put through, yet they have a confidence and supply agreement with the Liberals. If this is really important to them, why was it not negotiated in that agreement? There might have been a different bill than what we see here today.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Mr. Speaker, the NDP is here to get things put in place for people. That is exactly what we are doing. With this agreement, we were able to get tremendous outcomes for people who need dental care and the doubling of the GST. Those are just two examples. No, we were not able to get everything we wanted in there. That is why we continue to persevere and push for the Liberal government to implement the items that are so desperately needed in our communities, such as the disability benefit that we are debating today.

This is vitally important. The NDP has been fighting for generations for the supports that people with disabilities need and deserve. We will keep doing that until we see those who are living with disabilities living with dignity and respect.

*Private Members' Business**[Translation]*

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I salute my colleague, whom I spend a lot of time with at the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. We have a great rapport and usually see eye to eye.

For the most part, I agree with her that we need to move forward and find solutions. I understand my colleague's position, but is she not worried about the end product? Is she not worried that all this haste could lead to slipshod results?

Yes, from a political standpoint, we will be happy. Outwardly, we will say that we are glad that there is finally a law, that it has been a long time coming and that we are pleased. We will give ourselves a round of applause. However, at the end of the day, in real life, people with disabilities will not find much to reassure them that they will really get tangible, concrete and timely support.

*[English]*

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Mr. Speaker, I absolutely appreciated working closely with my colleague on the fisheries committee.

People in the disability community are asking for this to be put ahead, for it to go to Senate and pass royal assent. Then we can do the work of having those living with disabilities as part of the process. This will ensure that the specificity is included so that we know when this is coming. There are a lot of details that need to happen to ensure that those with disabilities can have the hope they so desperately need to plan and move forward, knowing the supports they need are on the way.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 6:30 p.m., pursuant to an order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill now before the House.

*[Translation]*

The question is on the motion.

*[English]*

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

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

- (1830)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask for a recorded division.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to an order made on Thursday, June 23, 2022, the division stands deferred until Thursday, February 2, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

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

**Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ)** moved that Bill C-239, An Act to amend An Act to authorize the making of certain fiscal payments to provinces, and to authorize the entry into tax collection agreements with provinces, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today about the single tax return. I will talk about it more later. Quebecers have been wanting this for a long time. The House needs to understand why they want a single tax return. The reason is that they have to file two tax returns: the federal return and the Quebec tax return. Why is that?

Let us go back to the beginning. To understand why someone is suffering or to understand a problem, we must learn about the history of the problem. The problem actually began in 1867 when Canada was created. Many believe that it was created by people from Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes, who were all united in saying that they wanted a country that would be called "Canada" and who were determined to come together. That kind of thing only happens in fairy tales. In reality, it did not happen that way at all.

It is very simple. In 1854, Canada signed a reciprocity treaty with the Americans. Why? Because Canada used to sell goods to its mother country, Great Britain, which later turned to Europe instead. The British said they would not buy anything from Canada anymore; they were turning to Europe and they would do free trade. What happened was that the rich folks in Canada had nowhere to sell their products. They thought it might be nice to sell to the United States, so they signed this reciprocity agreement with the Americans in 1854.

After that, we began trading with the United States. We created trains to sell Canadian products to the United States. Unfortunately, the Americans decided they were going to kill each other with the Civil War. Since the English had an affinity with the south, they allied themselves with the southerners. The northerners won. The northerners wondered who these disgusting people were who had supported the south. It was the mother country, Great Britain, so they decided to take it out on her babies. They turned on us and said they no longer wanted anything to do with us.

We wondered what we would do if we could no longer sell to the Americans. That is when a few visionaries, the fathers of Confederation, quickly met together. We are not talking about a huge group of people coming together in song. No. They were wondering what they should do, because they could no longer sell their products. That is when Canada was created. There was no singing, no music, no speeches. It was just the fathers of Confederation meeting together for the first time in Charlottetown talking amongst themselves. They were plotting. In the end, they created Canada. People were wondering what that was. One Quebec humorist always said that Canada was doomed to failure because a bunch of fathers giving birth to something was never going to work.

*Private Members' Business*

In 1867, the fathers of Confederation felt it was absolutely necessary for the federal government to be very strong, so there would be a very united market. The provinces' powers needed to be limited, to prevent a civil war from breaking out like in the United States. The fathers of Confederation decided to make the provinces insignificant. The provinces would be given some taxing rights and a few responsibilities. The fathers of Confederation thought they were great visionaries. A blind mole has more vision.

Later on, they decided to give Quebec and the provinces a little bit of power, in other words the right to manage education and health, things they felt were insignificant. At the time, those things were the responsibility of the clergy. One hundred years later, we see that they were way out in left field. They also decided to give the provinces income tax, because they did not know what it was and thought it likely would not matter much. That was a serious mistake.

That is where my story begins, when they gave income tax to Quebec and the provinces. The first province to realize that there was something to this was British Columbia. It got to work and started to collect money in 1873.

Then came the First World War. The federal government figured it would be a good idea to tax income to pay for that war. That was in 1917. The federal government realized it could bring in a lot of cash that way. The tax was not supposed to outlast the war, but the government decided to keep it to pay off the debt. After 1929, the government said it would keep it because the dirty thirties were trying times. It spread its tentacles and made itself right at home.

● (1835)

Then came the Second World War. Subtle as a brick through a window, the government decided to maintain the status quo. After the war, they figured everything was fine, so why change it ever?

The federal government talked about benefits, and all the provinces except Ontario and Quebec reached an agreement in 1947. The government did it again in 1952. It told the provinces that was that and it was taking over that tax field going forward. Everyone got on board, except Quebec. Quebec always marched to the beat of its own drum, which is to be expected considering we are a nation and a people.

Quebec struck the Tremblay commission to figure out what to do about it. Before long, a consensus was reached, as articulated by Duplessis. In 1954, Quebec told Canada to make room in that tax field because it wanted its share too. The public service needed big changes, and Quebec needed money. That is why we have to submit two tax returns.

The Bloc Québécois is proposing that there be only one tax return. In Canada, there would still be two tax policies. The federal government and the Quebec government would each have their own tax policy. However, there would be only one tax collector, and that is Quebec. It will collect all the income taxes. At the end of the year, the government that collects the tax will write a cheque to the other government and give it the money it is owed under its tax policy. The government that is not responsible for collecting the money will pay for services rendered.

This model already exists. Some say that it does not make sense, but they just need a little more vision. This model is already being used for the GST and the QST, and no one has died so far. It has not been a huge pain, and no one is going around saying that it is so awful they will die. This model exists. Quebec collects the GST for the federal government. There is only one tax collector. The federal government tells Quebec to go and get the money in a certain way and sends a cheque at the end of the year. It sends \$145 million to Quebec as thanks, so that Quebec can pay its officials. That is how it works.

The tax collector should be Quebec, because Revenu Québec asks for a lot more information. The Quebec government's policies and interventions are more numerous and more complex. Quebec needs more information because it manages child care, schools, health care and so on. It needs this information so it knows where to provide these services. Tax data allows the government to do that. For instance, it uses the data to determine support payments for separated couples. The Quebec government can then deduct the amounts at source and give them to the spouse who is entitled to them.

Plus, if Quebec continues doing the collecting, it will not lose a jurisdiction that is required for collection. It keeps its jurisdictions. If Ottawa stops acting as the collector in Quebec, but continues collecting in the other provinces, there is no problem, it will keep those jurisdictions.

In addition, Quebecers want the Quebec government to be in charge of collecting this money. Quebec's National Assembly unanimously passed a motion to that effect on May 15, 2018. Even the staunch federalist Philippe Couillard was there and voted for it. I was the one who tabled the motion. I remember, I was there. I could see Philippe Couillard, staunch federalist that he is, smiling. He knew what he was doing and he thought it was a good idea. In addition, the motion stated that Quebec would collect the taxes.

Why do that? It saves time and money. According to economist François Vaillancourt, it takes Quebecers 10% longer to file their tax return than if they only had to file one. This is scientifically proven with econometric models. We are not talking 50% longer, just 10%. With technology, it is 10%. That amounts to \$39 million a year for Quebecers who have someone else file their tax return.

● (1840)

That would represent \$99 million in savings for entrepreneurs. In addition, entrepreneurs should have less paperwork and we should help them. Ensuring that they only have to file one return is one way to help them. It would be much simpler and would represent \$99 million in savings.

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No one needs a PhD in mathematics to understand that when the federal government and Quebec each have their own returns, two people are doing the same job. Can we afford to have two people doing the same job? That could mean \$287 million per year in savings that would be shared by the federal government and Quebec. It would benefit everyone. We must understand that it would be beneficial for everyone, and I am not just talking about the time we could save.

What are the counter-arguments? First, jobs. Two people are doing the same job, and we have to wonder why that work cannot be done by a single person. Seems sensible to me. People will lose their jobs, they say. Yes, but here is the thing. Quebec will hire some of them because there will be more work to do and it will need more people, so some of them will go work in Quebec, and it will be easy enough to give them the same working conditions they had in the federal public service.

Keep in mind that we are in the third decade of the 21st century, and we are not seeing the 13% and 15% unemployment rates we used to see.

Mr. Speaker, you are young, but I am sure you have heard about high unemployment in the 1980s. Those days are done. The problem now is a labour shortage.

The government keeps going on about how the passport situation is tough because there are not enough workers.

People who contact the Canada Revenue Agency are not getting any service. We are told that it is because of the labour shortage. People who need EI are not getting the services they need. We are told that it is because of the labour shortage. The immigration department is assigning files to people who do not even work there anymore. Once again, it is because of the labour shortage.

What I am saying is that there is a pool of extremely competent workers in the government who can stay at the Canada Revenue Agency, which will need more people. They could also work on tax evasion files, or they could go and work elsewhere in the public service. Plus, if this is done gradually, they can all transition to retirement and their positions can be eliminated through attrition.

Some people will argue that the feds share information with other countries. When tax returns are filed, we have to talk with other countries to avoid doubling up on accounting and taxation. If Quebec were collecting taxes, those agreements would no longer be valid.

However, we could tell the United States that the federal government used to provide this service, but that Quebec is now doing it and that the agreement is off. When the United States finds out that Quebec is a free trade zone now, that people are leaving the U.S. to work in Quebec and that it will not have any information anymore, it will get in touch with the Quebec government. That is how it will work itself out.

The last criticism of this idea is not complicated. Some say that the federal government would lose out on information that is important for keeping its public service running and for making informed decisions. That is not true, because the Quebec government collects more information than the federal government. The Quebec

government could simply transmit any information requested by the federal government. The opposite cannot happen, because the Quebec government has a much larger database. This is why a single tax return is needed. It is as simple as that.

In 2019, Quebecers were surveyed on whether they were in favour of a single tax return with Quebec as the tax collector. Fully 65% of respondents said yes, 22% said no, and 12% were not sure.

The National Assembly of Quebec is on our side, Quebec is on our side and common sense is on our side. It is time to join the 21st century, figure out a smart way to deal with the labour shortage and pass this bill.

• (1845)

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thank the member for the compliment. He said that I was not so old, but I think that he is only three years older than I am.

Questions and comments. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I suspect that the member would likely find individuals in every provincial or territorial jurisdiction who would make similar arguments. Many of them might actually be separatists in their own jurisdiction.

The issue I have is this. Canada is a nation with 10 provinces and three territories. Would the Bloc be advocating that Canada should just dismantle CRA and have all provinces operate on their own? It seems to me that the Bloc has an approach to take anything that would minimize the federal government's role, in essence, any resources we get, just to be that ATM. Things like OAS and many other programs that the federal government provides, I think, are really important.

Would he not agree that, for example, if one is a senior in Quebec or a senior in B.C., Manitoba or anywhere else in Canada, one should be entitled to the OAS? The federal government is, indeed, in a good position to administer many programs.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alain Therrien:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his questions.

First, there is a reality in Quebec that does not exist in the other provinces. Quebec is the only place in Canada where people have to complete two tax returns. We are not proposing that the CRA be dismantled. It will still exist in Quebec, but it would simply no longer collect any personal or business income tax. That is all. It would still have other things to do.

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That being said, we are the only ones who have to complete two tax returns. My colleague is talking about situations in Canada where there is only one tax return. I think that is great. That is what I want.

As for the rest, I honestly did not really understand what he was getting at.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his great speech and the historical background.

History belongs to those who tell and write it, but my colleague forgot to say that the only federalist party in the House capable of taking power already promised a single tax return during two elections, in 2019 and 2021.

Can my colleague tell me whether he trusts the Conservative Party to help Quebeckers get their due? Will he work with us during our next mandate, which may begin in 2023?

**Mr. Alain Therrien:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I really like my colleague.

The last time we worked on this bill, let us just say that the Conservatives were not too enthusiastic about it. In the end, they abstained from voting in committee and then supported us. Maybe the Conservatives are not as convinced about the merits of the single tax return as the Bloc Québécois. However, I have to admit that this time, the Conservatives are on the right side of history, and I applaud them.

Clearly, I want the bill to be passed right away. I believe we have all the reasons and arguments in favour of doing so, and I do not see why we would delay. I think it is time to take action. We are people of goodwill, and we can start fixing this problem right away.

• (1850)

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his persistence on this one issue, which keeps coming up.

I would note that, in 2021, he told the Standing Committee on Finance that 2,332 of the Canada Revenue Agency's 5,300 employees in Quebec would remain employed. That means 3,000 people would lose their jobs.

The NDP cares deeply about what happens to workers, especially unionized workers. My colleague mentioned the labour shortage and the unemployment rate. That is true in general in society, but what about the federal public service?

In 2015, there were 260,000 federal public servants. In 2020, there were 300,000, and, in 2022, there were 335,000. That means 35,000 people were hired in the space of two years. The NDP is happy about that because we want good public services and we want them to get even better. However, given that the government just hired 35,000 people in the past two years, where is it going to put those 3,000 people?

**Mr. Alain Therrien:** Mr. Speaker, 3,000 is not even 10% of 35,000.

First of all, this can be done over several years.

Second, I think the hon. member, who sits with us in the House, understands when the government repeatedly tells us that it cannot provide services because there are not enough public servants. It turns out that it is giving all the work to McKinsey.

I do not think we need to dig any further to realize that, although the public service has increased in numbers, it still is not big enough. It does not take a genius to figure out that when there is a labour shortage that translates into a shortage of services, it means more workers need to be hired. However, when there is a labour shortage, it is difficult to turn to the labour market because we are at full employment and everyone is chasing the same people. Employers are even putting on shows to attract people to come and work for them.

We are not suggesting that 3,000 workers should be laid off. We are not using 20th century language. We want to reallocate these 3,000 workers to where they will be even more useful, and it will not cost anything because they are already being paid. Who can oppose that?

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today it is my privilege to take part in the debate at second reading of private member's Bill C-239.

This bill is identical to private member's Bill C-224, which was introduced and rejected in the previous parliamentary session. By now, hon. members should be quite familiar with the major flaws that resulted in its being rejected. Now that it is once again before us, I feel obligated to use my time to review those flaws.

The bill authorized Quebec or any other province to collect federal personal and corporate income tax on behalf of the Government of Canada. Our government has always recognized that the purpose of this bill, which is to find ways to simplify income tax returns and reduce the compliance burden on Quebec taxpayers, is appealing. We all share that goal.

However, the way the bill seeks to achieve that raises grave concerns about effectiveness, equity, efficiency and value for both taxpayers and governments, including those in Quebec.

At the forefront of these concerns are the serious negative impacts the bill would have on the employment situation of Canada Revenue Agency employees working in Quebec, as well as their communities as a whole.

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At committee stage in the previous Parliament, we heard from expert witnesses and stakeholders such as a representative of the Union of Taxation Employees, who warned that “massive job losses will clearly ensue if this bill is passed and the federal government hands over administration of Quebec's federal taxes to the provincial government” and that “the vast majority of jobs that would be lost are held by people living in Quebec who pay taxes there and greatly contribute to the province's economic activity.” As the witness concluded, this “would be devastating, especially for the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean and Mauricie regions. The CRA is the biggest employer in the Mauricie region and one of the biggest in the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean region, along with the mining sector.”

These alarming findings are consistent with the CRA's projections, which show that the transfer of the federal administration of Quebec's income tax could jeopardize approximately 6,000 jobs in the 14 CRA offices in Quebec. The transfer would also affect employees in many offices outside of Quebec, such as the office in Summerside, Prince Edward Island, and offices in Ontario, which also process income tax returns.

We also learned in the previous Parliament that this bill would likely result in higher costs for taxpayers. The existing tax collection agreements produce efficiency gains that result in cost savings for taxpayers. The transfer of the administration of several provinces and territories to one tax administrator, namely the federal government, creates economies of scale and reduces the administrative burden on each taxpayer. Unfortunately, the bill we are discussing does the exact opposite.

This was confirmed by the testimony of a Canada Revenue Agency official when the bill was being studied in committee in the previous Parliament. As she noted, “The required integration between both organizations' processes and technology infrastructures would result in additional expenses. The fixed costs related to the functioning and significant investments in infrastructure by the agency to serve all Canadians will not decrease with such a transfer.” The CRA official confirmed that such a decision would increase costs. She stated, “At a minimum, our estimate at this time is around \$800 million.”

This was corroborated by the testimony of a representative of The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada, who pointed out that “the numbers don't add up. There are no savings or efficiencies to be gained either for Quebec taxpayers or for those in the rest of Canada”, he added. This same union official then went on to point out that “the most efficient and cost-effective way for Quebecers to have a single tax return would be for them to ask the CRA to administer all tax collection.” This opinion is shared by the representative for the Union of Taxation Employees. That is not to say that we want to go in that direction.

As the CRA official clearly indicated at committee, the question should not be whether Canada should be in charge of Quebec's taxes or whether Quebec should be in charge of Canada's taxes. The question should be: how can we simplify taxes for residents of Quebec?

• (1855)

Our government completely agrees. That is why we will continue to work and engage with Revenu Québec, with whom we have long had a productive and collaborative relationship, on finding ways to simplify the tax return and reduce the burden on Quebec taxpayers. We will continue to work with Quebec and the other provinces to make things more efficient.

Our concerns about the bill go even further. This bill also raises fears about Canada's ability to meet its obligations under international tax conventions and agreements in effect that state that the Minister of National Revenue is the competent authority in Canada.

Canada has more than a hundred tax conventions and agreements of this nature and renegotiating them could take years and considerable resources, with no guarantee of favourable results. Our international partners may, for example, not agree to change these provisions or be prepared to interact with two or more distinct tax administrations. This situation could in return have serious consequences on our capacity to fight tax evasion and tax avoidance, which relies on tax information exchange agreements and treaties.

Those are the important considerations, and Canadians expect us to take them into account. I want to commend my parliamentary colleagues for doing so when assessing this bill in the previous Parliament and for having rejected this bill.

As we clearly stated, our government is open to improving tax administration to ensure the best possible results for all Canadians in terms of fairness, efficiency and value for taxpayers and governments, including those of Quebec.

We will continue to work with Revenu Québec to find ways to simplify tax returns and reduce the compliance burden on Quebec taxpayers. This will ensure a better harmonization of our respective tax administrations and make it easier for Quebec taxpayers to complete their tax returns.

We are always willing to improve the situation. However, the preponderance of the evidence clearly shows that the bill before us will do the opposite.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to take part in today's debate on Bill C-239, which deals with a promise that the Conservative Party itself proposed in the summer of 2018.

We also moved a motion on February 5, 2019, here in the House, on this clear and legitimate request from Quebecers and the Quebec National Assembly, specifically to cut the paperwork burden on Quebecers significantly by allowing them to file a single tax return.

On April 24, 2021, all of my Conservative Party colleagues voted for this measure in Bill C-224. The single income tax return responds to a request that is dear to the hearts of the people of Lévis—Lotbinière and all Quebecers. All Quebecers are required to file two tax returns as soon as they start earning an income, even if they have not reached the age of majority. This noble and legitimate request will save a lot of time and money for Quebec families and all Quebecers. It is important to note that Quebec is the only province in Canada that still has to take on this onerous task.

Whether it relates to this bill or any other measure that would be good for the Quebec nation and the entire Canadian population, nothing seems to make the Liberal government lift a finger since it came to power in 2015, because saving time and money is simply not one of its values and is not in its DNA.

Let me give a real-life example of when all my children were still living under the same roof at home. At the time, it meant 14 individual tax returns for one house, plus two returns for my small farm. Think about it, that is 16 tax returns under one roof. That is a lot of repetitive and counterproductive work forced on families, students and young workers, who are eager to be active in the workforce, which is in need of labour now more than ever.

True to their values, Conservatives have always been committed to simplifying the lives of Quebecers, saving them time and money, and increasing their quality of life.

We cannot shy away from certain words. We are living under a coalition government, and this cronyism between the Liberals and the NDP is disastrous for all Quebecers and Canadians across the country. This arrangement is damaging our democracy and prevents any good measures from being adopted. We saw proof of this when the NDP and the Liberals voted against Bill C-224, sealing its fate.

We saw further proof recently with my private member's bill, Bill C-215, which got a majority but may not be adopted at third reading because the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance are still refusing to give it a royal recommendation. I would like to remind members that my bill would extend EI benefits for people with serious illness to 52 weeks, a fix for outdated legislation that has not been amended since 1971.

There are a lot of good bills here, including the one before us now, Bill C-239, which is perfectly valid. However, we have a major problem in the House after eight years of Liberal incompetence that is now making itself felt across Canada and in every sector.

Our Canada is broken. It will never be like it was before. We are experiencing the repercussions of lack of leadership and political will to bring positive, long-lasting change to the lives of people in Canada.

Under the Liberals, life has become very expensive. Inflation, taxes, crime and drug deaths are on the rise. Honest citizens like hunters and farmers are being attacked and penalized by Bill C-21. We have a Liberal government that will do anything to help its cronies get funding and contracts in exchange for a \$500 ticket to a dinner. The Liberals managed to legalize marijuana and now want to decriminalize hard drugs. However, when it comes to helping honest people who work hard, day in and day out, people who are responsible, or people who are seriously ill and simply deserve our

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support, there is no danger of Liberal favouritism. There is no danger of giving these honest people a free ride. We hear more than a simple “no”. It is a resounding “no” to anyone with common sense and logic, and this is all currently endorsed by the NDP.

This government is really old, worn out and outdated, not to mention fundamentally incompetent.

● (1900)

I remember all too well the Liberal argument against adopting a single tax return in Quebec. I can already see the return of the stale rhetoric of the Minister of National Revenue—we just heard it. The House has already heard responses using the simplistic argument that having a single tax return would result in massive job losses, which is unfounded and, moreover, would happen at a time when there is a dire need for labour across Canada.

I would also like to remind the minister and my colleagues that the number of public service jobs has increased by 32% from 2015. My constituents write to me to tell me that they can no longer make ends meet, have no savings, are using food banks to feed themselves and their family, can no longer afford their rent, have to work when sick or, even worse, have to declare bankruptcy. Like them, I am very worried about our future and that of our children and future generations.

The aspirations of Quebecers are eroding after eight years of Liberal incompetence. The single tax return that has been a Conservative election promise since 2018 will still not see the light of day, I am afraid. The NDP has to go back to being an opposition party and stop propping up the Liberal government. We all know that the 32 Bloc Québécois MPs are not the ones who can make the change that Canada really needs.

I am proud that the people in my riding, Lévis—Lotbinière, trust me and the leadership of the Conservative Party to put an end to the Liberal incompetence that we have seen for eight years now—eight years too many. The Conservatives are the best equipped to work for a more productive Quebec, a stronger Quebec, a richer Quebec, a Quebec that is a partner in Canada's success, a Quebec that is proud of its culture and heritage, a Quebec that is worthy of the French language, a Quebec that is respected by the Conservative Party of Canada for what it has achieved. The Conservative Party is a proud partner in the success of all Canadians from all provinces.

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Historically, the Conservatives have said yes to Quebec's requests. We said yes to the construction of the new Champlain Bridge, yes to the future third link in Quebec City, yes to more power over immigration for Quebec and yes to a single tax return. That is more than a promise of change or lip service. It is a real commitment, a promise that I have been keeping every day in the House for 17 years now, along with my Conservative colleagues. I say yes for Lévis—Lotbinière and yes for Quebec.

• (1905)

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, to begin, I would like to point out that it is February 1, and I would like to wish everyone in this country a happy Black History Month.

Sometimes my math skills are called into question, but, if my calculations are right, tomorrow will be February 2. Now, February 2 is Groundhog Day. I feel like I am reliving Groundhog Day a day ahead of time. I will probably repeat the speech I gave in 2019, 2020, and 2021 after we consider an identical bill in committee. It seems that people are having trouble hearing testimony from certain witnesses.

*Groundhog Day* is that movie where comedian Bill Murray wakes up every morning and relives the same day. Thanks to the Bloc Québécois, we are reliving the same discussion with the same arguments and debates, during which people came to tell us that it does not work, that it does not make sense.

It is not a bad principle, and it was even adopted at the NDP convention in 2018. The resolution was twofold. The first part involved a single tax return for Quebecers. Because of historic absurdities, war efforts and jurisdictional squabbles, Quebecers ended up being the only parties in the Canadian federation who have to complete two tax returns. Obviously, no one likes paperwork and no one likes waste. Everyone wants things to be faster and easier. Yes, everyone agrees on that, but implementing the single tax return would have an impact on real people, families and the regions of Quebec.

That is why the NDP resolution had a second part. We agree with the principle of a single tax return, but there must not be a human cost. Workers should not have to pay the price. People should not end up in a tough spot because we made a decision that we thought was good in theory. Yes, at first glance, completing one tax return instead of two seems logical and it seems to make life easier for everyone.

I will come back to employment, but I think the first thing that is important to mention in this debate is that this is not the 1980s. Back then, in Quebec, everyone went to the credit union to pick up the stack of Quebec tax forms and the stack of Canadian tax forms in February and March. People would take them home, go through all the pages and fill out the document by hand. After that, they had to get their T4s and tax receipts. Then, they would take the other form, fill in all the numbers by hand, and finally mail their provincial income tax return to Quebec and their federal income tax return to Ottawa. It was a pain, and it is unfair that, historically, Quebecers were the only ones to be stuck doing this. It is unfortunate.

It is now 2023 and the situation has changed. People do not go to their credit unions to pick up their forms. We have recent data that speaks to that. Most professionals told us that, since 2016, at least 60% of Quebecers' income tax returns are prepared by accountants. The remaining 40% are completed by the individuals themselves. Of this 40%, 75% are completed with online software.

Completing an online form is quite simple. The taxpayer fills out the return and the online software puts the information in the right boxes, with the small blue flower on one side and the small red leaf on the other. This has practically no impact on people's lives. It is done automatically. The taxpayer enters their amounts, social insurance number, address, charitable donation receipts, and political donations, if any, just once and then it is sent by email with one click to Quebec City and to Ottawa. They just have to enter the information once, and the rest is done automatically. The deductions are calculated automatically.

• (1910)

The fact is, between 10% and 12% of Quebecers complete two paper income tax returns. That is one in 10. This measure will not change a single thing for 90% of people. I expect that 10% to 12% to shrink from year to year because the trend is clear. Fewer and fewer tax returns are being done on paper, and more and more are being done online.

This solution is very appealing at first glance because it appears to simplify people's lives. The NDP supports that, but we realize the impact in terms of helping people and simplifying their lives will diminish over time. Where it will have a definite impact is on job losses in the regions in Quebec. That is what we heard from the member for La Prairie, who appeared before the Standing Committee on Finance in 2021.

During an exchange with the member for Joliette, the member for La Prairie said that only 44% of the 5,300 people at the Canada Revenue Agency in Quebec are really useful. According to the member for La Prairie, only 44% of the 5,300 workers are truly useful. That is right in the Standing Committee on Finance evidence. He comes along and says that the other half are technically useless. I would like him to tell the other 3,000 employees that they are useless.

Is that the Bloc Québécois's vision for regional economic development and respect for workers? That is really bad. The member for La Prairie went on to say, "This means that 2,332 of the 5,300 people would remain employed". It is not hard to figure out that this means 3,000 people would lose their jobs and their pay. That is what the Bloc Québécois and the member for La Prairie said, and anyone can read it in the committee evidence. They are prepared to sacrifice 3,000 jobs in the regions. That is 3,000 families for whom a paycheque is far more important than this symbolic political trinket. We must keep moving forward.



We, in the NDP, did our homework. We met with these workers' representatives. We met with people from the Quebec chapter of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, who are affiliate members of the Fédération des travailleurs et des travailleuses du Québec.

They said that, despite what they have been told, there is no guarantee that they will be sent somewhere else to work, that they will not lose their jobs and that things will not be complicated. Issues related to training, qualifications, workplace and organization of work led us to try to learn more and to ask questions. I was on the ground, visiting the tax centres in Shawinigan and Jonquière. I met with people and talked to them. It is very clear that, to them, this would mean a loss of employment. There are no guarantees. They do not believe in wishful thinking.

While it is true that service is sometimes lacking in the federal government, the federal public service has hired 35,000 people in the last two years. We are talking about 3,000 other people, but those 3,000 people are not 10% of the 35,000. They are an additional 10% on top of the 35,000. What do we do with them? The Bloc members do not have an answer. All they are saying is that things will work out, someone will find a place for them. No one believes that. The witnesses who appeared before the parliamentary committee said that there is no clear plan or guarantee. These 3,000 workers deserve respect. We want them to continue to work so they can pay their bills, pay the rent and buy groceries in their area. Surely we are not going to put their lives at risk for the sake of some political trinket for the Bloc Québécois to show off.

• (1915)

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I have my trinket with me. I hope I do not show it off too much tonight.

I would like to go back to *Groundhog Day*. I loved that movie. In fact, I feel like I just relived *Groundhog Day* while listening to my NDP colleague speak.

I am the member for Jonquière, and the tax centre at issue is in my riding. I remember how in 2019, the former member for Jonquière, an NDP member, said that there would never be a single tax return, so there would not be any job losses. At the same time, however, the leader and deputy leader of the NDP were telling the national media that they respected Quebec and wanted Quebec to have as much autonomy as possible. They wanted the single tax return to go through.

It was *Groundhog Day* for the NDP as they talked out of both sides of their mouths. They were trying to charm Quebec by acknowledging its political autonomy, but the member for Jonquière was being told to say that it would not happen. They were saying one thing in Jonquière and another in Montreal. That is not *Groundhog Day*. Back home, we would call that plain old hypocrisy. However, I would not go that far. That was just a friendly update for my friend and colleague from the NDP.

I would like to come back to the member for La Prairie's fantastic introduction, which made me realize something. It often happens that the member for La Prairie makes me see the light about something. In his introduction, he talked about the genesis of the single tax return and, in doing so, he recapped the reasons that led

to Confederation. I want to add a layer. The member for La Prairie forgot one small detail.

The reason for the birth of Canada, and what motivated the fathers of Confederation, was the desire to build a railway, of course. They wanted to do business from coast to coast. They had a stake in a railway company and figured that if they wanted to build a railway, why not unite?

Some countries arise as a result of a quest for emancipation. Take, for example, the United States and "We, the people". The birth of the United States was a quest for emancipation. Other countries were created for business considerations. They said to themselves, why not build a railway?

I think this is quite important. The member for La Prairie told us that, and I think it is important because this is one of the key points about the single income tax return. The only political entity that is still trying to develop through a quest for emancipation is Quebec. There is a link here with the single income tax return.

Listen carefully. I will not shock anyone, but everyone will see the inescapable logic in what I have to say. I often do this with my girlfriend. When she says something to me, I want to know why. I want to know where she is coming from when we have a disagreement. Similarly, I want to find out what is behind the federal government's refusal to relieve taxpayers and business owners from having to file two tax returns.

What is the Liberal government's motivation for not wanting to save \$425 million a year?

The answer is quite simple, and the member for La Prairie gave us part of it. It is the fear that the government would be sending a message to Quebec that Quebec is capable of managing itself as a nation. What really scares the Liberal government is the possibility that Quebec might prove that it is capable of managing itself. It is the fear that my nation might take another step towards political autonomy.

It has always been that way. Quebeckers did not want a railway; they wanted political autonomy. The other side is all about business, so our interests are not aligned. We will come back to that later.

The first major stumbling block that prevents us from being on the same page as either my NDP colleagues or members of the Liberal government is not concern about jobs. It is their fear of giving Quebec any kind of political autonomy. Doing so would show that Quebec is capable of governing itself as a nation. That is what worries them.

The Conservatives did things hastily in committee. Fear is also why they abstained from voting in committee. This would give Quebec a degree of autonomy. They can say yes in a roundabout way and then change their tune when it is time to take action. That is what we are seeing with the new Conservative leader, who now has no choice but to say he will not support Bills 21 and 96.

*Private Members' Business*

● (1920)

If we look carefully at the situation, we see that all of the parties in Ottawa have a centralizing vision, and that no party truly wants to recognize Quebec, which has unique characteristics and makes different choices. They do not want Quebec to have a single tax return.

That brings us to the strategy that the NDP and the Liberal Party use when it comes to self-government. It makes me think of Robert Charlebois's 1969 Paris tour entitled *À soir on fait peur au monde*, or tonight we scare people. I encourage everyone to listen to it. This strategy works all the time. I remember how Jean Chrétien said that if Quebec decided to separate, it would definitely not be able to get any more oranges. Florida would not sell oranges to Quebec because it only sold them to Canada.

The same thing is happening here. This evening, we are talking about a single tax return and they are fearmongering. If Quebec gets a single tax return, then jobs will be lost. That is the argument that I hear every time we talk about a single tax return. However, that did not stop us.

I—along with the member for Joliette, who introduced the bill in the previous Parliament, and my colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean—looked into this situation, and we went to meet with workers at the tax centre in my riding of Jonquière. Not only did we go to meet them, but we also commissioned a study to get an overview of federal public service employment in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean. In looking at the results, it is clear that the government's motivation for maintaining public service jobs makes the government look bad.

The first observation is that Quebec pays approximately 20% of the CRA's budget but has only 12% of the jobs. That alone is blatantly unfair. Quebec has only 11% of the full-time jobs and only 12% of CRA jobs. Again, that is blatantly unfair.

The study we commissioned shows that there was serious job growth tied to the federal public service in the 2000s. In Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean, we are short 1,100 federal public service jobs to be in the Canadian average. We are already below acceptable levels, so trying to scare people by saying that they will lose their public service jobs is just stupid.

A constituent who was hired by CRA during the pandemic approached me recently. She is happy to work for CRA, but she told me that she was told when she was hired that her position would become bilingual. Since she is not bilingual, but a francophone, her contract will end.

This person who processes CRA files will not get a permanent position because she is francophone. The federal public service is currently falling apart. We experience that as MPs every day. Whether we are talking about employment insurance, immigration or any other service the government offers, there is a severe shortage of workers. Then they take a francophone and tell her that because she is not bilingual she will not be able to keep her job.

If I were a Liberal member, I would be a lot more outraged about that than about the idea that a single tax return could result in job losses. We all know that, through attrition or by reassigning these

people elsewhere in the public service, it is possible to make sure they keep their jobs.

The truth is that the government is deathly afraid of Quebec gaining greater autonomy.

● (1925)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will continue along the line of what the member said was the truth. We heard a sense of the truth from the member when he indicated that really what this is about is separating from Canada. That is what seems to be the primary motivation for Bloc members in making their presentation, if we listened to what the member was suggesting. I would like to hear the logistical arguments on why it would be in Canada's best interest as a nation to do what the Bloc is proposing without a separatist bias.

Every province and territory has separatists who live in them. However, if we listened to what the member was articulating, it was not about the logic behind the bill. Are we to say that every separatist in every province is saying they should have their own taxation, or that they should forget about OAS and they want their own OAS program? I suspect the separatists inside this chamber would say they do not want a national OAS program.

I beg to differ. I would suggest that with the OAS supplements, GIS and many other programs that are out there, all Canadians in every region of our country benefit from them. The Bloc has failed to demonstrate why it is in Canada's best interest, including the province of Quebec, and why there is an argument to be made for a single system that is solely based on the province of Quebec versus Canada.

I believe the Liberal caucus is open to the arguments, but not with the bias that I heard demonstrated by the former speaker who last addressed the chamber. I believe in the distinct nature and uniqueness of the province of Quebec, and I think there is a great deal of sympathy in terms of how we can recognize that in many different forms. However, in no way was that demonstrated in the debate on the introduction of the bill, particularly by the Bloc member who spoke previously.

I suggest that the bill, before going to committee, needs to be looked at again. At the end of the day, I am somewhat concerned about how the Conservative Party is placing itself on this legislation. I hope it is not an appeal to garner support from the Bloc side.

I think we need to take a look at Canada and the services it provides. If there are better ways we can provide those services, then we should look at those. However, it does not mean that we start taking apart Canada, whether it is separatists in one province or another, which is their ultimate goal and the purpose of the legislation as it was implied in the previous speaker's comments.

• (1930)

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business is now expired, and 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*]

### PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am here again to ask about the urgency for persons with disabilities for immediate income support as they continue to wait for the Canada disability benefit.

There was news today that there will be a vote tomorrow, and the House wants to push this through quickly, but we still have to wait for those regulations to be made. We know that persons with disabilities face too many challenges, which are only increasing with the rising costs of living, such as food and skyrocketing home and rent prices.

Throughout the course of the committee study on Bill C-22, we heard about the suffering of those living in poverty. We heard from the minister that ESDC had supplied information that the average gap for persons with disabilities between their income and the Canada poverty line is \$9,000. That is \$9,000 below the poverty line.

Overwhelmingly, we heard that almost one million persons with disabilities living in poverty are not eating enough meals daily and cannot keep up with the rising costs. They are making impossible choices between housing, food, heating and transportation, and the provincial support programs have remained stagnant.

As we know, no single province is even close to the poverty line. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick show the highest gaps, in excess of \$12,000 a year, while two of the most affluent provinces, Ontario and B.C., have gaps nearing \$10,000. I have no doubt that the gaps have only grown worse. It is essential that the federal government step up with some interim benefit immediately.

The government has international obligations, including the UN's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to ensure dignity and full equality for all. This includes necessary and adequate income, but it is not happening right now. Dire financial circumstances are the reality for too many people with disabilities, and the longer they must wait for the promised Canada disability benefit, the more they are left feeling abandoned by the government.

Another common theme from witness testimony in committee for Bill C-22 was that income supports are needed now. With the rising hopes and expectations of a Canada disability benefit, persons with disabilities are calling for assistance to get them through until the disability benefit is a reality. In the last several months, we

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

have been hearing a growing call for an emergency response benefit to offset the cost of living.

Will the Liberal government acknowledge the dire financial situation for one million persons with disabilities in this country? What is the plan to protect their human rights? Will the Liberals explore an interim benefit as we wait for the Canada disability benefit?

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam for her advocacy on behalf of persons with disabilities.

I want to especially acknowledge the advocacy of the hon. Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion. She has worked tirelessly throughout her career to promote the rights of persons with disabilities.

I understand my colleague is looking forward to knowing all about the Canada disability benefit, and I too want nothing more than to see Canadians with disabilities receive the new Canada disability benefit as quickly as possible. I remind my colleague that, as set out in this legislation, the details of the proposed benefit will be addressed in future regulations. Those details include the benefit amount, eligibility criteria and other features, such as the treatment of employment income. We will work out all of those details in consultation with our partners, including persons with disabilities and disability stakeholders, as well as with the provinces and territories.

The Canada disability benefit will be a groundbreaking income supplement. It has the potential to lift hundreds of thousands of working-age persons with disabilities out of poverty, and that is why we are taking the time to get it right.

In the spirit of “nothing without us”, we will continue engaging with the disability community at every turn to ensure that the Canada disability benefit is designed with their voices at the table. We will keep their voices at the forefront to ensure that we truly reduce poverty and support the financial security of working-age Canadians with disabilities.

I am pleased to say that engagement activities began in the summer of 2021. A series of virtual round tables with stakeholders took place during the winter and spring of 2022, and community-led consultations will continue over the coming months.

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We have also been working closely with provincial and territorial governments, because they play a key role in providing benefits and supports to many Canadians with disabilities. This will help us ensure that every person who receives the Canada disability benefit will be better off. It will also help us harmonize delivery of the CDB and ensure that there are no clawbacks to other benefits.

The Canada disability benefit has the potential to make a profound difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of working-age Canadians with disabilities. For that to happen, we need to take the time to do things the right way, and that is exactly what we are doing.

• (1935)

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciated working with the member throughout the whole process of Bill C-22 since Parliament began to sit.

Right now, the cost of living is limiting persons with disabilities who are living in poverty the opportunity to eat a meal. I am asking the member if the Liberal government is willing to consider an emergency interim benefit as we wait for the Canada disability benefit to get into their bank accounts. I want to know from the member if it is on the Liberals' radar to make sure that people living with a disability in this country are having their human rights upheld and can afford to live in a home, eat a decent meal, and buy fresh fruits and vegetables.

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk:** Mr. Speaker, the proposed Canada disability benefit has the potential to reduce poverty and improve financial security for hundreds of thousands of working-age Canadians with disabilities. That is why we are taking the time to consult with our partners, including the disability community, indigenous organizations, disability researchers and experts, persons with disabilities, and disability stakeholders, as well as the provinces and territories.

Persons with disabilities know what they need. With their input, we will determine all details of the Canada disability benefit, which we look forward to sharing with everyone, including my colleague, the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am here tonight because I am deeply concerned about the state of our immigration system in this country. I am overwhelmed by the horrific stories of people's lives being ruined because the government has failed to provide a service it is required to provide for people who are trying to come to Canada or who are trying to bring their loved ones to Canada.

I do not think anyone in this place is going to be surprised when I say that my office is dealing with non-stop stories about IRCC issues. Every single member of the House of Commons is getting non-stop calls about how our immigration system is failing to meet the needs of Canadians. It is failing to meet the needs of all those people who are trying to make Canada their home.

We have a government right now that is promising things. It promised to bring in “unlimited of this” and “40 of that.” It makes tons and tons of promises like “500,000 of this”.

The way I have described this in the past is that we have a goat track. Our immigration system right now is a goat track. Do not promise to buy me a Lamborghini when what one has is a goat track. The system is broken, and the government has an obligation to fix our immigration system.

The fact of the matter is that we have people who are trying to come to Canada to go to school. The question I asked the minister, and that I am bringing forward again today, is about students who want to study in universities in Canada. My goodness, we want these people to come to Canada. We want these people to study at our universities. Our universities need that tuition. Our country benefits from having these people come to our country, yet they cannot come because our immigration system is so broken.

This question was about students and their ability to come to Canada to study, but I need to take this opportunity to tell the House a little about some other folks. Yesterday, I was walking into the House of Commons. There was a man from Afghanistan who worked for the Canadian government. His family and his loved ones are still in Afghanistan. He cannot get them out. He was sobbing on the steps of the House of Commons because he is so worried his family will be murdered. It breaks my heart.

I have been working with members of every party in the House to bring female members of Parliament from Afghanistan to Canada and to safety. I woke up a week ago to news that one of those members of Parliament had been murdered, so I do not want to hear from the government that it is going to bring in 100,000, 20,000, or whatever the number of people is, because it is not fixing the immigration system. The problem, when it does not fix the immigration system, is that it ruins people's lives. It ruins our chance of having people come to be part of this beautiful country that is Canada.

I do not want to hear that the government is doing enough. I want to hear what it is going to do to fix the deeply broken immigration system in this country now.

• (1940)

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to highlight our government's progress as we continue working to improve our immigration and refugee system.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

In addition to the challenges brought by the pandemic backlog, Canada is the top destination in the world for immigration. There are record levels of people wanting to come to Canada. We also saw back-to-back humanitarian crises in Afghanistan and Ukraine, which significantly impacted processing capacities as more resources were reallocated to these crises.

Our government has added the tools and resources, with more than 1,250 new employees in 2022 to tackle this challenge for students and all others, and the results of 2022 show it. Last year, IRCC processed over 5.2 million applications, nearly double those processed in 2021. This is thanks in part to improvements to the immigration system, including digitized applications, the hiring and training of new employees, streamlined processes and the harnessing of automation to increase efficiency while protecting the safety and security of Canadians.

The results for study permits were even better. IRCC processed approximately 739,000 study permit applications, compared to 555,000 in 2021. The fact is that we have made international study permits a priority, which is why there has been a 100% increase in international students since 2015.

Canada is on track to meet its goal to process 80% of new applications within service standards of 60 days and provide shorter wait times for clients.

We have been taking concrete steps to reduce our backlogs, which, to be clear, are the applications that have been in inventories longer than the service standards. The government knows the wait is too long and is working hard to address the problem and return to service standards. That is what Canada's future students, workers, permanent residents and citizens expect.

To support greater transparency, we have implemented solutions like online status trackers that provide reassurance to clients by allowing them to view progress on their applications. Our case status trackers are in place for citizenship applicants and certain permanent resident applications. We will continue to expand these trackers to more applicants across our system in the coming months, including study permits. To keep Canadians up to date on our progress on reducing backlogs, the department has also been publishing monthly updates on its websites.

These actions demonstrate our commitment to improving processing, reducing backlogs and ensuring our immigration system works for everyone.

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Mr. Speaker, universities in Canada are losing millions of dollars because study permits are not being processed in time.

Iranians trying to escape from their murderous terrorist regime are waiting years for news on whether loved ones can come and when they can come.

In Afghanistan, there are nine female members of Parliament. The current government could get them out today. It could get them to safety today, and it is choosing not to do that.

For Hong Kongers, right now there is a program that is going to expire, and the current government has done nothing to ensure that it is extended.

Ukrainians in my riding have not been able to study at university because the current government has failed to give them a study permit.

That is not a solution.

• (1945)

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk:** Mr. Speaker, it is not just promises; it is action. Our government added the tools and resources, such as 1,250 new employees in 2022, and we see the results with 5.2 million applications processed, which is nearly double the applications processed in 2021.

The results for study permits were even better. IRCC processed approximately 739,000 permit applications, compared to 555,000 in 2021. With hard work and timely investments, we are processing more student applications than we ever have.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The motion to adjourn the House is now 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 7:46 p.m.)



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