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# House of Commons Debates

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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



## **CONTENTS**

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, March 23, 2023

The House met at 10 a.m.

• (1005)

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*Prayer*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[*English*]

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 10 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

### FIRST NATIONS FISCAL MANAGEMENT ACT

**Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-45, An Act to amend the First Nations Fiscal Management Act, to make consequential amendments to other Acts, and to make a clarification relating to another Act.

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

\* \* \*

[*English*]

### INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

**Hon. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the delegation of the Canadian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union respecting its participation in the parliamentary forum at the United Nations high-level political forum on sustainable development held in New York, United States of America, from July 12 to July 13, 2022.

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

### COMMITTEE TRAVEL

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among all the parties, and if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That, in relation to its study of potential trade impacts of the United States Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, seven members of the Standing Committee on International Trade be authorized to travel to Washington, D.C., United States of America, in the Spring of 2023, during an adjournment period, and that the necessary staff accompany the Committee.

And that, in relation to its study of human trafficking of women, girls and gender diverse people, seven members of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women be authorized to travel to Vancouver, British Columbia; Toronto, Ontario; Brampton, Ontario; Mississauga, Ontario; Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario; Halifax, Nova Scotia; and Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, in the Spring of 2023, during an adjournment period, and that the necessary staff accompany the Committee.

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

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

(Motion agreed to)

### FINANCE

**Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I move that the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Finance, presented on Friday, March 10, be concurred in.

It is always a privilege to rise in this place, a place of sometimes rancorous debate but also of camaraderie and of mutual respect, no doubt.

I will be splitting my time with the member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

*Routine Proceedings*

I want to talk today about the pre-budget consultation process. Those at home watching this might be wondering what a pre-budget consultation is. Every year, with notable exceptions like COVID, the government of the day will submit a budget. Prior to that budget, at finance committee, there is a series of consultations that we call the pre-budget consultations. It is an extensive process that I have had the honour to be a part of on multiple occasions. There are stakeholders with varied perspectives, from climate change to productivity studies and various other issues. Some stakeholders have a connection to the budget, perhaps with regard to funding. It is a very prolonged process.

This process has two primary challenges. One is a lack of prioritization and a ceiling on that budget process. The second is that there does not appear to be a tangible or concrete link to the budget-creating process. The finance minister of the day will work with their cabinet, as well as the bureaucracy, to come up with a budget. Along with that process, there are concurrent pre-budget consultations that include stakeholders who come from all over with valuable information, and I certainly have enjoyed hearing from the witnesses. However, the link between what stakeholders are expressing and the actual budget is tentative at best, especially in today's Liberal government.

As one example, for at least four or five years, nearly four years since I have been elected, numerous stakeholders have come before the finance committee in the pre-budget consultation process and have asked for a reduction or complete removal of the escalator tax on beer, wine and spirits. That is an automatic increase in taxes on wine, beer and spirits, every year, without parliamentary consent. Unionized workers for breweries, wineries and distilleries have come forward and said it is impacting their industry and reducing Canadian competitiveness. It even triggered a potential trade war with Australia—

• (1010)

**The Speaker:** I am going to interrupt the hon. member for a moment to remind everyone that a debate is taking place. There is a bit of a murmur that is getting louder. Before it gets any louder, I want to remind everyone that the hon. member has been interrupted, and we do not want to interrupt more than necessary.

The hon. member may continue.

**Mr. Philip Lawrence:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hospitality and the respect from my colleagues. I know they are as thrilled to hear about this as I am. Some of those members have wineries, breweries and even distilleries in their various ridings, and they would want to make sure that the workers and the consumers are protected from this tax that increases every year.

We heard this at the Standing Committee on Finance over and over again, but it appears as though the process is not having any impact on the budget. The budget is scheduled to come out next week, and maybe in this budget we will see that the Liberals have decided to listen, after seven years of hearing from stakeholders, unions, consumers and everyone who enjoys a drink of beer.

I enjoy a drink of beer, and I imagine there are quite a few Liberals who do. I do not want to tell tales outside of school, but I have actually seen them drink beer before, and they seem to enjoy it. Therefore, I do not know why they would increase the cost and

make it more expensive for everyone else to enjoy a cold beer after a hard day's work.

Another issue that has been brought up over and over again at the pre-budget consultations is the impact of the carbon tax. In fact, at the finance committee, the Governor of the Bank of Canada, Tiff Macklem, said that the carbon tax has an inflationary increase. He estimated it was at nearly half a per cent. That is a huge amount.

One might ask how much half a per cent is. It equates to hundreds of millions of dollars in excess costs because of the carbon tax. Throughout the pre-budget consultations, we heard from numerous groups and individuals, including the Governor of the Bank of Canada, who talked about the potential inflationary impact of taxation and the carbon tax.

If the pre-budget consultation was healthy and working, and the finance minister was actually listening to some stakeholders who are representatives of millions of Canadians, the carbon tax would have been gone years ago.

Another issue I heard about numerous times at the pre-budget consultations is the effect of the marginal tax rates on low-income earners. Maybe not everyone loves taxes as much as I do, and I do not know why, because it is extremely compelling and exciting stuff. The marginal tax rate, for those who perhaps are not aware, is one's total tax rate. It includes clawbacks and it includes the actual tax one is paying.

If one can believe this, the Prime Minister said that lower-income people do not pay taxes. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, there are many individuals who earn less than \$50,000 a year, and some who earn less than \$30,000 or \$40,000 a year, who face a marginal effective tax rate of over 50%. That means 50¢ of every dollar they earn over \$30,000 or \$40,000 is going back to the government.

We heard from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation and we heard from numerous economists at the pre-budget consultations. They said over and over that this is detrimental to Canadians. It is affecting Canadians going back to work. Believe it or not, there are some Canadians who are earning less than \$60,000 a year who are giving upward of 60% or 70% of every extra dollar they earn to the government.

Imagine a single mom trying to decide whether she should work an extra shift or spend that extra time with her child. Instead of getting 100% of those dollars, or even 80% or 90%, she is only going to get 30% of those dollars. She is a hard-working single mom doing everything she can to raise her family in the best possible way. The government's reward for working the extra shift, staying away from her child, depriving her child of that time and putting in that extra blood, sweat and tears is that she is getting to keep 30% of those dollars. That is 30¢ of each dollar. Two-thirds of the money she is earning is going back to the federal government.

Oftentimes in law, we decide who is in a better position to afford that loss. It is my position that the federal government, with its billions of dollars in largesse, is in a better position to absorb the additional taxation and the additional loss than a single mom.

• (1015)

Clearly, the government thinks otherwise, despite the fact that throughout the pre-budget consultation, we have heard over and over again about this problem. The government keeps charging taxes, with a marginal effective tax rate upwards of 50% on Canadians who are earning less than \$50,000 a year.

Another substantial problem with the pre-budget consultation is that there is no overall budget framework. The pre-budget consultation has no budget to it. A lot of the requests are great. They are valuable. They are meaningful investments in the Canadian economy, but there is no overall cap. What happens is that the pre-budget consultation ends up becoming an additional pressure for a government that already has trouble with spending to spend more money. We need a prioritization process, a process that will help any government stay on track, because this government, particularly with its billions of dollars in deficit spending, is putting Canadians in a deeper and deeper hole.

We know that the more the government spends, the more everything costs.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague and the Conservatives for this concurrence motion today. This is certainly a topic I love talking about, and I look forward to a 20-minute speech shortly.

The member was talking specifically about the carbon tax and the price on pollution that the government implemented. Conservatives have run two elections suggesting that they will get rid of it, two elections that they lost in the process.

Given the fact that, in the last election this member ran in, not that far away from my riding, he was knocking on doors trying to sell the Conservative version of a price on pollution, how is it possible that Conservatives can be so hypocritical about a price on pollution when this member himself ran on it less than two years ago?

**Mr. Philip Lawrence:** Madam Speaker, it is great to finally recognize, and I appreciate the member recognizing the fact, that it is a carbon tax and that this is a tax plan and not an environmental plan. The number of targets the government has hit is zero.

I refuse to take lessons from a government that is an abject failure on climate change, one of the worst performers in the G7, or in fact in the OECD, with respect to climate change, while destroying Canadian energy.

You are destroying the economy. You are not fighting climate change. It is time for a change.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I am sure the hon. member was not saying that I was doing that, so I would just remind the hon. member to address the questions and comments through the Chair.

The hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

### Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I found that exchange amusing. I do not see how reminding the Conservatives that they lost two elections when they got more votes than the Liberals has anything at all to do with the debate on budget proposals.

My question has to do with the tax on aircraft. There is one thing I do not understand, and I do not know how my colleague can explain it. One of the Bloc Québécois's demands was to put an end to this tax, which is disguised as a social justice measure. The unions involved are also opposed to it. What I do not understand is that this tax was put forward for the first time two years ago.

I can understand the government putting a measure forward originally. However, once the government realizes that the way the measure is written is having a negative impact, then it should do something to remedy the situation.

What does my colleague think about that?

[English]

**Mr. Philip Lawrence:** Madam Speaker, I am sorry. I think the translation missed a little bit of that.

What I can say is that, clearly, the Liberal policies have been, intentionally or not, abject failures. The Liberals have been spending to reduce the costs for Canadians, yet mortgages have doubled, rents have doubled and food is going up by 10%. They brought in the carbon tax to supposedly fight climate change. We have not hit a target.

As I said, it is time for a change. We need a government that can get results.

**Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, in terms of people struggling to make ends meet, I often hear people in the House usurp the story of the single mother, usually men who I know will never experience being a single mom. I was one, as I have mentioned before.

If we are going to talk about helping families get ahead, helping moms not have to work three jobs, I am wondering if the hon. member is open to supporting things that the NDP has put forward in the pre-budget, things that would really help pay the bills, like dental care, pharmacare, and a national child care strategy that puts non-profit and public child care first in this budget.

• (1020)

**Mr. Philip Lawrence:** Madam Speaker, there is some overlap, I believe, between the NDP and the Conservatives. We both see the affordability crisis affecting all of us and, of course, the most vulnerable at the lower end of the economic spectrum.

*Routine Proceedings*

Where Conservatives, I guess, differ from the NDP is that we believe one of the most effective ways to help individuals is to stop taking their money. We have marginal effective tax rates at over 50%. An individual earning \$30,000 a year may be paying 30¢ or 40¢ of every dollar. That is tens of thousands of dollars when it is added to inflation and taxation. The more the government spends, the more it will cost Canadians.

We believe in the individuals and their ability, if in fact the government can just get out of the way.

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today with another opportunity to warn the government about the course it is on.

Winston Churchill is famous for saying, “Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it”, and he was right. We can just look at the Liberal government. High taxes, high inflation and corporate socialism are not an innovation of today's Liberals. It has been going on for years. This is a lefty obsession: raising the taxes of everyday Canadians, and then turning around and spending so much money that the government runs massive inflationary deficits and runs up the debt. The only people who benefit are the wealthy Liberal insiders and their corporations. In the 1970s, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau did this exact same thing. At the time, he spent more than all his predecessors combined, driving up Canada's debt and leaving in his wake nearly two decades of high inflation and high interest rates.

Canadians are turning in their house keys, taking on more household debt just to survive and worrying about whether they can afford to heat their homes, buy groceries or gas up their cars. It sounds very familiar. It is another example of history repeating itself.

We know that, just as in the days of Pierre Trudeau, the current Prime Minister created the inflation and cost of living crisis we see today with his out-of-control spending. While he got Tiff Macklem and the Bank of Canada to cover his massive deficits with money printing, he did nothing to address the inflation concerns or ease the inflationary pressures of higher taxes. Instead, the Prime Minister passes on the taxes. He takes from everyday Canadians and spends their money on high-priced consultants and Liberal insiders who get cushy government contracts.

The concept of money printing and inflation is not even the invention of the Liberals of the 1970s. In the 1700s, French banker and economist Richard Cantillon observed that the rich and the insiders get all the benefits when the government increases the money supply. In those days, the rich and the insiders were the aristocracy closest to the French king. When a gold mine was discovered and the supply of gold increased, Cantillon saw that the value of gold did not increase, and neither did the wealth of the everyday people. Instead, the value of gold diminished. Instead of one gold coin purchasing a loaf of bread, it now took two, yet the wealthy gold mine owner and the landowner growing grain for bread were better off. They could keep spending money on luxuries, while everyday people fell further behind.

Today, Canada sees the same thing happening. We are not just witnessing the 1970s repeat themselves. We are seeing fundamental

economics return with a vengeance. Leave it to the Liberal government to ignore an at least 300-year-old lesson in inflation.

Today's aristocracy is the ones benefiting from the \$600 billion spent in the last eight years. These insiders enjoy privileged access to billions of tax dollars stashed away in Liberal programs like the Canada Infrastructure Bank or the Canada growth fund. These are the same insiders who will benefit from the so-called “just transition”, which will eliminate hundreds of thousands of good-paying, responsible Canadian energy jobs. They are the same insiders who will benefit from the \$21.4 billion the Prime Minister is handing out to consultants like McKinsey, and from what his ministers are handing out to their besties in cushy contracts. These insiders are the same ones getting rich off the inflationary deficits and wasteful spending.

Do not get me wrong. As a proud Albertan and Conservative, I support the free market and individuals' ability to make and use their money the way they want to. What I have a problem with is when the Liberal government takes more out of the pockets of everyday Canadians and in some quasi-corporate socialist way redistributes these tax dollars to the rich and the Liberal insiders.

This is such a disregard for freedom, free enterprise and Canadians' money. The blatant payoffs to Liberal friends using taxpayers' money only make life more expensive for the rest of us. As the Leader of the Opposition has clearly explained to this House, just as Cantillon observed 300 years ago, it is this type of government waste that causes the people to suffer while the rich insiders have never had it so good.

• (1025)

What is most frustrating is how the Liberals cannot see that the increasing cost of government is tied to the increasing cost of living. That is what I take issue with. In the study the finance committee overtook, despite the warnings and voices of everyday Canadians pleading with us to address the real issue, the cost of living crisis, the Liberal-NDP costly coalition joined forces to make recommendations that will not restore affordability.

In our dissenting report, Conservatives were clear: The Liberal government must rein in its inflationary deficit spending and address its ballooning debt. We reiterated our calls for no new taxes and no new spending, including all planned tax hikes, such as the tripling of the carbon tax, the second carbon tax, the luxury tax, the escalator tax on alcohol, and the payroll tax increases. We called on the Liberal government to adopt the pay-as-you-go law the Conservative leader proposed, which was endorsed by the Minister of Finance in a letter to her own ministers last fall.

*Routine Proceedings*

The reality is that, after eight years of the current Prime Minister, Canadians are out of money and the Liberals are out of touch. We cannot saddle future generations with borrowing for current spending and deficits. Interest rates are the highest they have been since the 2008 global recession. One in five Canadians is skipping meals, out of money or accessing charities for basic needs. Newcomers are being driven out of this country. One in five newcomers wants to pack up and leave. The number one cause of that is the high cost of living in this country.

Mortgages and rents have doubled since 2015. The average rent across Canada's 10 biggest cities is now over \$2,200 a month, compared to almost \$1,200 a month in 2015. Mortgages are now above \$3,100 compared to \$1,400 a month in 2015. All the while, Canada has the lowest homes per capita in the G7, and the lack of supply has home prices still inflated 30% above prepandemic levels. This is the result of eight years of out-of-control Liberal spending and increasing tax hikes.

That is why Conservatives are calling for budget 2023 to reverse the economic mismanagement brought on by the Prime Minister. Canada needs to stop printing money and, instead, make more of what money buys; axe the damaging and failed carbon tax, especially for farmers, so they can produce the food that Canada and the world need; remove gatekeepers to free up and speed up permits for homes, so that people can afford homes and so that job-creating energy projects can get built, which will create paycheques at home in Canada. By addressing inflationary deficit spending and high taxes, we can bring home lower prices and more powerful paycheques so that hard work pays off again.

This pre-budget consultation report fails to address the inflation and the cost of living crisis, and fails to provide real solutions. That is why, while I am on my feet, I move that the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following:

the 10th Report of the Standing Committee on Finance, presented on Friday, March 10, 2023, be not now concurred in, but that it be recommitted to the Standing Committee on Finance with instruction that it amend the same so as to recommend that the government create a "Blue Seal" National Professional Testing Standard to quickly license professionals, like doctors and nurses, who prove they are qualified, and that anyone who has passed the common national test for their profession would get a "Blue Seal" certificate allowing them to work in any province or territory that chooses to join the Blue Seal Standard.

• (1030)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The amendment is in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Fleetwood—Port Kells.

**Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, if government programs were responsible for inflation, we would see everybody up and down the line pinching pennies to get by.

Could the hon. member explain why big food is making record profits and why big oil is making record profits, while people are jacking up the cost of rent and the price of houses because of the lack of supply? This has nothing to do with government actions. In fact, I would ask the member whether or not it really justifies gov-

ernment action, in terms of regulation, because the free market has clearly been responsible for these distortions.

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan:** Madam Speaker, I am a little surprised. I should not be surprised, actually.

The Liberals make it seem like it is never their fault, and it is indeed. It is the government's wasteful spending that has put Canadians in a position where they are pinching pennies. They are literally barely hanging on. We are seeing 1.5 million Canadians visiting food banks in a single month. One in five Canadians is skipping meals in this country today.

When my family came here, we came here for a better future, like many other immigrants are coming today. However, because of the government's reckless spending with the support of its costly coalition partner, the NDP, more and more families want to leave this country, not stay here and contribute to it.

The government needs to rein in its spending and support Canadians by lowering their taxes so they can afford to eat and to heat their homes.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Madam Speaker, if I could sum up my colleague's speech I would say, "cut, cut, cut". It reminds me of the "triple, triple, triple" quip we used to hear.

Unfortunately, after the pandemic, some people have been left out in the cold, left to fend for themselves. It has been very tough for many people, including the homeless. In Quebec, homelessness is becoming quite visible in cities where there never used to be any. We need to deal with this.

Last week, I met with representatives from the Réseau Solidarité Itinérance du Québec, who shared what they are looking for in the next budget. They are asking the federal government for a 30% increase in investments in the reaching home program to prevent and reduce homelessness in Quebec. We know that budgets were increased during the pandemic, which helped, but they have returned to prepandemic levels. That is not right. The demand is still there.

They are also asking for the annual indexing of social housing and a \$3-billion investment. This is super important. At the end of the day, we want homeless populations to be housed.

What does my colleague think of these demands?

*Routine Proceedings*

• (1035)

[English]

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan:** Madam Speaker, the member's question gives me the opportunity to talk about the Conservative plan for getting more houses built in this country, including affordable housing.

Our Conservative leader recently made a proposal with respect to the 15% of federal buildings that are completely empty in this country right now. We could convert those, by working with municipalities, into affordable housing and houses. We could create more units in this country.

We also need to make sure we are getting the municipal gatekeepers out of the way so we can get more houses built. We need to get more people into more houses. There is a huge supply issue, which the Liberal government has failed to address after eight years. It has caused rents to double, and it is the same thing with mortgages.

Conservatives would get more houses built in this country for those who are most vulnerable and need them the most.

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the member talked about selling off 15% of government buildings to ensure there is adequate housing for Canadians.

We used to build 25,000 co-op units a year before the Liberals killed this in 1992. The Conservatives did not build any. In fact, under the Conservative government, rents and property prices doubled.

My colleague talked about supply. Would he agree that, when selling those government assets, it should be certain and there should be covenants in place so they go to non-market housing? Nowhere in the world has free market solved the housing crisis when there is a housing shortage.

I would like my colleague to agree that they should go to non-market housing in our country.

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan:** Madam Speaker, what we need to do is get the municipal gatekeepers out of the way and work with our municipalities so more housing units can get built in this country.

As someone who came from the home-building industry, I think that, with more supply, we could bring down the cost of rents and provide more units in this country to address the shortage, which is not only driving people out of home ownership but also leading to more and more people wanting to leave.

The largest portion of paycheques goes to housing right now. That is unfair to the newcomers and the Canadians who are living here. Conservatives would address that.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to talk about the important issue of finances and the direction in which the government has been leading Canada in order to support Canadians in every region of the country.

Before I get into that, I want to quickly make reference once again to the Conservatives' bringing forward a concurrence motion

in order to prevent government legislation from being debated. In fact, today, we were supposed to be debating Bill C-26, which is about cybersecurity, something important to Canadians. However, it is not the first time we have seen the Conservative Party show disrespect for important issues Canadians want us to deal with. In fact—

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I want to remind members that there will be 10 minutes of questions and comments, so they will have an opportunity to ask questions then. I would ask members to please hold off on any of their comments and maybe jot them down so they do not forget them.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, with respect to that particular point, I can assure the members opposite that I will hang around for the 10 minutes of questions and answers, which is unlike what we saw yesterday when I attempted to ask questions and there was no one around able to answer the questions or prepared to answer the questions.

What I am referencing—

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, the member opposite knows he cannot do indirectly what he cannot do directly. I would ask him to withdraw his previous statement.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Just to be very clear, when a member rises on a point of order and causes the Speaker to stand, it does not take away from the time allocation a member is supposed to be given for their speech. With that in mind, I would suggest that I did not make reference to any individual at all. The member is just assuming, correctly, that it was Conservatives who abandoned the chamber so I could not actually ask the questions.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I would just ask individuals to please be mindful of the words they use. Again, I did not hear the hon. parliamentary secretary speak directly about a specific member, so I just want to, again, remind members to be judicious with the words they use.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

• (1040)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I thought it was actually good news that I am prepared to answer for the comments I make in the chamber, because not all members can actually say that, as we witnessed yesterday when I attempted to ask questions of Conservative members of Parliament and they chose not to answer those questions.

I would like to—

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, the member opposite knows that he cannot directly or indirectly reference the presence of a member in the chamber. He is directly talking about the presence or not of a member who was not here yesterday. When we were having a debate, a member had to leave the House, and now the parliamentary secretary is bringing it up again. That is twice in the last 10 seconds that he has done it. The member needs to withdraw the statement.



*Routine Proceedings*

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Again, I want to remind members to be careful with respect to how they use their time that they have in the House. I did not hear the parliamentary secretary speak about a specific member. Generally, that is when we take issue with specific comments made. Again, I want to ask members not to mention anybody who was or was not in the House.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, let us try this again. I believe, just for confirmation, that I have 19 minutes left in my comments.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I do want to remind the member that his time is not being eaten away by these points of order. The clock is stopped every time.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**POINTS OF ORDER**

## ALLUSION TO PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I think that the point we are discussing right now is extremely important.

You just indicated that we may not refer to the presence or the absence of specific MPs in the House. I would like to have some clarification from you and from the Table.

For example, if I say that a significant number of Liberals are not in the House right now, am I making a faux pas in the House?

It is essential that I get an answer to this question.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I thank the member.

I will consider the question and come back to the House with an answer shortly.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## FINANCE

The House resumed consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, let me switch a bit, because the Conservatives are a little sensitive on the issue of accountability and responding to questions being posed to them. We witnessed that last night.

Having said that, let me assure those who are going to be following the debate today, first and foremost the many individuals who are interested in the whole issue of cybersecurity, that we will get to that debate eventually. It is just that the Conservatives have chosen to play a bit of a game. Fortunately, it is an area I really enjoy talking about, because it is an issue that is so important to all Canadians, and that is the budgetary measures the government has to put into place in order to ensure the economy is working for all of us.

Since we formed government back in 2015, we have had a very clear and concise message as a government. This is a government focused on supporting Canada's middle class and those aspiring to become a part of it. This is a government that has been there to have the backs of Canadians during a worldwide pandemic. This is a government that has recognized the need for the government to take actions, even at a time when we have inflation rates that are not acceptable.

Members opposite will talk about inflation and they will give a false impression. If we listened to what the Conservative Party is saying, we would think this government is the cause of worldwide inflation. One member says it is. We are not quite that influential around the world; I can assure the member of that. At the end of the day, if we take a look at Canada's inflation rate, we can compare it to the countries of the G7 or even the G20, our allied countries. We can look at it in terms of the United States. We will find that our inflation rate is actually lower than the U.S.A.'s and than that of most countries in Europe, whether France or others.

Our inflation rate is still of concern to the government, because we understand. As members of Parliament, we go home and understand the pains our constituents are experiencing, and that is the reason we take seriously the issue of consultations, something Stephen Harper really did not do. In fact, we have a Prime Minister who still does open, public town hall-type meetings, something the former Prime Minister never really did. We have a Minister of Finance in the department who aggressively goes out to consult with Canadians and different stakeholders consistently throughout the year, but in particular in the lead-up to making those important budgetary decisions.

We do this because we recognize how important it is, as a government, that our budget reflect what Canadians expect the government to do. Yesterday, the Conservatives wanted to focus on one aspect. They wanted to talk about the possibility of 15¢ for 24 bottles of beer and the impact that was going to have on Canadian society. That is what their focus was yesterday.

**Mr. James Bezan:** Jobs. What about the agriculture sector?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, the member says “jobs”—

• (1045)

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

I just want to remind the member that he should stick to his speech and not answer during the debate when other people are yelling out. I would also ask members not to yell out, mention other things or try to have conversations with the hon. member.

Again, I would ask members to hold on to their questions and comments. They will have 10 minutes of questions and comments.

The hon. member still has almost 14 minutes to speak, so I would ask individual members to please be mindful of that.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

*Routine Proceedings*

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, the point was that the Conservatives could have talked about what the member just heckled about, which is jobs. We could have talked about jobs yesterday.

Does the member not realize the number of jobs that have been added to Canada's economy since before the pandemic got under way? We have seen an increase of over 830,000 jobs, closer to a million. Can members imagine that? It took Stephen Harper 10 years to achieve a million jobs.

We went through a pandemic, and because we had the right priorities, unlike the Conservatives, we protected Canadians. We were there to support small businesses. Never before have we seen the type of programs that supported small businesses, whether it was with loans or wage subsidies. Millions of jobs were saved as a direct result of that. Companies were prevented from going bankrupt in many situations because of that. We were able to support Canadians through the CERB program. Imagine the eight million-plus Canadians who genuinely needed the program, which allowed them to put food on the table, pay their mortgage and so forth. By providing those types of supports, we were in a good position to rebound and build stronger after the crux of the pandemic.

As a result, there are more than 830,000 more jobs today than there were at the beginning of the pandemic. This is far better than, let us say, the United States or some other countries in the world. Why is that? It is because the federal government chose to work with Canadians, chose to work with different levels of government, and implemented policies that really made the difference. If I were to cite some of those policies today, we hear Conservatives talk about their Conservative ideas. There are a few that come to mind, some that we put in place and some that the Conservatives wished they could have put into place.

We go out and consult. What does the leader of the Conservative Party do? He says that consultation is not necessary. After all, we have YouTube. Remember cryptocurrency, which was economics 101 and his first major policy statement recommendation for Canadians? The Conservative Party of Canada was saying that the way we avoid inflation and really reap the profits was to invest in cryptocurrency. This is something he advised Canadians to do.

I will conclude with those who took the advice of the Conservative leader. They had their savings wiped out, with 60% to 70% gone. It was incredible the amount of money that was lost on cryptocurrency, going into the millions of dollars. Individuals on a fixed income who believed what the Conservative leader was saying paid a very heavy price.

Now the Conservatives are talking about interest rates. Do members remember what the leader of the Conservative Party said about the Bank of Canada? He said that we would fire or get rid of the head of the Bank of Canada.

**An hon. member:** Why would he do that?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, that is a very good question. Why would he do that? This is also what the member for Abbotsford posed, and look what happened to that member. I will reference the member and the riding he is from who questioned the Conservative leader's judgment on that issue because the member

for Abbotsford now sits way in the back and has been kind of ditched to the side. We very rarely hear from him. However, we have an initiative or suggestion from the leader of the Conservative Party that even progressive Conservatives disagree with.

• (1050)

We need to look at some of the other issues. Let us stop with some of the Conservative ideas because they can be painful to listen to. We can think of the child care program. What is the Conservative Party's position on child care? We know that during the election they said they would rip it up. They did not want anything to do with the Liberal plan. Now, because the government had the support of at least one opposition party, we were able to implement a national child care program, \$10-a-day day care, throughout the country. Every province, even Doug Ford's Ontario, has signed onto the program.

The economic impact of that program will see more people participating in the workforce. There will be more recognition of quality child care. Universally, with the exception of the Conservative Party of Canada, it has been well received. I am hoping that sometime between now and the next federal election we will see a major flip-flop by the Conservative Party on this issue. I hope it will not rip up the agreements and will continue the commitment, because we have seen the success of that particular program. All one needs to do is look at the province of Quebec and the positive impact it has had on that province, particularly women becoming engaged in the workforce as a direct result. That is an idea that really makes a difference.

Speaking of flip-flops, my colleague from Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston referred to the price on pollution. We really have to follow the bouncing ball on that one. Representatives from around the world went to Paris where there was a great deal of discussion about what we can do about the environment. They recognized that climate change is real. Climate change is a reality of life on earth today. There are some in the Conservative Party who do not quite understand that, or choose to not believe it is a reality, but it is a reality.

From that Paris conference came the idea that we needed to implement a national price on pollution. Some provinces, indirectly or in some other way, had it, so we said we were going to put in a policy to protect the environment, via a backstop to make sure that all of the provinces and territories have it. The price on pollution is quickly becoming the go-to tool for ensuring that Canadians are participating in diminishing greenhouse gases. Other provinces have now opted into the price on pollution because, as the Parliamentary Budget Officer has made very clear, there is a net benefit for the majority of Canadians with the federal backstop program on the price on pollution. That is a really positive thing.

*Routine Proceedings*

The Conservatives, prior to the last election, were opposed to it. They fought it tooth and nail. Then they had a new leader, about two or three leaders ago, and the new leader said that a price on pollution is a good thing. They came up with a different type of design so they could stamp it blue to put it in their campaign. There were 338 Conservative candidates from coast to coast to coast saying they supported a price on pollution, and they got a lot of votes based on that, a lot of votes. A lot of people thought that maybe the Conservatives could be sensitive to the environment.

After the election, a new, shiny leader took over and that idea was gone. It was history. It was toast. Now the Conservative Party says not to worry about climate change because, after all, we do not need a price on pollution. It wanted to get rid of it. Getting rid of the price on pollution will be a platform issue, no doubt, coming from the Conservative Party of Canada.

• (1055)

They will spread all sorts of misinformation. They will attempt to give the false impression that most people are not going to receive, or have not been receiving, a net benefit. They have been talking a lot about doctors and health care workers. The government of Canada has been working with different levels of government to ensure that we can get more credentials recognized. We have been providing incentives for that to take place and looking at ways in which immigration itself could assist. We know and we realize that we want to see an enhancement of health care workers.

The Conservatives came up with this next idea about having a common national test. Members can imagine what they are telling Canadians. They are saying to Canadians that they are going to get them more doctors. The way they are going to do it is to have an exam so that someone coming into Canada, or any doctor, I would assume, could write this exam and then go to any province or territory to be a doctor. That is balderdash. A federal Conservative government in the future, heaven forbid, could not do what it is that they are talking about doing.

The administration of health care is done through provinces. There are professional organizations and all sorts of stakeholders out there. It is not as simple as saying that we are going to have a national exam and if someone passes that national exam then they are going to be able to practice medicine. When do they think they would be able to implement something of that nature? I think that they are looking at this and thinking they will hoodwink Canadians on this, much like they have tried to trick them on other issues.

In the last 20-plus years of its history, the Conservative Party has never demonstrated an interest in health care. What we negotiated back in the 2004 health care accord, was expired by the Conservatives. They are the ones who reduced it from 6% to 3%. They had no interest in meeting federal and provincial first ministerial meetings to deal with the health care issue.

One of the first things did, whether in previous administrations or this administration, has been to invest in health care. We achieved health care accord agreements with individual provinces shortly after. We have just invested \$198 billion in health care. Health care is a part of our core identity as Canadians, and we have made the investment, recognizing that those are the types of priorities Canadians have. That is what this Liberal caucus is reflecting

on: the priorities of Canadians. The good news is that next week we are going to have a federal budget that will amplify what it is that Canadians expect of the government.

I look forward to seeing that budget and being able to participate in that debate.

• (1100)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I will bring the debate back to budget requests. The earlier exchanges were not very respectful.

I would like my colleague to speak about the agriculture sector and agri-food processing. Agricultural groups informed the government that they were expecting significant support to deal with inflation, especially newer businesses. Next-generation businesses currently have very high debt levels. They need some liquidity.

Does my colleague agree that those sectors need support? Has he supported the creation of such measures within his party?

We have to help the next generation. We also need an innovation program to improve agri-food processing, which is affected by a significant and very serious delay in infrastructure investment. We must not wait for it to be more profitable for a multinational to demolish a building and put up a new one because we do not know where the new one will be built. It is important that the government provide assistance for that. I would like to hear my colleague's reaction to that.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, our agricultural industries throughout the country are of critical importance. When the member talks about infrastructure, there is no government that has invested more in infrastructure, at least in the last 50, 60 or 70 years, than this government has over the last five, six or seven years. In agriculture, of course it is important.

We have to be careful when we talk about interest rates or inflation. Let us do a fair comparison. Take a look at what is happening in the United States. Take a look at what is happening in the G20 countries. To say that interest rates in Canada are going up and that we are not comfortable with the inflation rate in Canada, yes, the government is aware of that. We are taking action. In relative comparison to other jurisdictions, we are doing well, but that is still not good enough. That is the reason why someone such as myself, being from the Prairies, looks at agriculture and the diversity of agriculture.

I am very proud of how the pork industry, for example, has grown. I will add comments as—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Questions and comments, the hon. member for Red Deer—Mountain View.

*Routine Proceedings*

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is always interesting to listen to my colleague. There are two things. One thing he just mentioned was interest rates and inflation. Right now, Alberta has a 3.2% inflation rate, whereas we are at 5.2% for the rest of the country. Part of the reason for this is that the province is cutting taxes and making sure people have money in their pockets so they can invest in things that are important. This is something different than what we see in the government, and we start to worry about whether the taxes are going to be increased and make it more difficult.

The last point I want to make is about health care, which the member talked about. Could he explain what the Liberal government did in the 1990s, when it slashed the money that was going toward health care?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, when one thinks about the different fluctuating rates of inflation across the country, one also needs to take a look at natural resources, the provincial GDPs and so forth. All of that has an impact on inflation rates.

On the health care issue, I am glad the member brings it up. Jean Chrétien established a clear cash transfer on health care. Prior to that commitment, we were working on a tax point shift that ultimately would have seen Ottawa defunding health care into the future. I was concerned.

I was in the Manitoba legislature at the time as a parliamentarian, and there was a great deal of discussion that Ottawa was getting out of health care. Thanks to Jean Chrétien and that particular government, we not only established a very strong presence in health care, but we also continued to grow that through health care agreements and accords to ultimately reach what we have today. That is a \$198-billion commitment under this particular administration for health care.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Madam Speaker, we are all seeing across Canada, and in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith, a growing income gap happening. We see so many people struggling to make ends meet while ultrarich CEOs are making higher and higher excess profits every day. This is a big problem.

I do see in here that a majority of parties came together and put together a recommendation I find to be quite good, and I wanted to ask the member about it. It reads:

Take steps to close the growing income gap and generate revenue to fund poverty reduction programs by closing tax loopholes and ending the use of low-tax or non-cooperative jurisdictions for tax purposes, taxing extreme wealth, and implementing a tax on excessive profits, including windfalls associated with the pandemic.

What are the member's thoughts on this? What is the government doing today to begin implementing this very sound recommendation?

• (1105)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, in principle I agree with what the member is suggesting. It is one reason the Minister of Finance has in fact put a special tax on bank profits.

I want to go back even further than that to the principle of tax fairness. One of the very first things we did back in 2015-16 was to

introduce a tax break for Canada's middle class. At the same time, we funded that tax break in good part by putting a special tax on Canada's wealthiest 1%. By the way, opposition parties voted against that, but at the end of the day we were able to implement it.

Through those types of policy initiatives of the federal government, we developed and enhanced the Canada child benefit program, which then took money away from millionaires and put it where people needed it the most, such as with the development of child care. Again, this had a very positive outcome and is one of the reasons literally thousands of children have been lifted out of poverty.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, there has been a lot of commentary particularly, from both sides of the House, on Canada's climate record. As a Green, I can also say in a non-partisan way that no government in this country has ever met a single climate target to which we have signed on in legally binding agreements. Neither Stephen Harper nor any Liberal prime minister has done so.

Not only have we never hit a target, but we have also never gotten the direction right. Our emissions go up instead of going down. As we look at the budget next week, does my hon. colleague and friend not think it would be good to stop putting billions of dollars into promoting fossil fuel use, cut them altogether and cancel the Trans Mountain pipeline?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, the leader of the Green Party is in fact consistent, and she would disassemble some of our currently existing pipelines. The government has a responsibility. We made commitments to transition and to net zero by 2050. We have also worked with other governments.

For example, with the LNG project, which I know the member does not support, we worked very closely with the provincial NDP government in British Columbia, and we were able to move ahead on LNG. I would like to think that all parties inside this chamber except the Green Party support it. Maybe the Bloc does not support it; my apologies. At the end of the day, we do have a very progressive approach to protecting our environment. The price on pollution is just one example; another is tax incentives for hybrid vehicles.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Madam Speaker, Canada ranks last in the G7 when it comes to the average number of housing units per capita. That alone is outrageous.

There are currently 45,000 people on waiting lists to get low-cost housing in Quebec. It is shameful and outrageous. I spoke with an economist from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation who initiated a study a few months ago. In Quebec alone, in order to address the two biggest problems, which are affordability and accessibility, 1.1 million housing units would need to be built. The private sector will build 500,000 units over the next 10 years.

This means that governments need to step up somehow and build 600,000 units in the next 10 years.

Over the past five years, as part of the broader national housing strategy, 35,000 units have been built and 60,000 units have been renovated, for a total of 100,000. We need 60,000 every year. This country needs a Marshall plan to address the housing crisis.

When is that going to begin?

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, per capita, Canada is one of the fastest-growing countries in the world.

We can look at our population base and find that our population growth is actually incredible compared to that of any other country in the world. This means that more people will be looking for housing.

What the member did not include is that the lead on housing is not the national government. The national government plays an important role, but so do the provincial governments and municipalities. The municipalities need to allow and allocate more land for housing developments. Those are zoning requirements.

The federal government could provide supports, encouragement and dollars. In the last 30 or 40 years, no government has invested more in housing than the current one. We recognize the need. We are supporting action by other governments. In fact, where we can, we are taking direct action to ensure that the housing stock is not only better maintained but also greener from an environmental perspective. We are also growing the actual number of houses for people with disabilities, as well as non-profit homes, generally speaking.

\* \* \*

• (1110)

[Translation]

### POINTS OF ORDER

#### ALLUSIONS TO PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF MEMBERS—SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Before we move on to the next speaker, I would like to return to the point of order raised by the member for Mégantic-L'Érable.

*House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, 2017, by Marc Bosc and André Gagnon, on page 619, chapter 13, states the following:

Allusions to the presence or absence of a Member or Minister in the Chamber are unacceptable.

As we can see, it states, “a Member” and “a Minister in the Chamber”.

I would still like to remind members that there is a gray area when we refer to people who are or are not in the House. It would be better not to mention who is in the House and who is not, as a general rule.

### Routine Proceedings

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

### FINANCE

The House resumed consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Speaker, thank you for those clarifications. It is still a grey area. MPs learn something every day in the House.

Crises teach us so much because they subject our societies to pressure. They highlight our strengths and our weaknesses. However, for the past three years, we have been operating from inside a Matryoshka doll set of crises that have revealed weaknesses in both our economic structure and government action. There was the COVID-19 crisis, lockdowns and a stalled economy.

First, let us talk about the public health crisis. The COVID-19 crisis revealed the system's extreme fragility, aggravated by the aging population. It was primarily caused, however, by chronic federal underfunding, which has escalated since 2017 when health transfers stopped being tied to rising costs.

A better division of health care costs, including adequate and predictable federal funding, would have protected our health care system from potential collapse. Moreover, recent agreements are insufficient to stave off that threat. At best, they temporarily freeze, at an insufficient level, the federal share of health care funding, nothing more. In 10 years, Ottawa will contribute 24% of health care costs, which is the same percentage it was contributing when the current Prime Minister took office in 2015.

We know that ending the government's disengagement is not enough to rebuild the health care system. The government needs to tackle the chronic underfunding with a significant reinvestment if we have any hope of being able to deal with the coming demographic crisis. Quebec and the Canadian provinces have said it again and again while providing ample evidence to support their case, but Ottawa is missing in action. Ottawa is the one holding on to the money that Quebec and the provinces urgently need on an ongoing basis.

COVID-19 created an income crisis for individuals by forcing millions of people to stop working temporarily. It brought to light the flaws in the employment insurance system, which covers only a small portion of the contributors who lose their jobs. Because the system was inadequate, the government was forced to compensate by creating a whole host of special programs, which were often not well-thought-out, poorly targeted, ineffective and costly. However, these programs expired, as did the relaxed EI rules, which are now back to the way they were before 2020 and before COVID showed us how inadequate they were.

With the threat of a recession looming, now is the time to fix the problems with the EI system, to make it more accessible and to adapt it to non-standard jobs, which are becoming increasingly common. Ottawa is refusing to conduct this necessary, in-depth reform.

*Routine Proceedings*

After the lockdowns, the economy reopened. This reopening of the economy also revealed its share of weaknesses. The housing shortage, caused by years of underfunding and not building enough homes, caused prices to skyrocket. Housing starts, especially for affordable rental housing and social and co-operative housing are still weak in 2023. Things need to change course and fast.

The destabilization of our manufacturing sector made us seriously dependent on foreign suppliers in globalized supply chains, whose fragility was exposed during the crisis. There again, the disruptions led to shortages and high inflation, amplified by a lack of competition, which allowed mass distribution to increase its prices at will. We need to rebuild solid supply chains immediately and improve our competition regime. It is imperative that we improve the resilience of our economy.

All these factors contributed to the increase in prices and then the successive interest rate hikes set by the central bank. We know who is suffering the most from this: people on a fixed income, such as pensioners, low-income earners who cannot cope with the increased cost of essentials, and heavily indebted households that are especially hard hit by rising interest rates, especially young families who recently purchased a home.

As if that were not enough, we are now being rocked by international crises. Aggression against Ukraine is turning Russia into an international pariah and pushing it out of trade and economic channels. That has impacted the price of commodities, oil, grains and fertilizers, all of which have skyrocketed. In addition to reminding us that we need to urgently reduce our dependency on oil, war is affecting the agricultural sector in particular, where input costs have skyrocketed. That sector urgently needs to be given the tools to survive the crisis, as well as help to adopt a more sustainable model: supply management protection, predictability, resilience to annual yield variability and disasters, ecological transition, standards reciprocity and succession planning, among other things.

• (1115)

Then there is China. Its economy is far more diversified than that of Russia, and a rise in tensions is likely to impact many more sectors. In particular, we are completely dependent on China's supply of components needed for high-tech goods and the electrification of transportation. These sectors need a major boost.

We already have a relative advantage because Quebec and Canada have critical mineral deposits. If we move from mining to producing batteries, as the government of Quebec is proposing, we will all have what it takes to become the engine of transportation electrification in North America and become a vital link in new and more resilient supply chains. In that area, Ottawa must align with Quebec to accelerate the rolling out of its strategy.

Finally, there are crises unfolding in slow motion. There are three crises that we can see coming. They have been anticipated and analyzed for a long time, and there is no reason for not implementing the measures needed to address them.

First of all, there are demographic changes. The aging population will put more pressure on health care services and on the public finances of Quebec and the provinces, as we know. As baby boomers retire, this will also have significant economic repercussions.

Canada ranks near the bottom of OECD countries when it comes to protecting the purchasing power of retirees. There is an urgent need to preserve seniors' purchasing power to ensure that the demographic shock does not cause a major economic shock, which is why we want an increase in old age security that does not discriminate based on age.

This wave of retirements is problematic for businesses. The labour shortage could prevent us from rebuilding our supply chains if we do not take steps to address the shortage. Incentives must be provided for experienced workers who want to stay on the job. Our businesses need to step up their productivity to help them deal with the labour shortage. The temporary foreign worker program must be transferred to Quebec, which will be able to make it more efficient and bring it in line with Quebec's labour policies.

Then there is the climate crisis. Again, it has been unfolding for a long time, and we have analyzed it from every angle. However, we have been slow to act. Whether we are talking about shoreline erosion or the increase in extreme weather events, climate change will put enormous pressure on our public infrastructure. An adjustment fund is needed.

More fundamentally, we must accelerate the transition to a net-zero economy. The money invested in oil and gas must be urgently redirected to the green economy, with a focus on energy efficiency in all sectors, the electrification of transportation, which includes critical mineral processing, the transition from oil to renewable energy, and more sustainable agricultural practices.

As oil companies take advantage of international crises to rake in obscene profits, Ottawa must end all forms of subsidies, including subsidies for carbon sequestration and small nuclear power plants that are designed to produce energy to increase oil sands production. This money must be redirected to accelerating the transition.

Given the enormity of the task and the urgent need for action, the financial sector will have to participate and gradually redirect its oil investments to the green economy. Ottawa must get the banks to step up to the plate by forcing them to integrate climate risks into their investments. Tens of billions of dollars could be made available for the green transition.

*Routine Proceedings*

There is the ongoing issue of the fiscal imbalance, which is causing major problems that are limiting the government's ability to address the many challenges it faces. There are three types of problems. First, Ottawa, which brings in more revenue than it needs to discharge its responsibilities, is not making an effort to manage its own affairs properly. The federal government is notoriously ineffective, and everything costs more than it should.

• (1120)

I would like to give two examples to illustrate this. It costs the federal government two and a half times more to process an EI claim than it costs the Quebec government to process a social assistance claim. It costs the federal government four times more to issue a passport than it costs the Quebec government to issue a driver's licence. Everything costs more and those are just two examples.

Then, Ottawa uses its fiscal room to interfere in areas that fall under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. This sort of interference makes the sharing of powers less clear and less sound while undermining our autonomy. Administrative duplication is not in any way efficient. All it does is promote centralization in Ottawa.

I will again give two examples. The first concerns something that happened very recently, specifically the implementation of the dental care program for children. Quebec already provides dental insurance. However, the federal government did not make any effort to harmonize programs and simply created a second program. That is completely inefficient and ends up costing twice as much. It is really outrageous, and the Bloc Québécois has spoken about that many times.

Here is a more general example. People in Quebec have to complete two tax returns when, for years, the Quebec National Assembly and the Bloc Québécois have been calling for a single tax return. That is a useless and inefficient duplication of effort.

Lastly, with regard to the fiscal imbalance, given that Ottawa tightly controls the purse strings of the governments of Quebec and the Canadian provinces, the Quebec government's ability to fully discharge its responsibilities is diminished.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer has been clear: If the trend continues, eventually, provincial governments will no longer be sustainable. They will likely collapse while the federal government's fiscal room will increase considerably. That is what the Parliamentary Budget Officer has been telling us in his fiscal sustainability report year after year.

In other words, unless the trend is reversed, we run the risk of seeing an unprecedented centralization of power in Ottawa, which will take away the Quebec people's ability to control their development according to their needs, strengths, characteristics and wishes.

In that regard, at a time when this government is choosing to contribute six times less for health care than Quebec and the provinces are asking for to fix the system, Ottawa has unprecedented fiscal room that is in excess of \$80 billion, or three times the amount of the health care requests.

Let me explain. Ottawa increasingly budgets money for voted items that it fails to spend year after year. When you add up the

items that were voted and the spending that was authorized but not spent last year, \$41 billion was left on the table. Let me repeat that. Some \$41 billion was left on the table because it was voted or authorized but not spent. This is in addition to another \$40 billion in extra fiscal room, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer. If the federal government wanted to maintain its debt-to-GDP ratio, it could increase spending or reduce revenues by that amount.

When we talk about unprecedented centralization and the fact that the money is here, we are talking about \$81 billion in one single year. That is three times the amount the provinces and Quebec were asking for to better fund health care. Ottawa said no and agreed to six times less. That is peanuts. The federal government is gradually stabilizing its share, and the money stays here. That money will be used for new programs that interfere in our jurisdictions. There is no respect for the governments of Quebec and the provinces or for the National Assembly.

It was with these important challenges in mind that the Bloc Québécois drew up its expectations for the 2023 federal budget. We presented them to the minister a few weeks ago. Considering the challenges we are facing, now is not the time for shiny new programs, which are often not within the federal government's purview anyway, nor for pre-election pandering.

Financially speaking, the way to avoid austerity is to be prudent. Economically speaking, the best way to insulate ourselves from the potential turmoil of an extraordinarily uncertain environment is to tackle the fundamental issues. In this period of uncertainty, we need to get back to the essentials. The strengths of Quebec's economy are precisely what is needed to succeed in a rapidly changing world.

Also, the way to meet the current needs of the different sectors of Quebec's economy is to finally step into the 21st century. We have an abundant supply of clean, renewable energy, especially hydro-electricity. In this area, the shift is already under way, and we are ready to move on to the next step, which is a net-zero economy.

• (1125)

If our forests are managed sustainably, they are renewable resources that could be one of the keys to replacing hydrocarbons. More research would allow more processing and greater generation of wealth with this resource. Our proximity agriculture has already espoused the model of the future in favour of short circuits and food security.

We need to help our farmers face the current international turmoil that is inflating input prices and we need to help them develop more sustainable practices. That is the future.

When it comes to critical minerals essential to the redevelopment of supply chains and the electrification of transportation, the only mines in operation in Canada are in our neck of the woods. We need to move from mines to batteries and become an essential link in the chain, especially when it comes to supplying North America.

*Routine Proceedings*

Obviously, all that development needs to respect the highest environmental standards, in partnership with indigenous communities and with the agreement of local communities. It is good for the green economy, it is good for economic resilience, it is good for strategically positioning Quebec in a changing world.

Another one of Quebec's strengths is its creativity. A stagnant society struggles to cope with change. The antidote is creativity, and Quebec has that in spades. This is especially true for its arts and culture sector, so we must ensure that it maintains its vitality and influence, and the French language is the most vivid expression of that creativity. That being said, this same is true for all fields.

Yesterday's tinkerers are now working in artificial intelligence, creating the next video game, developing the next green finance instruments, working on the aeronautics industry of tomorrow. That is already the case. As Canada's technology hub, Quebec has what it takes to become silicon valley north, as long as we support our cutting-edge sectors.

Finally, there is our social model, particularly our tax and family policies. Because of them, wealth is more evenly distributed in Quebec than anywhere else on the continent. The middle class is larger in Quebec than elsewhere in Canada or the United States and, in a world that is under pressure, that guarantees a more peaceful life and social harmony. That is why it is so important to maintain the Quebec government's ability to take action, and that is why we must seriously address the fiscal imbalance that undermines that ability.

As with all of the expectations set out in the committee report we are discussing, the Bloc Québécois presented a series of requests covering many aspects of Quebec's economy. We outlined them here. They reflect the requests expressed by various sectors of Quebec society when consultations were held by all members of the Bloc Québécois. They respond to Quebec's real needs. They will help Quebec deal with all the existing crises and will make us more resilient. They will enable Quebec to embrace the future with confidence.

[English]

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member briefly touched on the electrical grid, the greening of that grid and the great success Quebec had seen around this. A number of recommendations in this report specifically talk about incentivizing electric vehicles and the infrastructure for electric vehicles.

I think it is widely known that Quebec has led the way in providing that infrastructure for electric vehicles. Could the member speak to the incredible success of Quebec in that area and how the rest of the country could benefit from the lessons that Quebec has learned?

• (1130)

[Translation]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Madam Speaker, a significant portion of the Standing Committee on Finance's report, and the demands of the Bloc Québécois, deals with the electrification of transportation. One of the key components of transport electrification is the con-

struction of charging station infrastructure so that drivers can charge their vehicles in various locations. That is well under way in Quebec and in British Columbia too, if I am not mistaken, where it is going well.

Obviously, to make electric vehicles appealing, we first need to require dealers and manufacturers to have models available at the dealership, which is not always the case, even in Quebec. We are asking Ottawa to introduce legislation in that regard and also to build a network of fast charging stations. A car that has a range of 400 kilometres, or 250 kilometres in winter, has to be able to charge in different locations. The hon. members for Berthier—Maskinongé and Drummond can attest to that.

[English]

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, as he is always working hard to fight for tax fairness and close loopholes that allow for extremely wealthy individuals to move their money out of the country.

One thing I am hearing from constituents is that people who applied for CERB and who might not have properly read the application, which might have not been clear from the government, are now being told that their child tax benefit will be reduced or, even worse, are getting a bill from CRA saying they have to pay it. Instead of the government going after big companies that paid out dividends to shareholders and collected the wage subsidy, it is going after low-income Canadians. This is creating huge mental health stress for Canadians and huge financial stress for them and their families. These people are already struggling.

Does my hon. colleague agree that there should be CERB repayment amnesty for all Canadians who are struggling right now?

[Translation]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for raising that important issue.

I think all of my colleagues in the House of Commons would agree. We are getting a lot of calls from families that have had their child benefit cut, probably because they received CERB payments that the Canada Revenue Agency wants to claw back.

No arrangements seem to have been taken into account. This approach can really lead to suffering and poverty for these families. We sincerely hope that the government will look at this, that the Minister of National Revenue will be able to address this and find a solution. We hope so. We will see whether she will do anything about this. It is really troubling.

I really liked the comparison the hon. member made. When it comes to regular folks, the government is quick to claw back money it is owed without even asking, but when it comes to multinationals, billionaires and fighting tax evasion, then it is much more complicated, sadly.



*Routine Proceedings*

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I thank my dear colleague, the member for Joliette, who is also the Bloc Québécois finance critic. I have a question about next week's budget.

What does he think about the money being wasted on the fossil fuel industry? For example, the Government of Canada owns the Trans Mountain pipeline. The cost of the project has ballooned to \$30 billion of public money.

What does he think about that?

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Madam Speaker, first, I want to pay tribute to and thank the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for her strong commitment to the planet. The IPCC's recent report reminds us of the urgent need for action, and I salute her commitment, her life's work, as we were saying earlier in a private conversation.

In my opinion, the government made the wrong choice for both the environment and the economy. That is why we were opposed, as was my hon. colleague. The time has come for the government to step from the 20th century into the 21st century and to support the green economy. It needs to stop supporting the oil economy. We still need it, but there must be a gradual, clear transition. For goodness' sake, subsidies to billionaire oil companies need to stop.

• (1135)

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I congratulate my very esteemed colleague from Joliette on his speech and comments, which are always enlightening, well-thought-out and prepared. We always appreciate the discussions we have with him.

Quebec cares deeply about its culture. This week, the Government of Quebec tabled its budget. There are allocations for culture, especially for certain aspects of culture that I appreciate, in particular facilitating access to culture for youth. Money is allocated for that. Also, some \$100 million over five years is being invested in Télé-Québec, if I am not mistaken. That is in addition to Télé-Québec's current budget. There is also assistance for the media sector.

My question for my colleague is this. The Bloc Québécois expressed its expectations for the cultural sector and, especially, the media sector. I would like him to briefly speak about the importance of the resources we are calling for to restore the vitality of the media sector.

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Drummond for his question, his comments and the kind words he said about me. We could praise one another all day, for I could say the same about him.

Language and culture are at the heart of our identity and our pride. They are what sustain us. They are what inspire us. It is the government's job to support our creators and organizations as well as the ecosystem that surrounds them. This includes the news media. Having high-quality, independent, local news is crucial.

Let us look at my community as an example. In Joliette, local media like radio stations and weekly newspapers are having a really tough time, particularly because advertising has shifted from local

media to the web giants with no compensation. I see these news organizations as an essential service. It is the government's job to support them and ensure that we continue to have high-quality, local news.

That is what the Bloc Québécois is asking for, and we will not back down.

[*English*]

**Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Madam Speaker, in her last budget and latest fall economic update, our Minister of Finance talked about Canada's lagging productivity numbers compared to those of our trading partners. She even called this "Canada's Achilles heel".

I wonder if my colleague shares that concern. What does he think is the source of the lagging productivity problem, and could he point to some solutions?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Madam Speaker, productivity is incredibly important. In terms of business productivity, Canada is lagging behind our G7 allies, as well as the average across high-income OECD countries. This needs to change.

Productivity measures the amount of value generated per hour worked. It is dependent on the amount of capital, the technology used and other factors. The level of technology and capital per hour worked in Canadian businesses do not adequately compare to other countries. Something needs to be done.

To fix this problem, the government must support leading-edge sectors like the aerospace industry. Various cities across the country have a strong aerospace industry, and the greater Montreal area is the third-largest aerospace hub in the world. Canada is the only country that has a very large aerospace industry but does not have an industrial policy to support research, development, commercialization and so on.

The government needs to do a better job of supporting productivity, investment, research and development.

[*English*]

**Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am so pleased to rise in the House today. Before I begin, I will mention that I will be splitting my time with the member for Edmonton Griesbach.

We talk about budgets, and I hear rhetoric in the House almost on a daily basis about how people from coast to coast are struggling to make ends meet, with a particular reference to single mothers. The story of the single mother is consistently usurped in this House without real solutions to tackle issues of poverty and inequality in this country.

*Routine Proceedings*

I actually was a single mom, as I have mentioned in the House. When I first had my son, I was one of the people we talk about in the House. I was not a single mom at the time, but I had just graduated from university and I was poor. The only thing that kept a roof over our heads at the time and allowed me to feed my son was affordable housing with rent geared to income and social assistance. I had just given birth to my child, and my partner at the time had employment that did not pay the bills, so I needed to get help.

I share this today because I often find that in this place these stories are taken by people who have never had lived experience with struggling to make ends meet or struggling to feed their kids. I share today, with my head held high, that I was one of those folks. It is an experience that allows me to understand that things are more difficult in life than a person picking themselves up by their bootstraps so they can survive.

Very often things are much more complicated in the lives of individuals and families, and they were for me at the time. I consider myself a well-educated person. It certainly was not about a lack of intelligence or hard work. It was just a matter of the circumstances of life at the time.

I share this because we are still coming out of a global pandemic that has impacted families from coast to coast, a pandemic that has left families more economically vulnerable than we have seen in a long time. We had programs put in place during the pandemic that kept food on the table, I would argue. We had CERB.

Now, as we move in another direction in real time, the current government is not going after big corporations to pay their fair share of the pandemic. It is not going after the billionaire class to pay their fair share of the pandemic. It is not going after big CEOs to pay their fair share of the pandemic. Do members know who it is going after? It is low-income parents to get money from the monies they collected from CERB, knowing that costs for families were drastically impacted during the pandemic.

That is unacceptable, and who is the most impacted by it? It is single mothers with multiple children. We are talking about housing and supporting families. This is going to leave a lot of families on the verge of falling into the streets.

Going back to my story, I was very fortunate at the time that I had affordable housing with rent geared to income. It allowed me to keep food on the table when food did not cost as much. That is not the reality right now, which is why the NDP has called on the current government to put in place CERB amnesty for low-income families in particular. The process the government is using could result in families being at greater risk of precarious housing and being placed in deeper levels of poverty. We know that people who were already behind before the pandemic are further behind now.

● (1140)

We need to stop poor-bashing in this place. We need to stop the simplified discussions about how to deal with the growing poverty crisis that impacts my riding of Winnipeg Centre, Manitoba, which was just reported to have some of the highest child poverty rates in the country.

Children are supposed to be provided with minimum human rights. We have signed on to international law. We have an obligation to uphold international and domestic laws to ensure that children are provided with basic human rights, which are being violated every day, whether in urban centres, first nations communities, indigenous communities or Inuit communities across the country.

I hope all my colleagues in the House will support the call for a CERB amnesty for low-income families, which, again, are the most impacted. If we are so concerned about the story of the single mother, it will be single mothers with multiple children who will be most impacted. That, for me, as the member of Parliament for Winnipeg Centre, is a true test of this so-called care I hear about in this place all the time. We must have CERB amnesty now.

The NDP also put forward a dental care plan, a universal pharmacare plan, and has been fighting for a national child care strategy that prioritizes public, not-for-profit care. We have been working with frontline advocates and organizations for almost 30 years to push that forward.

I am glad the current government finally heeded our call to implement a national child care strategy. This would have made a difference in my life and the life of my son. We talk about people working multiple jobs to pay the bills. I was one of those single moms who had to work multiple jobs to pay the bills. Part of the reason for that was because of high child care costs. I literally had to work more so I could work.

If members of the House want to support families, then they need to support a universal dental care plan, universal pharmacare and a national child care strategy that ensures that all children are afforded their minimum human right to have access to affordable, accessible, high-quality child care. These services are essential for supporting families, as is the addition of affordable housing with rents geared to income and my bill, Bill C-223, to put in place a guaranteed livable basic income.

I want to build a Canada where families are not begging to eat, where we do not make the assumption we are all born with the same privileges, where nobody is living in poverty, and where we stop poor-bashing and deal with what is going on in our country at the very roots of inequality. We can do that as members in the House.

Therefore, today, I call on all members of the House to support the NDP's call, and certainly my bill for a guaranteed livable basic income, and build a Canada for all.

*Routine Proceedings*

• (1145)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for the very personal nature of her discussion about being a single mother.

My wife, before we got together, was a single mother who benefited from a good support network around her. However, the reality is that so many single mothers out there do not have that support mechanism.

Toward the end of her speech, the member spoke specifically about a basic income. I know the NDP has been rightfully calling for that for a number of years and it is something I agree that we need to understand and implement.

Could she comment on how a basic income would directly help single mothers, in particular those who do not have access to good supports.

• (1150)

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** Madam Speaker, we need to start talking about the high cost of poverty, not the high cost of a guaranteed livable basic income. We have income guarantees right now. My bill would not offer anything new.

What I argue, though, is that the income guarantees we currently have are not livable. GIS for seniors is an income guarantee that is not livable. We know that when we do not look after seniors, or anybody, and when we do not provide people with what they need, it costs in other areas, like health care and justice systems.

We know that with a guaranteed livable basic income, and we have income guarantees, we need to make them livable and expand them out for those who are falling through the cracks of our social safety net.

**Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am very intrigued by the concept of CERB amnesty. I would like to hear some more details about my colleague's thoughts about that. Will there be means testing? I am assuming that applicants for this amnesty would have to be below a certain income or below a certain wealth level. Would there also be inquiries as to why applicants for amnesty applied for CERB when they clearly did not qualify for it? How about the people who decided not to apply for CERB because they knew they did not pass the test? Would they also qualify now for a CERB payment after the fact?

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** Madam Speaker, we should be clear that this program was not clear to begin with. There were calls to apply for CERB and then we would deal with it after. That is important to point out.

A lot of people benefited from support during the pandemic. We know that if we do CERB clawbacks for families that are currently living at lower incomes right now, it is going to result in people ending up on the streets.

Income assistance programs are not enough for families to survive, and children are going to be punished for this. I am calling for this, as is the NDP. Instead of going after families living in poverty, instead of going after poor people all the time, poor bashing and criminalizing poor people, let us go after rich CEOs who collect-

ed bonuses during the pandemic from programs that were paid by the government

I get tired of that rhetoric in the House. It is not based on research. It is not based on fact. It is a violence that continues in the House against people living in poverty, and I do not accept it.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I wanted to say that I myself have been a single mother with three children. I have had to work two jobs.

I would also like to talk about the cause of poverty, support for families, and funding to help them and single mothers.

From my colleague's point of view, what should the government prioritize in terms of support?

[*English*]

**Ms. Leah Gazan:** Madam Speaker, what I have offered up is not one solution. We need robust supports and services for families, like dental care, universal child care, pharmacare, guaranteed livable basic income and investment in affordable housing with rent geared to income. We need a comprehensive strategy to tackle social inequality.

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleagues for engaging in what I believe to be a really important discussion today.

To be clear, Canadians are suffering right now. In my community of Edmonton Griesbach, one does not have to look far to see the devastating impacts of poverty. There are community organizations with some of the biggest hearts and biggest hugs one can imagine, but that does not go far enough when we see critical under-resourcing and underfunding of some of the most essential services our country needs to offer. When we do not offer them, we see community organizations having to do that work, the work of health care, the work of mental health, the work that is required to ensure that regular everyday people can maximize their opportunities.

People living in absolute poverty, living in the absolute worst situations one can imagine, if they have no homes or supports, are driven to a place in life where they may seek, for example, substances, which they abuse. They will fall down the rabbit hole of trying to find mental health services and will be unable to find them. It is a kind of labyrinth of poverty that our country has created, and we can address it and fix it. We are wealthy country.

We would not know that by looking outside. We would not know how wealthy our country really is by the conditions of workers. We would not know how wealthy our country is by the lack of clean water in first nations communities. We would not know how wealthy our country really is until we look at the bonuses big CEOs get. These are questions of our society, of our economy, questions about what kind of Canada we want to build.

*Routine Proceedings*

When I speak to folks in my province of Alberta, they are scared. They are scared of a crumbling health care system that is being driven into the ground by private huge megacorporations that would seek to benefit and profit off those who are sick, and it is being allowed by the politicians for whom they pay.

Danielle Smith, the premier of Alberta, right now is allowing for-profit surgeries in my home province. It is shameful when seniors are waiting in emergency rooms day after day not knowing if they are going to get the care they need.

I speak to many young people who are struggling to even imagine an idea of owning a home. Even worse, some of them are living on our streets, the most vulnerable in our society. Who put them there? It was not solely the actions of individuals who got them there. It was our society that participated in a manufactured condition.

We are seeing a mental health crisis. When I see people in my community struggling to get the supports they need, there are often massive barriers. One of the biggest barriers is money. There is a lack of public mental health care, and that lack of public health care downloads costs onto our existing health care system. This massively and exponentially compounds the problems we are seeing in our hospitals.

Hospitals cannot be the one-stop shop for all problems in society. We need to reinforce our hospitals and reinvest in them, but we also need to create more mental health supports with real professionals who can ensure that the work of mental health and the kinds of supports needed in that kind of care are met.

We are witnessing a drug-poisoning crisis. It is killing Canadians. It is a crisis that has touched every community that we all represent in this place. Whether it is young people, seniors, business owners or teachers, they are dying because we are not doing anything about the drug-poisoning crisis. We can do more.

When driven to absolute poverty, the increase in crimes goes up. These are crimes of desperation. People do not want to see themselves in a penitentiary, but when they find themselves there, we have to ask ourselves as legislators, as people who represent our constituents, how did they get there? It is not, as I said before, the actions of just individuals; it is the conditions of poverty that we have placed upon them.

There is an answer to this, and the New Democrats have been steadfast for decades to distinguish between the needs and wants of Canadians. The needs of Canadians are the things I spoke to: good public health care; a good, strong public mental health care system; housing stock that can ensure that low-income folks can get into those homes.

• (1155)

We need to address the drug poisoning crisis. We need to make sure that there are resources invested in mental health. We need to take seriously the inflictions of poverty and the outcomes they present. We can ensure that our economy actually works for those who are working to build it.

There seems to be a problem with our conception of where wealth comes from in this country. People think CEOs get up in a

day and produce all this money. No, it is workers who show up every single day, like the small business owners in my community. They are not only those who offer their philanthropy to those who need help, but they are also the same people who are suffering in their own right. They are seeing huge costs passed on to them, and they cannot afford to compete with these megacorporations that are dodging taxes while simultaneously gouging Canadians. How can a small business compete with that? It is not possible.

We need to protect those in the working class in this country. They need strong wages. We do not have a labour shortage in this country; we have a wage crisis. When we increase the wages of everyday workers and they can see the value of their labour produced in their paycheque, that is a good day for workers. It means they can actually put food on the table, pay their bills and pay their mortgages.

However, the problem gets worse. It is not just ensuring that workers have good wages but also ensuring that these companies are held to account. We are seeing some of the largest tax avoidance in our country's history taking place right under our noses today, and I will speak directly to some of the facts on this.

The tax gap has almost doubled in the last three years. Corporations are walking away with \$30 billion in tax avoidance. We could close the tax loopholes today if only we had the courage of the government to see this as a serious problem.

I will take a moment to talk about the \$30 billion, which can go a long way. We are going to see a budget in a short few weeks, and it is going to demonstrate a massive underfunding of public services if we do not ensure that we close these tax loopholes.

Canadians deserve to know that when they show up to work for massive corporations, these corporations are also paying their fair share. When regular, everyday folks are paying exorbitant tax and seeing that these megacorporations are not, there are doubts about the efficacy of our tax system. Moreover, it creates a kind of distrust, which is growing across Canada.

We need to fix our tax system, in which corporations see massive profits, with some up 60%, while simultaneously seeing their tax gap go down. This is creating a massive revenue problem. For the government, and in speaking directly with the commissioner of the CRA, it is a massive issue.

The CRA needs resources to ensure that it can tackle this. However, right now, these resources are being directed to a witch hunt of little old ladies who took CERB in the most desperate time of need instead of going after the rich corporations that have massive windfall profits. Instead of taxing them, we are going to use CRA to attack these poor folks. We are calling for an amnesty for these folks.

*Routine Proceedings*

I will conclude, as there will be a vote on this amendment in a short while, with regard specifically to the amendment that has been brought by the Conservative Party. New Democrats have been fighting for years to see a pan-Canadian licensing that would make sure we have a standard so that we can increase our workforce, particularly in health care, right here at home. We can do this by ensuring that those who bring those skills here actually have the ability to enter our workforce quickly. We have been calling for this ever since the leader of the official opposition was in federal cabinet, as a matter of fact. Therefore, we are very happy to see the official opposition adopting a very important policy that New Democrats have fought for, and we welcome that.

However, my colleague on the finance committee tells me that this specific program was not raised during the committee hearings on the budget, and so it actually was not heard. The Conservatives did not mention it. To be clear, we want action on this issue, but we will be opposing the amendment because we think it is important that the House have a chance to concur in committee before the budget day next week. It is important that we have that.

I will conclude with that, and I thank my colleagues.

• (1200)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was listening attentively. I heard the part of my colleague's speech where he talked about not having a labour shortage but a wage shortage. I may have that slightly incorrect, and he can correct me.

I found that to be very interesting. I would agree that, especially since the pandemic came along, the divergence between the haves and the have nots is getting worse and worse and greater and greater. We know that what makes the most successful society, both economically and from a societal perspective, is having a strong middle class in there.

Can he expand on that and his suggestions in order to help remedy that?

• (1205)

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais:** Mr. Speaker, the middle class in this country is important. These are the folks who ensure that our economy is continuing to function. They are contributing every single day. They are showing up to work and making sure that they can put food on the table.

The people I am thinking about are those who the middle class often leaves behind. This class of people is growing in this country. Those who need, who are in desperation and who cannot afford to put food on the table are the ones falling behind.

It is incumbent on the government to ensure that no one falls behind, particularly when it comes to the needs of Canadians, health care or mental health. We can make the investments that lift these people out of the condition they are in. They do not want a handout; they want a hand up. We can provide that to them because they are people with dignity. They are people with tremendous stories and life experiences who deserve the respect that every worker needs.

I will conclude with this. We can eliminate poverty in this country. It is not a matter of money; it is a matter of will.

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one thing I found interesting was about the drug addiction crisis that we are facing in this country. One thing the Conservatives are focused on doing is providing more treatment for people who need to receive it.

Many mothers have come to my office to talk to me about either somebody in their immediate family or an acquaintance, and how their son or daughter is unable to get the treatment that they deserve because of a lack of beds and a lack of access. Treatment is what these people need so that they have hope to be able to get their lives back on track so they can become regular members of society once again. Would the member agree with me on that?

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais:** Mr. Speaker, I want to preface my comments on the opioid crisis and the drug poisoning crisis by mentioning the lives that have been lost. We have already lost thousands across this country. People who die cannot seek treatment. That is the problem we have. One can have as many beds as they like, but if we are not addressing the stigma and the barriers to getting that support, we are not doing these folks any favours. We need to ensure that we understand the critical points of how this crisis is affecting us. We need to understand that poverty plays a role in that.

We can ensure that people have options. Most times, these folks often need access to what is a health care problem in their lives. We can, of course, ensure that there are benefits towards treatment. However, that cannot be the only solution. There is no silver bullet to this problem. We need to have a holistic solution that addresses the conditions in terms of why people are entering this kind of state. That means anti-poverty measures; ensuring that we have good, safe access to a safe supply; and ensuring that we can meet these people where they are at.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. He talked a lot about poverty and lack of income. I would like to ask him about seniors.

The Bloc Québécois recently held a conference in the riding of Shefford, where our critic lives. We heard from experts on the subject. Unfortunately, they confirmed our interpretation of the Liberal government's policy of not increasing old age security starting at age 65. It is the Liberal government's way of getting seniors to work. The message the government is sending them is that they need to get out there and work if they do not have enough money.

However, not everyone is able to return to the labour market at age 65 or more. Some people are sick, and others held very difficult jobs their whole lives. I think it is appalling and unacceptable to withhold money from a segment of society like that. If the government wants to encourage people aged 65 and over to go to work, then it should give them tax credits, for example. However, we should treat all seniors equally without discriminating based on age. I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

*Routine Proceedings**[English]*

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais:** Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking my colleague for bringing up an important topic and advocating for seniors. Seniors are the same people who built this country. They fought for our freedoms. They ensured that we have the kind of beautiful blessings we do today. They are asking for basic respect and decency, which begins with ensuring that the systems they built work for them.

The position the government has on not indexing OAS to 65, and instead picking the arbitrary number of 75, is disrespectful. I agree with the member that this is one of the most disrespectful things a government can do. After a lifetime of hard work, these people are left without the supports they need; it is shameful.

• (1210)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I must admit that when I first came here today, I did not realize that we would be discussing such an important topic, but I am glad we are. There are a number of recommendations in this report from the finance committee being concurred in at this point. I am looking forward to talking about some of the recommendations in here.

I am going to focus my conversations on two areas that I have great interest in and that are referenced in this report. The first would be with respect to electric vehicles and electrifying our grid. The second is with respect to fossil fuel subsidies and a recommendation in here that references those specifically.

In a prelude to my conversation around electric vehicles and the incentives and recommendations that are in this report, I think it is important to reflect on how far this country and developed nations have come in terms of electric vehicles and zero-emission vehicles more generally speaking.

It is worth noting that in 2017, only 1% of vehicles that were registered in Canada were considered electric vehicles. By 2019, this was at 2.9%. By 2022, in the first quarter, it was at 7.7%, and it is said to be as high as 10% now. This means that 10% of the vehicles currently being registered right now are electric vehicles.

This is very important, and I will attempt to explain why. If people are familiar with the five stages of technology adoption, they are probably familiar with the bell curve that talks about the diffusion of new technology.

Basically, the first 2.5% of people are at the front end of that bell curve. These are the innovators, the people who go out and buy things because they genuinely believe in them. They are willing to pay exorbitant amounts of money, because they can often do so, to be the first people to have these new technologies.

After that, the next 13.5% are the early adopters. These are the people who buy things for the purpose of believing in the cause. They are starting to see a price point that works for their budget, so they go out and buy it.

After that, we have the early majority, at 34%. These are people who are basically buying because they have seen other people do it, and now they want to do it.

We then have the late majority. These are the people buying because they have to at this point.

At the very end, the last 15% or 16% are the laggards. These are the people who have to buy it because they have no choice other than to buy the technology that everybody else has adopted.

I bring this up because, at 10%, we are past the halfway point through the early adopters. Once we hit 15%, the threshold between the early adopters and the early majority, that is the tipping point. Once we hit that point in terms of market penetration, we will see everything start to move very quickly.

If we can say that 10% of the vehicles that are being registered in Canada right now are electric vehicles, we are only 5% away from that tipping point. Once we hit it, things will move very quickly. I think it is incumbent upon government to be prepared for this. It is coming, and it is going to happen.

We know there is an EV revolution. We know we need to revolutionize the way we produce, store and transmit electricity. That is why I was glad to see a number of recommendations in this report that specifically speak to this.

Anybody who has heard me speak in the House around this subject knows that I am very passionate about electric vehicles. I will speak to it almost any opportunity I have. It is important because we have the ability to tackle a very important problem. We have the ability, on an individual level, to tackle a very important issue, and that is climate change.

I am very proud of the fact that there are industries setting up right around my community of Kingston and the Islands. The first would be Umicore, which is actually in a neighbouring riding represented by a Conservative member in the House, the member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington.

Umicore is a European-based company that has chosen to come to Ontario. Great credit is due to the folks in the member's riding who were able to do the incredible work to attract this multi-billion dollar company to Hastings—Lennox and Addington. It is going to be building the largest battery-manufacturing facility for electric vehicles in North America.

• (1215)

It is going to be building the largest battery-manufacturing facility for electric vehicles in North America, something like \$5 billion, in Hastings—Lennox and Addington just outside my riding, to the west of me.

I think this is incredible because, as we see these new technologies developing and see more and more people being interested in electric vehicles, Canada has the opportunity to be at the forefront of this. We have the opportunity to be ahead of this. We have the opportunity to export the technology once it is being developed here. It is very important. It is very important for our area, but it is also very important for the country.

*Routine Proceedings*

There is another aspect to this. Quite often the argument about electric vehicles, when I get into discussions with people, whether through social media or in person, is, “Well, what about the mining and the lithium and all of the negative environmental impacts that go into the production of the required elements in order to make these batteries?” The ongoing narrative is that it is extremely harmful to the environment.

I am not going to stand here and try to dismiss that. I think those are valid concerns, but what I can say is that there is another industry starting to emerge in our country, another industry, located in my riding, that has one of the first plants to do this.

If we can believe this, in the northern part of Kingston, which we call, in Kingston, “north of Princess” because Princess Street is the dividing line, pretty much, for our city, there is an old industrial area. I mean “old” as in going back to the 1940s and 1950s. It was the original industrial area in Kingston, outside of the Shipyards building, which was more along the water. In this area, there is a company called Li-Cycle, which has started to recycle lithium batteries. It receives lithium batteries from throughout the country. These are end-of-life batteries for electric vehicles or batteries from vehicles that have been in accidents and have been written off.

There are actually only two facilities in Canada doing this right now, using different technologies. One is in my riding and one is on the west coast. They take these batteries and can recycle up to 97% or 98% of each battery. They can break them down into the elements in order to create brand new EV batteries.

With fossil fuels, we extract oil out of the ground, refine it and produce gasoline with which we fill up our tanks. Once they are burned, they are gone and they have created CO<sub>2</sub>, which is in the atmosphere. By contrast, once an EV battery hits its end-of-life stage, it can be transferred and broken down into the original elements to make a new battery, using 97% of that original battery. I think that is very telling about what the technologies have to offer as we move into the future.

Li-Cycle is a great success story. It is actually where the Prime Minister chose to bring the President of the European Commission when she came to visit a couple of weeks ago, to this facility in my riding, which, I should note, is now expanding because the current location is too small. The company is building a new facility, 10 times the size, still in my riding, just more on the west side of the city. I am very excited about that.

I will come to the recommendations in this report, given the prelude I have made to this point.

Recommendation 41 specifically talks about zero-emission vehicles and rebates for low- and modest-income individuals and families. This is a program, according to the report, that was based on another program from California, and I think it has great potential.

Of course, one of the barriers, especially when one goes back to the bell curve I talked about earlier, is that if someone is an innovator or an early adopter, they are paying more than the average person can for these technologies. If we can try to assist individuals to access the technology sooner, we will hit that tipping point sooner. Therefore, I am very glad to see that a recommendation is put in here that specifically tries to encourage and give access to individu-

als of lower or modest income, in terms of rebates, when they are looking to purchase zero-emission vehicles.

Also within recommendation 41 is a reference to “green cash for clunkers”, which I can only assume is to provide people with money that goes toward green technologies if they trade in old vehicles, which are notorious for being large emitters.

- (1220)

There is also a rebate suggestion, in recommendation number 41, for taxis and car-sharing services. The important thing about that is that the recommendation specifically states that these rebates should be stackable so people do not have to choose between one and the other. Again, it is really trying to help individuals and business owners, as it relates to taxis or car sharing, to penetrate into this market.

Of course, there are the educational programs, also referenced in recommendation number 41, about educating the public on zero-emission vehicles, including how to access them, what they are actually like to drive and what benefits they have for the environment.

I also noticed in here that recommendation number 178 talks about a goal of one million EV parking stalls to be installed in apartments and condos throughout Canada, which is, again, another great recommendation.

I asked my Bloc colleague earlier about Quebec's success, and the reality is that Quebec has had tremendous success in this. Quebec entered into an agreement in 2006, I believe, with California and Ontario to develop the cap-and-trade model. This incentivized electrifying the grid, put incentives into transitioning away from fossil fuels. Ontario, when Doug Ford came along, decided to get out of it. In that short period of time, since Doug Ford has been premier, the difference between Ontario and Quebec, with respect to electrifying the grid and providing car-charging stations, is like night and day.

Last summer, I drove with my wife through Quebec. It is almost impossible not to find an electric vehicle charging station once one enters the province of Quebec, because the province has been so aggressive when it comes to ensuring the infrastructure is there. The federal government needs to take the lead and tell other provinces they need to start being more like Quebec when it comes to the capacity to charge electric vehicles, because it is absolutely key if we are just about at that tipping point.

Doug Ford and the rest of the premiers are going to find themselves in a lot of trouble very shortly, once we hit that tipping point and suddenly they realize they do not have the capacity. I do not want to have to say “I told you so”, but I would like to warn them in advance that this was all foreseeable years ago. Quebec saw it and Ontario saw it; Ontario bailed and Quebec did not. Quebec is now ready for it and will be even more ready as we get toward that tipping point.

*Routine Proceedings*

I also saw that recommendation number 179 specifically talks about EV requirements and putting them into the national building code. Why is this important? Most provinces in Canada rely on the national building code as their building codes. Some provinces, like Ontario and Quebec, have their own building codes, but they are very heavily influenced by the national building code. The recommendation would ensure that, within the national building code, we would tell contractors that, when they are building a new house, they have to put in the hard-wiring for an EV station even if it is not going to be installed now. Running a 10-gauge or eight-gauge wire, or whatever is required for that, at the construction stage is a lot cheaper than asking a homeowner to do it retroactively after their house has been built.

I live in a condo in Ottawa, which was brand new when I moved into it in 2015. I almost fell out of my seat when I saw that it did not have some capacity for electric vehicle charging within that building, as is the case in the vast majority of buildings in the downtown area of Ottawa and in other municipalities throughout this province, for that matter. We need to put it into the building code, to say that, when building a new building, builders have to at least have the infrastructure and the hardwiring in place to ensure we can deal with this when the time comes.

I also noticed that recommendation number 181 is, “Include EV charger installation or EV-readiness as part of energy efficiency programs...in older houses.” A lot of older homes in this country, especially those 40 years and older, have only 60-amp service running into them, and this cannot realistically handle what is required. Therefore, putting incentives in place to help people with older homes upgrade to 100- or 200-amp service would be beneficial in the long run when it comes to EVs.

I am very glad to see all this very important work in there regarding EVs.

• (1225)

I really hope that the government picks up on some of these recommendations, because I think they are very meaningful. I do not know how the committee came to them. I do not know if it was the Liberals or the Bloc or the NDP that pushed these through. My sense is that the Conservatives probably did not have a ton to do with it, with all due respect. However, I am very glad to see these in there. I certainly will reference this when I am talking to my government about these recommendations.

Finally, in the last few minutes that I have, I want to talk about recommendation 6, regarding fossil fuel subsidies, which states, “Divert subsidies from the fossil fuel sector towards the development of renewable and efficient energy sources, while supporting those most impacted by this transition.”

This is absolutely key. There is one criticism I have of my government, despite the fact that many people in the House think I am just here to be the mouthpiece of my government in the House.

Do not nod your head, Mr. Speaker; you are not supposed to have an opinion on this.

If there is one thing I am critical of, it is the speed at which we have been removing fossil fuel subsidies. I know we have been do-

ing it. We have been doing a lot of work on it and have slowly been getting there. I understand there are always circumstances that create scenarios that make things harder to do with great haste.

However, I believe we should not be subsidizing the fossil fuel industry, full stop. That is my position on it. That has been my position on it for a number of years. That is my own personal position. I continue to make that known to those in charge on this side of the House.

Having said that, the NDP will quite often say that we have actually increased fossil fuel subsidies. I might even get a question on this. I would like to say that where we have increased money is by helping certain regions of the country deal with orphan oil wells. I know, and I do not disagree, that those who created the wells should have been responsible for dealing with them at the end of life. However, in many cases they did not.

It falls on somebody to be responsible, and in this case that somebody has to be the federal and the provincial government working together. I do not consider money being used to deal with orphan wells that have been completely abandoned to be a fossil fuel subsidy, when there is no ability to create recourse with those responsible. I consider that the right societal thing to do, regardless of who has to pay for it. If there is any way to go back and get the proper funding from those responsible for paying for it, I would be completely supportive of that. However, I will not just stand by and watch an orphan oil well sit there, and not insist we do something about it. I do not include dealing with orphan oil wells as part of a fossil fuel subsidy.

To that end, we have been moving in the right direction. I want to move faster in that direction. I see that this recommendation specifically talks about moving there quickly. It talks about using those funds specifically to support those most impacted in this transition. There are a ton of new opportunities and new technologies out there. I think the government could do very well by helping those transitioning into working in these new clean technologies. There are tremendous opportunities in the future.

I am not here to advocate, in any way, that we abandon the sectors of our country that have supported this country for so long. Rather, I am here to say we should do our part in helping them transition. This recommendation is a very good one in that regard, and it points us in the right direction.

I thank the movers of this motion for allowing me to join this very important discussion today. The good news is that I do plan to stay here for the next 10 minutes to answer any questions my colleagues have.



*Routine Proceedings*

**The Deputy Speaker:** First, I just want to apologize to the member. I was just agreeing that I could understand why members in the House would think you were a spokesperson for the government. Second, I am waiting for my invitation to see the battery recycling organization, because those battery packs are complicated to work on, let alone recycle.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Calgary Rocky Ridge.

• (1230)

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member's speech. At the very end, I heard him acknowledge a province, and he did not name it, but it was pretty clear he was talking about Alberta. He thanked it for supporting the country for so long. I would like to make sure we do identify or be clear about which province the member was talking about.

That was quite an acknowledgement from the member about an industry the Liberal government has attacked and vilified. From time to time, it has negatively characterized the entire province. The member acknowledged the extent to which it has been financially underwriting the public services the entire country relies on. I do thank him for that.

Could the member comment on the amendment to the motion made today and the blue seal system that has been proposed by the opposition? Does he agree that we should move toward recognizing credentials? Will the member be supporting the amendment and getting this recommendation before the government?

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, if I left anything to wonder, a lot of what I was talking about was Alberta. I would not say it was about Alberta exclusively, but indeed Alberta and the fossil fuels sector have supported this country for a very long time. Although I am very much in favour of moving away from fossil fuels, I am not here to say I would turn my back on those who have helped this country for so long. Indeed, I agree with the recommendation that specifically talks about helping the transition so Alberta and those other affected regions can see new opportunities and benefit from those new opportunities.

With respect to his question, I cannot support the amendment because the amendment says that we delete everything else beforehand, but do I support the idea of the blue seal program? It is a great program. I must admit I did not hear the entire amendment and do not have a copy of it, but if it is what I understand it to be, there are a lot of individuals with skills in this country who need to be accredited. We need people working in this country, and we need to do everything we can to ensure those who have the skills to the standards of Canada have the opportunities to participate in those workforces.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I sincerely congratulate the hon. parliamentary secretary on his speech. It was excellent from start to finish. It was profound, well thought out and backed up with facts. I thank him.

It warms my heart to see that the committee report we adopted so collaboratively is being discussed today and to see that some proposals are being put forward. On the issue of the electrification of

transportation in particular, we really collaborated across party lines. It warms my heart to see our efforts pay off in the House today.

As an aside, we also made a number of suggestions for combating tax evasion and tax avoidance, which we worked on together. The hon. Liberal member for Pontiac did an outstanding job on that.

I have a question. Battery recycling is something the hon. parliamentary secretary talked about in his speech, and it really caught my attention. It is often pointed out that it takes a lot of resources to make batteries for electric cars. I would like my hon. colleague to elaborate on that.

Is recycling economically viable? How feasible is it right now? Is the industry ready?

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, it certainly is economically viable. It is to the point where there is a company in my constituency called Li-Cycle that is building a new facility 10 times the size of its existing facility. It is clearly something that is economical, because this is going to be a booming industry.

The reality, and this is what I was trying to say in my speech, is that, when we talk about fossil fuels to run vehicles, we are extracting fossil fuel from the ground and we are burning it. When we are done burning it, it is pollution in the air and that is the end of the story. We then extract more.

With electric vehicles, we are seeing this new company. It is just at the beginning of the technology, and it is already able to recycle 97% of the battery. It is taking the battery, ripping it down to its core elements and then giving it to the battery manufacturing plants, which are building brand new batteries out of it. Although lithium needs to be mined originally, every time after, that same lithium can go on to serve many vehicles as the recycling process gives the opportunity and the ingredients to make new batteries.

• (1235)

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for bringing up the condition of orphaned wells across the country, particularly in my home province of Alberta. It is no secret these orphaned wells, some of them dating back many decades, are a huge pollutant. Indigenous communities are the communities that are the most impacted by these sites. I grew up in an area in northeast Alberta just north of the Cold Lake oil sands, and this location has one of the largest numbers of abandoned and orphaned wells.

It has been known by the government, ever since the first orphaned well happened, that these sites would need remediation. Why did the government not take action to ensure the companies put aside money to ensure these projects would actually be remediated in a proper way? Why did our environmental laws allow for these kinds of projects and not have the enforcement necessary to hold these companies accountable?

*Routine Proceedings*

I agree that today taxpayers are stuck, unfortunately, with the problem, which years of delay, mismanagement and ignoring the oil sector's misdealing have presented. Why not ensure the corporations, moving forward, are actually held to account to put the resources aside to clean them up themselves?

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, that is an absolutely excellent question, and I wish I knew the answer to it, but I do not.

I was in municipal government before coming here, and the minute we built a brand new building, we had already started building a reserve fund to deal with the challenges the building would face years and decades down the road. If one goes into a municipality and wants to build a new building, they have to give the municipality a deposit on the site plan. If they do not deliver on the site plan, the municipality can come in and pay for it. Why on earth that was not set up for oil wells, I do not know. I can respect the fact that the times must have been different then. I do not know what the circumstances were like, but in hindsight, it was just not the right thing to do by all the previous governments that dealt with this.

**Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad my colleague, while speaking, brought up the issue of batteries and the importance of them for the electric vehicle industry. I think they are also a really important thing for energy storage, and they make renewable power generation, such as solar and wind, much more viable going forward. I should congratulate him on having adjacent to his riding one of the biggest battery plants coming, and Li-Cycle in his riding has started a processing facility recycling unit.

I would like to ask him whether he agrees with me that the weakest link in the entire ecosystem of battery manufacturing is the mining of the critical minerals that are required for the manufacture of batteries. The federal government has entered into an agreement with various provinces, such as its agreement with Ontario. We tried to align the resources, timelines and regulatory process to fasten up the mining projects.

Does the member agree with me that this is the weakest link and that we need a team Canada approach to make sure we get the real mining companies started in extracting and delivering the critical minerals required for the battery industry?

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, Li-Cycle is in my riding. However, the new plant that is opening is in a Conservative riding next door to me, so I think it is something that both Liberals and Conservatives should be celebrating.

To his question, I would say that the weakest link is in the mining. He is absolutely right. We have all seen those videos on Facebook. We have all seen the reports on the conditions in which individuals are required to mine these products and minerals. We are rich in our resources, with respect to those. We have standards in this country that will ensure that it is not one of the weakest links, and I think there is a great opportunity there for Canada moving into the future.

I certainly think we need to establish that as soon as possible. I think that our government is working on it, and the only other thing I would say is that, when we talk about these technologies, they are evolving very quickly, and there are new opportunities coming along. We are just in the earliest phases of this. As time goes on, it

is really going to take off and we are going to see incredible progress.

● (1240)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. parliamentary secretary has opened up a personal reflection on his deep commitment to climate action. I saw that in his face when we debated here in the emergency debate in October 2018 when the IPCC said the future of humanity is at stake and that we have very little time. I put it to the hon. member that we are in no better position now than we were in October 2018 because we have not taken the immediate action required to ensure we have any hope of holding to 1.5°C or 2°C.

As uncomfortable as it is, I would ask him to rethink the commitment to continuing to say the government is on the right track because the government continues to boost fossil fuel production, promote building the Trans Mountain pipeline and live in a world of cognitive dissonance. It believes it is doing the right thing while it keeps its foot on the accelerator to climate hell. I am sorry, but that is the reality.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, I do remember that debate vividly. It was a very emotional and passionate debate on all sides of the House. I would do anything in my power to expedite this even faster. I realize the UN recently said we have to make significant changes by 2040, if I recall what was just released. Anything I can do, I am more than willing to work with my colleague on that and push our government, and any government for that matter, to work harder and faster on this.

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, any tax increase on Canadians during a cost of living crisis is just plain wrong. I have opposed the increase happening on April 1 to the carbon tax. I opposed the payroll tax increases that took effect earlier this year, and for years I have spoken against the automatic alcohol escalator. With the budget coming up next week, these are tax increases that were imposed on Canadians, and are going to be imposed on Canadians, unless the government decides to reverse its course. Those are key recommendations I would have as we debate the concurrence of the recommendations made to the government.

Canadians cannot afford to pay higher prices with smaller paycheques. They cannot do it. That is the type of relief for Canadians that I am looking for in the budget. The automatic excise escalator on alcohol is an especially insidious tax. It is a tax that automatically takes effect, in this case next weekend, without a confidence vote in the chamber, without compelling government to come to the chamber to allow elected members to have their say on it. That is why last March, I tabled Bill C-266, an act to abolish the excise duty escalator on alcohol.

*Routine Proceedings*

Last night I had hoped to have an opportunity to get some remarks on the record about that, but there were some extraordinary events for those of us who were here. I will not get into what happened, but it resulted in my inability to get into that debate, so I want to add some remarks today as we debate the concurrence motion. That is a recommendation I would have hoped to see in this report, and it is what I would hope the government would do in its budget next week because the right thing to do is to repeal the escalator.

I know what the Liberals are going to say. They are going to say that the excise escalator makes the excise tax just like other kinds of sales taxes that go up each year as prices rise. They will say that all kinds of things, including benefits paid to Canadians, are tied to inflation, so why not tie the excise tax on alcohol to inflation. They are going to say this increase is so small that nobody will even notice. They are going to say that.

It is false when they claim that the tax increase is less than a penny on a can of beer because they are deliberately and purposely ignoring the effect the increase of the excise tax has on a chain of other taxes that are applied after. There are the provincial markups, there is the provincial excise tax, there are the sales taxes by both federal and provincial governments, fortunately not in Alberta, but everywhere else in Canada. Therefore, these taxes are taxes on taxes and there is markup on that tax, so it is more than what they have falsely claimed to be less than a penny per can of beer.

I meant to say at the outset that I will be splitting my time with the member for Kelowna—Lake Country. I look forward to her remarks. She is from a region that produces wine and the escalator is dear to her as well.

A couple of weeks ago I was in my own neighbourhood and dropped in to Al's Pizza. I think most members in this chamber would probably recognize a place like Al's Pizza. It is a good solid family restaurant that serves the neighbourhood. He has been in business for 35 years, and everybody knows Al's Pizza in the neighbourhood. It is good pizza. It makes a great carbonara. He is a good guy.

I asked him if his customers could afford higher prices. He said absolutely not. He knows that his customers are strapped. His customers are feeling the bite of inflation. His customers are feeling the bite of the carbon tax. Their paycheques have shrunk with payroll tax increases. They cannot afford to pay higher prices he has to pass on when his costs go up. He is aware that he cannot pass on higher prices. He is a small business person, so he cannot afford to just absorb a new tax.

• (1245)

However, it is not just Al, who is one restaurateur I happened to speak with. Restaurants Canada has also made this clear to Parliament when it testified before the finance committee. These people are in a competitive tight-margin business. It is a high-cost, low-margin business that cannot afford additional prices. They cannot afford to just absorb this new tax.

There are questions parliamentarians should be asking, and should have been asking before they voted last night on the opposition motion. If my bill, Bill C-266, should come to this Parliament,

they need to ask themselves whether Canadians can afford higher prices. Well, we know they cannot. The cost of housing has doubled, interest rates are through the roof and the costs of transportation and groceries have gone up under the government as a result of the government's disastrous policies of running irresponsible deficits before COVID and running irresponsible deficits after COVID. A consistent policy of fiscal mismanagement has fuelled inflation. Therefore, no, consumers cannot afford to pay higher taxes.

Can the industry afford higher taxes? No, it cannot. With labour shortages, the high cost of energy imposed by the carbon tax, ever-increasing business taxes at municipal levels and the high cost of commercial rent, there is no room for a tax like the increase on alcohol. It cannot be absorbed.

The question that should then be asked is this: Can industry support this? What about the manufacturers? Well, the manufacturers cannot afford anything else either. The excise escalator makes Canadian products non-competitive with other producers, so no, our world-renowned vintners, world-renowned wineries and world-renowned breweries and distillers cannot absorb it.

We cannot let this country become a place where a simple pleasure like enjoying a bottle of wine with a loved one becomes an unaffordable luxury beyond the means of working people. We cannot let this country become a place where enjoying a beer with colleagues after work on a Friday becomes a luxury that people cannot afford. It cannot become a place where a family celebration cannot include a toast because nobody can afford any kind of libation. This cannot be a country where the hard-working men and women at Canada's wineries, distilleries and breweries are thrown out of work and rendered unemployed as businesses collapse because of an inability to compete in world markets.

It also cannot become a country where governments no longer have to face a confidence motion in the House and go to electors when they want to increase a tax to fund their spending. This is a basic principle of Parliament going back to the time of King John. When the king or his government, in this case the Prime Minister and his cabinet, wanted to spend more money and tax people, the principle was that they put it to a vote in Parliament and not put tax increases on autopilot. That is why I tabled Bill C-266.

I encourage all members to support the repeal of the automatic excise escalator. It is good policy. It is good for consumers, it is good for workers and it is good for the principles of parliamentary government.

*Routine Proceedings*

• (1250)

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am a little curious. The member opposite spoke about the importance of making life more affordable for Canadians, yet he voted against child care, which has been proven to make life more affordable for Canadians. The Conservatives voted against every single measure that has come forward to make life more affordable.

The member also spoke about the importance of dealing with the excise tax. We all want to make life more affordable for Canadians, but he mentioned that even though it would be approximately 0.7¢ more on a can or bottle of beer, there are other compounding factors. Can he tell us the precise impact there would be on a bottle or can of beer?

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** Mr. Speaker, it is different in every province. It is fairly complicated. I am not going to give him the run through, because I do not have time. I will merely say that it is quite astonishing that the government's main defence of the automatic excise escalator tax is that it is only raising taxes a bit; it is not raising them that much. Why should people complain? The Liberals are only raising taxes every year on people amidst an affordability crisis.

No tax increase is acceptable at this time. They should reduce that tax, at least back to the level in 2017, before they brought in an automatic escalator. Since then, nobody has voted for the annual increase.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague spoke about alcohol taxes. Last year, the Bloc Québécois fought for an excise tax exemption for cider and mead. This exemption should also apply to alcoholic beverages made from berries and to acerum, which is made from maple syrup.

Does my colleague agree that craft liquors are very different from mass-produced commercial liquors and should be exempt from excise duty, just like cider and mead?

[*English*]

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** Mr. Speaker, that is a good question. I have not given significant thought to the products the member mentioned and the taxes placed on them. My first reaction and instinct is to agree. I do not support additional taxes. Taxes are high in this country, and our taxes on alcohol are among the highest in the world.

The most expensive ingredient in beer, wine or spirits in Canada is taxes. It is more than half of the cost of many products. In fact, Spirits Canada says that for some spirits, up to 80% of the cost at the retail level is tax.

I thank the member for bringing that segment of the market into this debate. My first instinct is to agree with him.

**Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we often talk about the support needed for families. My colleagues and I believe in supporting a robust social safety net to make sure families have what they need, including dental care. Our teeth are part of our bodies, and if we want to support good health, we also need to support holistic health, which includes our teeth.

I wonder if the member shares my opinion that we need to put in place a national dental care strategy so that all individuals who live in Canada can access proper dental care.

• (1255)

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** Mr. Speaker, I agree that dental care is very important for families, and I understand the costs and concerns around access to dental care. However, I am also concerned that the government's approach to just about everything it has done is to harm our ability to have a robust economy that can afford the sustainable programs Canadians rely on.

I have concerns about cost and about how any type of system would work, and I have no confidence in the government to deliver one. I encourage members of the NDP, including the member for Winnipeg Centre, to demand a bit more accountability regarding the failures of the government on any of a host of issues, perhaps including dental care.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise to speak on behalf of the residents of Kelowna—Lake Country.

Today, we are discussing the finance committee's pre-budget consultation report. I want to start off by saying right out of the gate, and I have talked about this many times in the House, that we as Conservatives oppose all tax increases at this time. That includes the excise tax increase, the payroll tax increase and the carbon tax increase, the last of which increases the price of everything that is shipped across the country.

To set the stage, inflation is at a 40-year high and we know that food inflation is higher. When inflation was around 6%, food inflation was over 11%, almost double.

I did a survey in my community. I send out surveys that go to every residence, and it is amazing how many thousands of people mail them back. It is such great information for me. It is such a great way for me to gain feedback from the community, in addition to all the other types of outreach I do. I would say that over 70% of the people who filled out that survey said their food costs were up 20% to 30%, and food prices can be higher regionally across the country. When food inflation is this high, it definitely makes it very hard for everyone to pay their bills, in particular people who are on fixed incomes, like seniors. It has been reported that 1.5 million people went to a food bank in just one month.

*Routine Proceedings*

Before I came here to debate this motion today, I had the honour of sitting for a while on the finance committee, where a chief economist from a bank said that he expects insolvencies to increase. The CIBC has said that one in five mortgages it has in its portfolio is in a position where the borrower's monthly payment is not high enough to cover even the interest portion of the loan. People are struggling, and now is not the time to increase any taxes.

What I would like to talk about for most of my time today is the excise tax increase. To go back a bit regarding this tax increase, in 2017, the Liberals put in place an escalator tax on the alcohol excise tax. "Escalator" is just a fancy bureaucratic word for automatic, so it is an automatic tax increase that does not go into budgets and is not debated every year. At the time, Conservatives, industries and stakeholders asked the government not to do it. They were very concerned that it might trigger trade challenges. In fact, it did with Australia. During that time, Australia said that it was unfair, and over the course of a few years, an agreement was made with Australia and was announced on the Canadian side.

I should mention that previously, some wineries with domestically grown grapes that were made into wine were exempt from paying the excise tax. This was done many years ago to build up and assist this value-added industry and agriculture. The agreement made was that these wineries, and we later learned cideries as well, had to start paying this excise tax. That was the agreement the Canadian government announced. However, back in Australia, they were announcing they won the trade challenge, so it was interesting how the communications came out. What has happened with that? The Canadian government has had to come up with different formulas to fix that situation with domestic wineries.

In addition to that, the excise tax is increasing every year, and it is tied to the CPI, which means it is tied to inflation. Therefore, when inflation is higher, this tax increase is higher, which then perpetuates inflation even more. As of April 1, there will be the highest tax increase ever, at 6.3%, and because inflation has been high this year, we are already tracking to have a high tax increase as we go into next year.

● (1300)

Just dealing with this year, this is really going to affect the producers. It is not only the manufacturers, which could be the wineries, breweries, cideries and distilleries, but this tax increase then trickles down to the retailers who will be selling these products. It trickles down to the restaurant owners, who are still having a really tough time coming out of the pandemic, and, of course, ultimately to consumers.

For disclosure, I worked for 27 years in the British Columbia beer and wine industry, so I worked on all sides of the industry. I remember at different times, when, for example, the provincial government was changing some of its formulas around taxation, so winery or brewery operators would have to make a very difficult decision on how long they would absorb that increase.

To really simplify things, as an example, people's wine might be on the shelf at \$19.99 a bottle. Now they have to make the choice. Do they put it up to \$20.19? It is such an odd number. Therefore, they make the decision to keep it at that price for a while and then realize they cannot and they have to eventually pass this on. They

will make a decision. They will take the hit for a while, but ultimately it has to be passed on. Those are the tough decisions that business owners, especially small business owners, make every day.

In Kelowna—Lake Country, there are 27 wineries, 21 breweries, and eight cideries and distilleries combined. These are farm-to-glass industries. These are value-added industries. All of these will be affected. This is just another cost that will be added on, which does not have to be because there is no benefit to those organizations. It is strictly a tax, and we should not be increasing any taxes at this time.

We know that small businesses represent most of the businesses in Canada. They represent most of the businesses in my community.

As I was talking about the trickle-down effects of this, Restaurants Canada shows that more than 50% of the licensed restaurants in Canada are losing money or barely breaking even. Again, as these cost increases are being passed on, it will affect them.

The CFIB reported that the average small business owner took on \$150,000 in new debt. Most business owners have not paid off this debt. Of course, with rising interest rates, their debt is costing more. Therefore, for any of them who work in this industry, this will just be affecting them even more.

Beer Canada wrote on behalf of eight brewery worker unions. I will read a quote from it. It states, "Canada is experiencing the highest cost of living increases in a generation. This is squeezing family budgets and making workers in the brewing sector nervous about their jobs."

Wine Growers Canada wrote to the Minister of Finance and said that with the addition of federal/provincial *ad valorem* taxes in the pricing chain, the next rise in excise duty would increase wine prices by at least 10¢ per litre, with long-term impacts on restaurants, hotels, bars, retailers, farmers and wine growers.

Members can see that this is going to dramatically affect a lot of these industries.

I wrote to the finance minister recently. I will just quote part of what I wrote to her. I said, "Producers will be left with the choice of absorbing this cost increase and adding it to their debt loads or passing on this cost to both consumers and our restaurant and hospitality businesses, fuelling inflation more." I have not heard back from her.

*Routine Proceedings*

I will also say that when I was first elected back in 2019, this was one of the first topics that I started advocating on, because I had so many small business owners in my riding coming to me, saying that this affected them every year. That was before we had this record high inflation.

With that, I am standing with small business owners in my riding and across Canada, and we need to stop all tax increases.

• (1305)

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is certainly a popular discussion right now around the alcohol escalator tax. We are receiving a lot of feedback from constituents as well. I continue to bring them forward to the government.

I am wondering what would be the most important thing that the member is looking for in the budget ahead. Certainly we are facing many issues. We are looking for environmental leadership. We are looking for reconciliation in health care. What would be the biggest thing the member would be looking for next week?

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Mr. Speaker, I spoke to this in my speech. We need to cut taxes. We need to have no tax increases and we also need to look at ways that we can cut taxes for small businesses, for families. That has to be a priority. We should not be increasing any taxes at this time. That should not be in the budget.

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

The question is on the amendment. If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes that the amendment 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.

**Hon. Tim Uppal:** Mr. Speaker, we would like a recorded vote.

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

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**PETITIONS**

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

**Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today and present a petition from hundreds of Canadians who have expressed their concerns with the comments from Louis Roy of the Quebec College of Physicians, who has suggested that babies from birth to the age of one year old could be euthanized if they display severe deformity or syndromes.

This proposal for legalizing the killing of infants is deeply disturbing, not only to these petitioners but to the majority of Canadians. We have to, as the House, recognize that infanticide is always wrong.

Their encouragement to the House of Commons is to reject any notion to that extent.

TAXATION

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and table a petition signed by a number of Canadians

who are concerned and agree with me on the need to repeal the automatic excise escalator on alcohol. They are concerned, as I am, that this tax is an automatic tax that impedes our industry from competing in world markets and that it is the wrong approach to excise.

The timing is particularly bad with the record tax increase that is scheduled to take effect next weekend. They are concerned that we are going to render some fairly basic pleasures unaffordable by working Canadians.

• (1310)

CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a huge honour to table a petition today that has been gathered by youth in my riding in the town of Qualicum Beach, climate activists who cite that children born in 2020 will face on average two to seven times more extreme weather events than their grandparents.

In a 2021 report in the *Lancet*, 83% of children worldwide reported that they thought people had failed to take care of the planet. They note that those most affected by climate change are the youngest generation as they will live to see the worst effects of this crisis; that youth discussion has proven critical to successful climate action and policy creation, however, dozens of climate-related decisions are made without input from youth.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to require all members of Parliament, regardless of party lines, to consult with a secondary or elementary school leadership, student council or environmental youth group of their riding, such as under-18 youth representatives, before Parliament holds second reading of any bill that directly affects Canada's greenhouse gas emissions; and that the purpose of the consultation will be to listen to the viewpoints of those directly affected by the specified bill, but who do not already have representation in Parliament.

I thank those youth for this very important petition.

GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, constituents in my riding have submitted this petition on an extremely important issue relating to genetically modified organisms and genetically modified foods.

The petitioners point out that these food products are not labelled as genetically modified. Consumers do want to know. Over 80% of Canadians have said that they would like mandatory labelling of genetically modified foods so they know what they are buying.

There is concern, as the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer has pointed out the herbicide more commonly used because of genetically modified so-called "roundup ready" products, that glyphosate, a probable human carcinogen, is not labelled.

The petitioners ask the Government of Canada establish mandatory labelling on all genetically modified foods.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

**Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by a number of Canadians who are deeply concerned the Government of Pakistan has failed, and continues to fail, to afford protection and legitimate rights to persecuted Christians. A good number of those persecuted Christians have found refuge in Canada, having escaped persecution in Pakistan via Thailand, from where they are able to apply for refugee status. Of course, we welcome them into Canada.

The petitioners call on the government to create a special status for Pakistani asylum seekers, who continue to suffer mistreatment in Thailand, in order to streamline and quicken the process for claiming refugee status through the IRCC.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT

The House resumed from March 6 consideration of the motion that Bill C-26, An Act respecting cyber security, amending the Telecommunications Act and making consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-26, an act about cybersecurity. In the 21st century, cybersecurity is national security, and it is our responsibility to protect Canadians from growing cyber-threats. We have to take the necessary steps to protect Canadians and our telecommunications infrastructure. Canadians must have confidence in the integrity, authenticity and security of the products and services they use every day.

This bill reflects the values of Canadians and is in line with our closest allies, including our Five Eyes partners. That is why we are investing in cybersecurity, ensuring respect for the privacy of Canadians and supporting responsible innovation. We will continue to protect Canadians from cyber-threats in an increasingly digital world. As said in our international cybersecurity overview, a free, open and secure cyberspace is critical to Canada's economy, social activity, democracy and national security.

Government Orders

Canada faces cybersecurity risks from both state and non-state actors. Protecting Canada's and Canadians' cyber-infrastructure from malicious actors is a serious challenge and a never-ending task. Canada works with allies and partners to improve cybersecurity at home and to counter threats from abroad. This includes identifying cyber-threats or vulnerabilities and developing capabilities to respond to a range of cyber-incidents.

A few years back, we put forward the national cybersecurity strategy, a vision for security and prosperity in the digital age. As mentioned there, virtually everything Canadians do is touched by technology in some way. We are heavily interconnected and networked, a fact that not only enhances our quality of life but also creates vulnerabilities. From commercial supply chains to the critical infrastructure that underpins our economy and our society, the risks in the cyberworld have multiplied, accelerated and grown increasingly malicious.

Major corporations, industries and our international allies and partners are engaged in the global cyber-challenge, but many others are not and that represents a significant risk. The strategy's core goals were reflected in budget 2018, where \$500 million was invested in cybersecurity. Part of the funding was for the new Canadian Centre for Cyber Security, which is Canada's technical authority on cybersecurity. It is part of the Communications Security Establishment, and it is the single, unified source of expert advice, guidance, services and support on cybersecurity for Canadians and Canadian organizations.

It regularly publishes the "National Cyber Threat Assessment", and I would like to quote from their latest one for 2023-24. It states:

Canadians use the Internet for financial transactions, to connect with friends and family, attend medical appointments and work. As Canadians spend more time and do more on the Internet, the opportunities grow for cyber threat activity to impact their daily lives. There's been a rise in the amount of personal, business and financial data available online, making it a target for cyber threat actors. This trend towards connecting important systems to the Internet increases the threat of service disruption from cyber threat activity. Meanwhile, nation states and cybercriminals are continuing to develop their cyber capabilities. State-sponsored and financially motivated cyber threat activity is increasingly likely to affect Canadians.

● (1315)

In the latest assessment, they chose to focus on five cyber-threat narratives that they judge are the most dynamic and impactful.

### *Government Orders*

First, ransomware is a persistent threat to Canadian organizations. Cybercrime continues to be the cyber-threat activity most likely to affect Canadians and Canadian organizations. Due to its impact on an organization's ability to function, ransomware is almost certainly the most disruptive form of cybercrime facing Canadians. Cybercriminals deploying ransomware have evolved in a growing and sophisticated cybercrime ecosystem and will continue to adapt to maximize profits.

Second, critical infrastructure is increasingly at risk from cyber-threat activity. Cybercriminals exploit critical infrastructure because downtime can be harmful to industrial processes and the customers they serve. State-sponsored actors target critical infrastructure to collect information through espionage, to pre-position themselves in case of future hostilities and as a form of power projection and intimidation.

Third, state-sponsored cyber-threat activity is impacting Canadians. State-sponsored cyber-threat activity against Canada is a constant, ongoing threat that is often a subset of larger, global campaigns undertaken by these states. State actors can target diaspora populations and activists in Canada, Canadian organizations and their intellectual property for espionage, and even Canadian individuals and organizations for financial gain.

Fourth, cyber-threat actors are attempting to influence Canadians, degrading trust in online spaces. Cyber-threat actors' use of misinformation, disinformation and malinformation, collectively referred to as MDM, has evolved over the past two years. Machine learning-enabled technologies are making fake content easier to manufacture and harder to detect. Further, nation-states are increasingly willing and able to use MDM to advance their geopolitical interests.

Fifth, disruptive technologies bring new opportunities and new threats. Digital assets, such as cryptocurrencies and decentralized finance, are both targets and tools for cyber-threat actors to enable malicious cyber-threat activity. Machine learning has become commonplace in consumer services and data analysis, but cyber-threat actors can deceive and exploit this technology. Quantum computing has the potential to threaten our current systems of maintaining trust and confidentiality online. Encrypted information stolen by threat actors today can be held and decrypted when quantum computers become available.

Simply put, cyber-threats pose a growing risk to all Canadians and institutions. We are confronting this threat head-on. Our government regularly engages with domestic and international cybersecurity partners to protect Canada's critical infrastructure and the systems that underpin essential services. We are working closely with critical infrastructure stakeholders and partners to ensure that they are better prepared to face cyber-based threats.

Our cybersecurity framework continues to detect, deter and disrupt state and non-state actors attempting to take advantage of the Canadian cyber-landscape. Our government is, and will always be, ready to respond to any malicious cyber-acts that threaten Canadian interests.

To conclude, the purpose of this act is to help protect critical cyber systems in order to support the continuity and security of vital

services and vital systems by ensuring that, first, any cybersecurity risks with respect to critical cyber systems are identified and managed; second, critical cyber systems are protected from being compromised; third, any cybersecurity incidents affecting, or having the potential to affect, critical cyber systems are detected; and finally, the impacts of cybersecurity incidents affecting critical cyber systems are minimized.

● (1320)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, speaking of cybersecurity, I would like to hear what my colleague thinks of the allegations made in the *Journal de Montréal* two or three weeks ago about a woman of Chinese descent who was elected as a Brossard city councillor. We know that she was the director of two Chinese community centres, one in Montreal and one in Brossard, that are suspected of having become Chinese police stations.

It is suspected that this woman got elected to Brossard's city council because people from the Chinese government sent WeChat messages to members of Brossard's Chinese community, telling them to vote for her. This woman is believed to be a Chinese operative. There is a link to the Chinese government, which is using digital platforms to influence our municipal and even provincial and federal elections.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks about that. Does this not prove that it is more urgent than ever to launch an independent public inquiry into Chinese interference in this country?

● (1325)

[*English*]

**Mr. Chandra Arya:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. colleague mentioned the growing importance of protecting Canadians and Canada from state-sponsored activities with respect to cybersecurity. State actors are very active in exploiting advanced technologies to create disruption and to erode trust in our systems and institutions, so that is one of the major objectives of our government in proposing this bill.

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the government seems to be granting itself some pretty broad powers in the bill, especially to the Minister of Public Safety and the Minister of Industry. Maybe my colleague can explain, and assure Canadians, how these powers would not be unjustly applied to ordinary Canadians who have done absolutely nothing wrong.



*Government Orders*

**Mr. Chandra Arya:** Mr. Speaker, with our system of checks and balances, like here in the House, the government is held to account by the opposition benches, which is one of the ways the government's powers and the ministers' powers are monitored and controlled.

There is a broader aspect to this. This legislation deals with evolving technologies, which are very difficult to even define in the legislation. The legislation cannot be changed or amended frequently, which is why the legislation provides more opportunities for the government or the ministers of the day to pass on regulations so that they can immediately identify those and take remedial measures.

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it has been reported that small and medium-sized businesses could face immense financial pressure from increased red tape and reporting measures. The Business Council of Canada, in an open letter, indicated that businesses were concerned with the added red tape and the impact it would have on small and medium-sized businesses.

We realize, at least on this side of the House, that small and medium-sized businesses are the backbone of the economy. Is this the time to be adding more financial pressures to these businesses? Can the member think of alternative ways of being able to satisfy that?

**Mr. Chandra Arya:** Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member that small businesses are the backbone of Canada and the Canadian economy, with the majority of Canadians working in small and medium-sized businesses.

Related to this bill is the fact that this issue affects small-sized businesses disproportionately more, because they do not have enough resources to protect themselves from cyber-threats. In fact, as I mentioned in my speech, the new Canadian Centre for Cyber Security, which is part of the Communications Security Establishment, is there to provide expert advice, guidance, and service and support on cyber-threats and cybersecurity to Canadian organizations.

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and join the debate this morning in the House of Commons. I will be sharing my time with the member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake.

Bill C-26 is a bill that addresses an important and growing topic. Cybersecurity is very important, very timely. I am glad that, in calling this bill today, the government sees this as a priority. I struggle with trying to figure out the priorities of the government from time to time. There were other bills it had declared as absolute must-pass bills before Christmas that it is not calling. However, it is good to be talking about this instead of Bill C-21, Bill C-11 or some of the other bills that the Liberals have lots of problems with on their own benches.

Cybersecurity is something that affects all Canadians. It is, no doubt, an exceptionally important issue that the government needs to address. Cybersecurity, as the previous speaker said, is national security. It is critical to the safety and security of all of our infrastructure. It underpins every aspect of our lives. We have seen how infrastructure can be vulnerable to cyber-attacks. Throughout the

world, we have seen how energy infrastructure is vulnerable, like cyber-attacks that affect the ability to operate pipelines. We have seen how cyber-attacks can jeopardize the functioning of an electrical grid.

At the local level, we have experienced how weather events that bring down power infrastructure can devastate a community and can actually endanger people's health and safety. One can only imagine what a nationwide or pervasive cyber-attack that managed to cripple a national electrical grid would do to people's ability to live their lives in safety and comfort.

Cyberwarfare is emerging as a critical component of every country's national defence system, both offensively and defensively. The battlefield success of any military force has always depended on communication. We know now just how dependent military forces are on the security of their cyber-communication. We see this unfolding in Ukraine, resulting from the horrific, criminal invasion of that country by Putin. We see the vital role that communication plays with respect to the ability of a country to defend itself from a foreign adversary, in terms of cybersecurity.

I might point out that there is a study on this going on at the national defence committee. We have heard expert testimony about how important cybersecurity is to the Canadian Armed Forces. We look forward to getting that report eventually put together and tabled, with recommendations to the government here in the House of Commons in Canada.

We know that critical sectors of the Canadian economy and our public services are highly vulnerable to cyber-attack. Organized crime and foreign governments do target information contained within health care systems and within our financial system. The potential for a ransom attack, large and small, is a threat to Canadians. Imagine a hostile regime or a criminal enterprise hacking a public health care system and holding an entire province or an entire country hostage with the threat to destroy or leak or hopelessly corrupt the health data of millions of citizens. Sadly, criminal organizations and hostile governments seek to do this and are busy creating the technology to enable them to do exactly this.

• (1330)

The Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics conducted three different studies while I was chair of that committee that were tied to cybersecurity in various ways. We talked about and learned about the important ways in which cybersecurity and privacy protection intersect and sometimes conflict. We saw how this government contracted with the company Clearview AI, a company whose business is to scrape billions of images from the Internet, identify these images and sell the identified images back to governments and, in the case of Canada, to the RCMP.

*Government Orders*

We heard chilling testimony at that committee about the capabilities of sophisticated investigative tools, spyware, used by hostile regimes and by organized crime but also by our own government, which used sophisticated investigative tools to access Canadians' cellphones without their knowledge or consent. In Canada, this was limited. It was surprising to learn that this happened, but it happened under judicial warrant and in limited situations by the RCMP. However, the RCMP did not notify or consult the Privacy Commissioner, which is required under Treasury Board rules. This conflict between protecting Canadians by enforcing our laws and protecting Canadians' privacy is difficult for governments, and when government institutions like the RCMP disregard Treasury Board edicts or ignore the Privacy Commissioner or the Privacy Act, especially when they set aside or ignore a ruling from the Privacy Commissioner, it is quite concerning.

This bill is important. It is worthy of support, unlike the government's somewhat related bill, Bill C-27, the so-called digital charter. However, this bill, make no mistake, has significant new powers for the government. It amends the Telecommunications Act to give extraordinary powers to the minister over industry. It is part of a pattern we are seeing with this government, where it introduces bills that grant significant powers to the minister and to the bureaucrats who will ultimately create regulations.

Parliament is really not going to see this fleshed out unless there is significant work done at committee to improve transparency around this bill and to add more clarity around what this bill would actually do and how these powers will be granted. There have been many concerns raised in the business community about how this bill may chase investment, jobs and capital from Canada. The prospect of extraordinary fines, without this bill being fleshed out very well, creates enormous liability for companies, which may choose not to invest in Canada, not fully understanding the ramifications of this bill.

There is always the capture. We have seen this time and time again with the government. It seems to write up a bill for maybe three or four big companies or industries, only a small number of players in Canada, and yet the bill will capture other enterprises, small businesses that do not have armies of lobbyists to engage the government and get regulations that will give them loopholes, or lawyers to litigate a conflict that may arise as a result of it. I am always concerned about the small businesses and the way they may be captured, either deliberately or not, by a bill like this.

I will conclude by saying that I support the objective. I agree with the concern that the bill tries to address. I am very concerned about a number of areas that are ambiguous within the bill. I hope that it is studied vigorously at committee and that strong recommendations are brought back from committee and incorporated into whatever the bill might finally look like when it comes back for third reading.

• (1335)

**Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to invite my hon. colleague to take a higher-level view of an important issue because we are dealing here with cybersecurity and the need for protections, but we are also looking at a realm of artificial intelligence and things like that. These are things that can happen. People can 3D-print a gun that cannot be picked up by

airport security. There is a lot of technology out there that could be purposefully harmful to individuals or to our whole society. In that regard, given some of the other conversations we have had about gatekeepers, would the member care to put a frame around the kind of gatekeeping that he and his party see as essential and necessary for the purpose of protecting Canadians?

• (1340)

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** Mr. Speaker, the primary function of government is to protect its citizens from external harm and to ensure that Canadians are able to live freely and safely in their communities.

I do have concerns about the gatekeeping aspect of this bill. I am concerned that if this bill does not get the balance of the regulation and the ability of commerce to continue, we will lose businesses and we will lose services and access to economic activity within Canada if we chase investment out through poorly thought-out regulations.

Yes, there is of course a delicate balance to be had. If we come down too hard on the side of regulation and gatekeeping, it will result in job loss and lack of investment, and the absence of investment would then compound businesses' abilities to actually deliver on cybersecurity.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, over the past few years, businesses and even political parties have been gathering data, whether through quizzes or games, not only on the person playing the game but also on all the contacts that person has on their phone.

I would like to know if my colleague finds this tactic to be ethical, given that these people were receiving unsolicited advertising. Does my colleague think the bill will put an end to this practice?

[*English*]

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** Mr. Speaker, that may be a better question for the government to answer, but I do not believe this is the intent of this bill. This bill is about cybersecurity. The government has another bill before the House, Bill C-27, which is a bit closer to privacy changes. The government has not proposed changes to the Privacy Act or the Elections Act, so I do not think this bill is relevant to the question that the member raised. The member is getting away from cybersecurity and into the much broader rubric of the privacy of Canadians. She raises some points, but I do not actually connect them to this bill.

*Government Orders*

**Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask some questions of the hon. member that are more related. I know it is a bit away from this bill, but he mentioned in his speech the work we are doing in our defence committee on cyber-defence and cybersecurity. I have two questions.

There have been calls for the International Criminal Court to declare cyberwarfare an actual war crime. What does the member think about that?

There is also the fact that we heard that Canada and its security institutions actually overclassify information by about 90%, and that if we could declassify a lot of that information, this would significantly help those security organizations deal with the specific threats we are seeing. I want to hear the member's opinion on that.

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** Mr. Speaker, with respect to the first question, I will set it aside and await more testimony and discussion at the defence committee about that.

With respect to the second point, about the overclassification of information, that is a good one and I am glad the member raised it. It actually speaks to the overall culture of secrecy that exists in the Government of Canada. This is a real problem that has been ongoing for years. The current government ran on a platform in 2015 to let the sunshine in and we have absolutely unprecedented secrecy within the government. The member raises a good point around the overclassification of documents.

• (1345)

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is wonderful to have an opportunity to speak to Bill C-26, an act respecting cybersecurity, amending the Telecommunications Act and making consequential amendments to other acts.

I think this is such an important topic, and it is something we need to be very aware of, especially in this increasingly digital era. We are seeing more and more attacks on cybersecurity happening here in Canada and around the world. I support the overall concept of the bill, and I want to see it go to committee so that we can have further study, as well as some amendments to alleviate some of the concerns that I, some of my colleagues and different stakeholders have brought forward. However, I have some questions I want to pose and put forward in the hope that the minister will have a plan to address some of them.

One big question I have is that the bill is pretty vague when it comes to the definition of “critical infrastructure”. Coming from northern Alberta, critical infrastructure can look very different from what it would look like in a larger centre in an area further south. One of the things I immediately thought of was whether a pipeline would count as critical infrastructure. Frankly, in northern Alberta, at the very minimum, pipelines not only export our oil but also bring up gasoline and natural gas, which are the ways we heat our homes. Most homes, at least in the Fort McMurray area, are heated with natural gas. In the wintertime, specifically and especially, if somehow a natural gas pipeline were to be the target of a cybersecurity threat, that could actually have devastating consequences and cause thousands of people to freeze.

I think this is the kind of question we have as to what exactly critical infrastructure is.

One of the other big pieces is that critical infrastructure seems to be defined in terms of what small and medium-sized businesses and not necessarily different government actors have. Different layers of government have different pieces of infrastructure that could also be attacked by cybersecurity threats. I think of provincial governments. Some of the big pieces for cybersecurity threats would probably be in hospitals, but it could go far beyond just a hospital, depending on the community. In the case of a specific emergency, like a fire, flood or some other natural disaster, the definition of critical infrastructure might be very different.

While I understand the idea of keeping it broad, a hacker or bad actor could specifically target an area in the case of an emergency or natural disaster because they know we are already in a weaker state. I think it is important to have some pieces in place so there can actually be plans to ensure that is not going to happen. That is something the legislation needs to define, and I would urge us to define it and specifically include pipelines as part of critical infrastructure. This is especially the case because we have gone into this space where so much is digitized.

There is digitization in just about every aspect of our world, so it becomes a question of actually having to define some of these pieces. We cannot just leave this all up to regulation. I think some baselines need to be set out in this piece of legislation in order to make sure we are actually talking about the same things. In this way, we can plan for future pieces of infrastructure we do not currently know are important and part of this plan.

While the legislation would give absolutely broad and sweeping powers to government, it does not seem to have any safeguards in place. I think the lack of safeguards is very concerning. I think back to the floods that were experienced in southern Alberta in 2012. Through the process of those floods, for a number of reasons that were not necessarily well defined, the RCMP decided to go into High River and seize guns. The RCMP made a decision not to seize guns in Calgary or other communities, but in High River, it decided to go in and seize guns.

• (1350)

This is a piece where we need to be very careful and make sure we have some safeguards in place. Then, in the case where there is government overreach in trying to prevent a security threat, there is recourse available that is defined in the legislation. It should not be left to regulation, where it could be changed at the whim of a minister. This is so important.

*Government Orders*

Another big, important piece that is scary to me is the fact that the government has all this work in place to make sure that small and medium-sized businesses, and other businesses, have security plans, which they must send to the government. However, what work is the government doing specifically to ensure that it is prevented from being part of a security threat? How many times has the federal government been hacked? In recent memory, it has been hacked a number of different times in different ways. This may be our email system or the House of Commons intranet. Some of these pieces are very much at risk. Is it a smart idea, from a security standpoint, to have everything housed in one place? What kinds of safeguards would we have such that information is not accessible should that aspect of the government be hacked? In turn, we want to make sure hackers do not find out all of our security plans so they can get around them or mess with things they identify as unprotected. That is one of the interesting pieces.

The bill also stipulates that businesses are to share with government but not that the government has to share with businesses. While I understand part of why the government would do that, I think having a two-way dialogue when it comes to this information is going to be important. We should be trying to work towards best practices whenever possible. An organization in one part of the country might be doing something that is innovative and substantially safer for all Canadians that prevents security threats compared with another part. Such information should be shared, not just held by government, so we can build on best practices in case there is an emergency at some point.

The other big question I have with respect to this bill is: What has the government done to work with municipalities, provinces and first nations governments to ensure that this is going to respond to their cybersecurity threats and cybersecurity needs? This is a piece where I do not want to let perfect be the enemy of good. Quite frankly, we are not going to know what the next big threat is; however, we need to make sure we are protected and must try to apply as many best practices as possible so that we do not open ourselves up to unintended risks.

This is about making sure we are taking care of all the little links in the chain. We can have a very robust system and an amazing plan in place, but if we have one weak link, it counts for nothing. That is why we need to send the bill to committee now. We need to have some very robust conversations with security experts from around this country and the world to make sure we do not have any weak links in the chain. All it will take is one weak link for this entire pyramid to collapse. It will crumble apart. This is something that, as Canadians, we all need to be prepared for and ready to address, as well as having meaningful and robust conversations around it.

With that, I am thankful for this opportunity.

**Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am reading from the summary of Bill C-26, which would amend the Telecommunications Act to “authorize the Governor in Council and the Minister of Industry to direct telecommunications service providers to do anything, or refrain from doing anything, that is necessary to secure” our telecommunications security.

Although it is a laudable goal, those are very broad powers to give to a minister. Does my colleague feel it is necessary to give such broad and unfettered authority to one person?

• (1355)

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague actually brings up another big point that I did not get to in my speech. The amount of control that it provides to a few people is very concerning.

Some serious conversations are needed about what we are doing to ensure that it is not just one or two people making these decisions, especially as we explore whether we really want the government to be the sole keeper of all this information and give it that broad power. It could actually open us up to specific risks if a threat agent knows that the best way of going after us is to go after that one particular minister. That could create more of a risk, not less.

That is something we should explore and look at amending, not so we are removing that power, but so we are expanding or changing it to create those safeguards. This would make it very clear that a bad actor cannot just go after one minister or ministry and shut down an entire system.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, as we know, technology is evolving at a frightening and unpredictable pace. It is exponential, according to all the experts.

I wonder if my colleague could comment on quantum computing, which is an extremely impressive technology that is evolving at an unbelievable pace.

I am wondering whether the contents of Bill C-26 and the agility we write into legislation are sufficient to respond to any concerns we may have about evolving technologies, which often mean that governments become outdated.

I would like my colleague to comment on that.

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague has pinpointed some very serious problems. The reality is that technology progresses at such a rapid pace that it is really difficult to have legislation in place to address the next steps.

It is crucial to have the best experts analyzing the flexibility of our legislation to ensure the protection and security of future technologies that will be implemented. This means not just for now, but for the future as well.

[*English*]

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we know that threats to cybersecurity are increasing and are very concerning. We are far behind other countries in our capacity to respond to them. We have heard from civil liberty groups that the surveillance provisions in this bill could be quite problematic.

Bearing in mind that we need to strengthen our cybersecurity, does the member have thoughts on the concerns or unknown ramifications that might result from this bill?

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague actually highlights a very important issue here. While having security is critical for our cybersecurity system, we must also make sure that we are balancing this with civil liberties and not allowing personalized data to be shared in an unfettered way. We need safeguards in place so we are able to respond. In certain circumstances, we might have to have a bit of flexibility.

We also need to have safeguards in place, as well as ramifications, for when governments or businesses go beyond that space. We owe it to Canadians and to the world. We need to be safe, but we also need to protect one another. I do not think any member would like to have their personal telephone number shared with everyone across the country.

Without adequate safeguards, that information could possibly be shared, and these are the kinds of pieces that could create a lot of harm to each and every one of us. We have to have serious conversations about them.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

### HEALTH PARTNERS INTERNATIONAL OF CANADA

**Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about my recent visit to Health Partners International of Canada, commonly known as HPIC. I saw first-hand the incredible work that this organization is doing. HPIC sends humanitarian and emergency medical kits to vulnerable communities around the globe.

Since 1990, HPIC has dispatched \$670 million in medicines to 130 countries. Today, it is working in 37 countries, such as Ukraine, Haiti, Tigray and Afghanistan. I want to highlight HPIC's campaign to provide life-saving medicines in Syria and Turkey. A donation of one dollar allows HPIC to deliver \$10 in essential medicines.

What struck me about HPIC was its team's dedication and passion. It works around the clock to ensure that critical medical supplies reach those who need them most. HPIC's efforts are a clear reminder that we are all members of one human family, and we support it.

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### AGASSIZ FIRE DEPARTMENT

**Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on February 27, I attended the District of Kent council meeting to proudly recognize the Agassiz Fire Department and its heroic actions during the floods and landslides that swept through my riding in 2021.

Our small-town agricultural community was hit with not one but two landslides, trapping 311 people. It was no small task for the Agassiz Fire Department, which bravely rose to the challenge

### Statements by Members

alongside the Canadian Armed Forces, the RCMP, BC Ambulance Service and Kent Harrison Search and Rescue. Thanks to their quick and strategic action, lives were saved that day. In conjunction with the Canadian Armed Forces, all trapped individuals were led to safety and helicoptered out by the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Members of the Agassiz Fire Department risked their lives to save others. I am moved by their true teamwork and dedication to selflessly put another's life ahead of their own. I am recognizing the AFD today because we must do more to recognize the heroic actions of local volunteer fire brigades across Canada.

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### WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

**Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this month is international Women's History Month, and I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the incredible contributions that women have made throughout history and continue to make today. I especially want to recognize the 103 women in the House.

This is a moment to bring attention to both the advancements made in achieving gender equality and the work that still needs to be done. I also want to highlight my municipal counterpart's work at the City of Brampton for unanimously passing a motion at council this month to implement mandatory gender-based analysis plus training for all senior staff using our federal tool. I was just at the UN Commission on the Status of Women, where Canada is recognized as a leader on gender equality, and GBA+ is a leading international model.

As we celebrate Women's History Month, let us remember the many women who have paved the way and those who continue to inspire each and every one of us.

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[Translation]

### PIERRE-LUC LEBLANC

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today I wish to pay tribute to one of my constituents, a worthy and dedicated citizen from the great riding of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

Ten years ago, Pierre-Luc Leblanc became the youngest-ever president of the Éleveurs de volailles du Québec, the Quebec poultry farmers' association. Pierre-Luc's tenure will come to an end in two weeks, making him the second-longest-serving president in the history of this illustrious institution.

*Statements by Members*

Pierre-Luc owns numerous poultry farms and will soon be able to dedicate his full attention to his growing businesses, as well as new ventures, such as opening a large market in Saint-Hyacinthe that is dedicated to local products.

Since 2019, when the voters in our riding entrusted me with the responsibility of representing them here in Parliament, I have worked with Pierre-Luc on the issues that matter to farmers, particularly the issue of supply management. He has been an invaluable ally in our journey towards food self-sufficiency.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I wish Pierre-Luc a successful end to his tenure and best wishes for the future.

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**CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS**

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is no stronger relationship in the world than the one between Canada and the United States.

[*English*]

The links between Canadians and Americans are long-standing, indeed. Like many, I have lived in the United States, which allowed me to experience American exceptionalism first-hand.

• (1405)

[*Translation*]

In the face of an uncertain future, we continue to strengthen our ties for our citizens, democracy, human rights, the rule of law and to fight climate change.

[*English*]

The well-known North American principle that diversity is our strength is both our nations' beacon of light to the world. President Biden's visit to Canada is a reminder of the remarkable Canada-U.S. relationship as neighbours and, above all, friends.

[*Translation*]

Together, we are determined to create real opportunities to promote security as well as an inclusive, robust economic recovery that will continue to stimulate competition for citizens on both sides of the border.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**CANADIAN ARMED FORCES**

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Liberal Prime Minister, members of our Canadian Forces are being told they are asking for more than the Prime Minister will give. Take, for example, the brutal conditions at my alma mater, the Canadian Forces School of Communications and Electronics at CFB Kingston.

Troops are housed in four-person rooms with poor HVAC, broken shared facilities, no privacy, no kitchenettes, no access to storage and bathrooms full of mould. Just yesterday, one member told me he is living in the shacks. His room is heated to 33 degrees and

is full of mice. "Would you let your family live here?" he asked. Of course, the answer is absolutely not.

Even the equipment is in shambles. LSVWs and lineman construction trucks are well overdue for replacement. No wonder morale and recruitment are dismal when the government will not provide our men and women in uniform the equipment or living quarters they need.

We ask everything of the men and women in our Armed Forces. It is about time the Liberals give them what they need to get the job done.

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**AGNES MACPHAIL AWARD RECIPIENT**

**Hon. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to congratulate the 2023 recipient of the City of Toronto's Agnes Macphail Award, Dr. Shakhlo Sharipova, a proud resident of Thorncliffe Park.

This award is presented annually to the volunteer in East York who has made a significant community impact. Agnes Macphail was the first woman elected to the House of Commons and served provincially in what is now Don Valley West. She was passionate about education, youth and women's political engagement.

Coming to Canada in 2009 from Tajikistan, Dr. Sharipova built the Thorncliffe Park Autism Support Network, parents caring for children living with autism. Even as the primary caregiver of a son who lives with autism, and while operating the network, Dr. Sharipova has time to help seniors, newcomers and low-income families. With her team of volunteers, she runs an annual toy drive, and this year will provide over 4,000 meals during Ramadan through her free hot meal project.

I congratulate Dr. Sharipova. *Ramadan Mubarak.*

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**ENDOMETRIOSIS AWARENESS MONTH**

**Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as March is Endometriosis Awareness Month, I rise to use my voice to call attention to the life-altering impacts of this chronic condition.

For those suffering from endometriosis, the lived reality of debilitating pain, infertility and other symptoms can take a significant mental and physical toll, impacting their ability to work, study and enjoy their lives. It can take five to 11 years to receive an official diagnosis, and there is no definitive cause or known cure. The stigma around menstruation and women's health has led to low awareness, and this is why we need to talk about it openly and get serious about addressing the research and access to treatment gaps that exist around the disease.

This is why I am proud to have joined some of my colleagues in the House in seconding Motion No. 52, which would establish a national action plan for endometriosis. I would encourage all fellow members to consider doing the same.

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### ACTIVISM IN RUSSIA

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in a secret courtroom in Russia, an unjust trial of a courageous freedom fighter is taking place.

Our friend, Vladimir Kara-Murza, is facing a sentence of 25 years in prison, which would beat the longest verdict ever sentenced and handed out to a Russian political prisoner. His crime is high treason, but what did he actually do? Vladimir Kara-Murza spoke out against Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine. He called out corrupt oligarchs and the kleptocrats in the Kremlin. He stood up for liberty, the rule of law and democracy.

While Putin wages his genocidal war in Ukraine, Kara-Murza called for peace. He languishes in prison, exacerbating his poor health, which is a result of the poisonings that he survived from two previous assassination attempts ordered by Moscow, yet he continues to fight for a better future for the people of Russia. In the words Kara-Murza, “The biggest gift that those of us who oppose Vladimir Putin could give to the Kremlin would be to give up and run away”.

I call on the House to demand Putin to immediately end the show trial against Vladimir Kara-Murza and set him free.

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● (1410)

### INN FROM THE COLD

**Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, an active and engaging not-for-profit is a sure sign of a healthy community.

On Saturday, February 25, my community took part in the Coldest Night of the Year fundraising walk for Inn From The Cold to support people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Over 400 walkers, 64 teams and 65 volunteers raised over \$157,000.

I thank the sponsors, the participants and the organizing committee members, specifically Martha Berry, Tracee Chambers, Ann Watson, Joanna Gardner, Cody Kaslove, Anne Young and Ken Turriff. It is because of their efforts that Inn From The Cold will continue to be able to offer support to those in need of shelter. I thank everyone who took time to make a positive difference in our community.

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### TAXATION

**Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on April 1, the Liberal government will raise the tax on beer, wine and spirits once again. It is the biggest tax hike on alcohol in 40 years, and that means Canadian breweries, vineyards

### Statements by Members

and distilleries will pay the price. It also proves that the Prime Minister has no shame in fuelling the affordability crisis he created.

Thankfully, Conservatives are fighting to turn hurt into hope for Canadians who enjoy a refreshing drink after a long day of work, and yesterday we got results. Conservatives successfully passed a motion calling on the government to cancel this punishing tax hike. Now, it is up to the Prime Minister to either respect the will of Parliament or turn a blind eye for yet another tax hike on Canadians.

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### CARBON TAX

**Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, they say this Prime Minister has never met a tax he did not like. He said no to relief from GST on home heating and fuels, he said no to freezing the rising escalator tax on beer, wine and spirits, and instead of providing relief to Canadians, the Liberals are increasing the carbon tax by 25% on April 1.

This Prime Minister does not understand science any better than he does the struggles of ordinary Canadians. For instance, in my riding, we have the largest concentration of greenhouses in North America. They are essential to our food security. Up to 75% of the carbon dioxide emissions can be recirculated back for essential plant growth, yet they are taxed. As most farm operations are now over 15 acres in size, by 2030, these operators will have paid another \$1.3 million in carbon tax.

When will this Prime Minister get the facts and stop the tax?

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### MAPLE SYRUP SEASON

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for Canadians, March means maple syrup, so I rise today to celebrate 40 years of Maple Madness in the Kingston region.

Last week, my team, joined by my family and I, went for our annual trip to maple madness. Bundled up on a cold yet sunny morning, we took a tractor-drawn wagon ride into the sugar bush at the Little Catarauqui Creek Conservation Area. We learned how making maple syrup has evolved over the years, including the ingenious techniques used by indigenous peoples for centuries. There are wonderful storytellers who guide visitors through the bush, and capable hands at work in the sugar shack. Of course, a highlight of our visit was enjoying some freshly made pancakes with warm maple syrup.

This is an annual tradition for so many community members in our area, and I want to thank all involved in making Maple Madness such a success for the past 40 years. I wish them a happy anniversary.

*Oral Questions*

● (1415)

**DENTAL HYGIENISTS**

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, today, I am pleased to welcome members of the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association to Parliament, especially Donna, Cindy, Bev and Juliana, who met with me this morning to share their experience and wisdom.

Dental hygienists are essential primary health care professionals who are critical to oral health and who specialize in preventative care.

This year, National Dental Hygienists Week will run from April 4 to 10. The week's theme "Oral Health for Total Health" reminds all of us that taking care of our mouth, teeth and gums is integral to our overall health. That is why my New Democrat colleagues and I are working so diligently to bring dental care to every Canadian from coast to coast to coast.

On behalf of Canada's New Democrats, I wish to thank the over 31,000 dental hygienists across our country who help take care of our smiles every single day. Together, we can expand access, provide better dental care and improve the health of all Canadians.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**LORRAINE-ROSEMÈRE NOVICE HOCKEY TOURNAMENT**

**Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the 29th Lorraine-Rosemère novice hockey tournament was held last January 25 to February 5. It is the biggest tournament in the Laurentians. Players took to the ice in a supercharged atmosphere. Congratulations to all the young people who gave us such wonderful performances.

I want to congratulate all the volunteers who contributed to the success of this event, especially the president of the tournament, Jessie Ann Hutchison, for the superb organization.

I had the pleasure of facing off with my colleague from Rivière-des-Mille-Îles. We were guest coaches at an all-star game. Unfortunately, my team was outdone by the opposing team's game plan.

I congratulate my dear colleague on his victory. There will be a rematch next year.

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[English]

**DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on November 7, the first report appeared about the PRC's interference in our elections. Since then, 19 weeks have passed. Since then, hundreds of questions have been asked in question period, in debate and in committee.

Despite these hundreds of questions, despite 19 weeks having passed, the Prime Minister has not told us much of anything. The government has responded with non-answers, denials, obfuscations, and accusations of racism and partisanship. The only reason why

we know anything is because whistle-blowers have leaked to the media.

This is appalling. It is contemptuous of Parliament. By denying Parliament the most basic answers to the questions about a serious national threat, by forcing whistle-blowers to leak to the media, by going outside Parliament, the government is undermining Parliament and the very foundations of our constitutional order.

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**FOREST STEWARDSHIP AWARD**

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to congratulate Dr. Isobel Ralston and Dr. Jan Oudenes for receiving the prestigious Forest Stewardship Award from Forests Ontario. This award is presented in recognition of outstanding support for forestry conservation and education.

MapleCross, founded by Isobel and Jan in 2017, invests in and protects ecologically sensitive land and areas of significant biodiversity. MapleCross has contributed to the preservation of almost 15,000 hectares of land across all 10 provinces and helped secure the preservation of more than 30 nature reserves, including the Oak Ridges Moraine in our region.

In Ontario, our greenbelt and other conservation lands are being threatened by a provincial government willing to allow development to occur on these protected lands. Our federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change acted recently, announcing a much-needed study to determine the effects of development on the Rouge National Park.

We are at a nexus where protecting our green space is even more important. Therefore, I want to thank Jan and Isobel for dedicating their time, talent and resources to MapleCross and the cause of environmental conservation. As their member of Parliament, I congratulate them on this well-deserved award.

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**ORAL QUESTIONS**

● (1420)

[Translation]

**DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for a thousand days, the two Michaels sat, hopeless, in a windowless torture cell not knowing when they would be freed.

Yesterday, we learned from Global News that, according to two national security sources, a Liberal MP allegedly, and I quote, "privately advised a senior Chinese diplomat in February 2021 that Beijing should hold off freeing [the two Michaels]". These members of our national security forces allegedly gave the Prime Minister that information.

When did the Prime Minister know?



*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, bringing back the two Michaels, Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig, was the top priority of the government and, I would say, of all members of the House and all Canadians.

We worked tirelessly for two years to bring these two men, who were arbitrarily detained by China, back to Canada, and all members of the House should know that.

[*English*]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for 1,000 days, the two Michaels sat hopeless in a windowless cell, fed in doggy bowls that were slid under their door, going eight months without seeing consular support, yet, according to Global News, a Liberal MP allegedly contacted the Chinese consulate and encouraged it to delay the release of these two Michaels for partisan Liberal gain.

The intelligence services that came up with this information to the media would have told the Prime Minister. When did they tell him?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me be clear that bringing back the two Michaels, Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, was the utmost priority of this government, of all members of the House, of all Canadians across the country.

For two years, we have worked tirelessly to make sure that these two Michaels, who were arbitrarily detained by China, would be coming back home safe. That is what we did and that was the only priority. Thinking otherwise is actually false.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have two members of our national security services who have told the media that a Liberal MP told the Chinese not to release the two Michaels.

I have now twice asked when the Prime Minister, his office or his department were informed of this startling revelation. I am going to ask a third time and I ask the minister to answer.

When did the Prime Minister become aware of these allegations?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, September 24, 2021 was a great day for Canada and it was the day when the two Michaels, Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, came back safely home to Canada. I think it was a day when the government, all members of the House and all Canadians were proud of what we did, because, indeed, the two Michaels were arbitrarily detained for too long in China.

This will always be our priority as a government. We will always stand up against any form of arbitrary detention in state-to-state relations.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this non-answer is extremely troubling. We have revelations from Canada's top security forces, who told the media that a Liberal MP asked the Chinese consulate to keep two Canadians in torture, in a windowless cell.

I asked already, three times, when did the Prime Minister become aware of these revelations. I ask again, when?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all the members of the House who were involved in making sure we could raise the case of the two Michaels for two years, because we worked with friends and allies, different states around the world, to make sure that we could advocate their case and that, on September 24, 2021, they would be coming back here to Canada.

In that sense, we will stand up against any form of arbitrary detention. This is part of our priority in terms of foreign policy.

In April, in Toronto, we will be hosting an arbitrary detention summit, because the world needs to know that what happened to the two Michaels was unacceptable.

• (1425)

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the importance of this question cannot be overstated.

The Prime Minister knew that a member of his Liberal caucus was working to keep two Canadian citizens arbitrarily and illegally incarcerated in windowless cells, potentially being tortured. He knew that and did nothing. That would be a devastating scandal against our national interest.

I am simply asking for the government to clarify. On what date did the Prime Minister find out the revelations that one of his MPs may have helped keep our people in jail?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister knew very well what was happening to the two Michaels and made sure that his government would be standing up against China in the context of their arbitrary detention.

In that sense, we will never accept any form of premise that this government and Canadians did not work enough to bring them back home. It was our priority, and members can be convinced that it will always be our priority, when it comes to any form of consular cases or any form of arbitrarily detained Canadians in the world.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Quebecers were already concerned about Chinese interference in our electoral system, but another line was crossed yesterday when very serious allegations were levelled against a Liberal MP. It is no longer just our electoral system at stake, it is the people's confidence in their elected representatives in this Parliament.

The Prime Minister should not be appointing his friend to reflect on whether or not a commission of inquiry should perhaps be launched at some point. Now is the time to act.

When will the Prime Minister finally set up a public and independent commission of inquiry? It is urgent.

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we fully understand the concerns of Canadians about allegations of foreign interference in our democratic institutions.

*Oral Questions*

Those concerns are shared and they should be shared by all MPs in the House of Commons. They are certainly shared by our government. We have put in place robust measures to counter foreign interference, and we have strengthened those measures in recent years.

The appointment of the Right Hon. David Johnston builds on those efforts to make them even more robust.

**Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, delay can be fatal.

First, we learned that China was interfering in elections. Yesterday, we learned that a Liberal member had allegedly advised a Chinese diplomat to take action that was not in the interest of Canadian citizens. This is serious. I am not making this up.

As we learn about this and more and more incidents are reported by the media, we note that there is still no commission of inquiry and that the government has appointed an old friend to determine whether or not there will be a commission of inquiry, when in fact, one should be launched right now. There should be an independent commission of public inquiry. It is urgent.

When will it be launched?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I must reassure the House and, of course, my dear colleague that bringing the two Michaels, Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, back to Canada was always a priority for this government.

I believe it was also a priority for all members of the House and certainly for all Canadians. September 24, 2021, was a great day because they finally came home.

Protecting Canadians around the world, no matter who they are, will always be our priority. We will never again allow any form of arbitrary detention.

[English]

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, enough is enough. Every day, new allegations come forward about political interference that erode the public's trust in our democracy. It is becoming more and more clear to the public that the Prime Minister must have known about these allegations. Communities are at risk of being stigmatized. We need to clear the air.

Will the Prime Minister do the right thing and allow his MPs to vote in favour of our motion today for a transparent independent public inquiry?

• (1430)

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we obviously share the leader of the NDP's concern about the importance of not stigmatizing communities in Canada.

I think all members of the House know that our government wants to have a respectful non-partisan, fact-based conversation around these allegations and around how we can work together to further reinforce our democratic institutions to ensure that foreign interference is something that is always countered by the government. It is something we have done since we formed the govern-

ment and it is something we will continue to do to ensure Canadians can have confidence in our democracy.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the way we do everything the minister just said is by launching a public inquiry.

[Translation]

The allegations published yesterday are shocking and disturbing. It is clear that a public inquiry is needed. These allegations are eroding people's confidence in our democracy.

We have an opportunity today. Is the Prime Minister prepared to allow his MPs to vote in favour of our motion calling for a public inquiry?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I just said a moment ago, we share the concerns of the NDP leader and of all Canadians. As for the need to have a discussion on these issues, a non-partisan, fact-based discussion, we have institutions already in place that are doing important work.

We have asked the Right Hon. David Johnston to go even further, to review the institutions that are already in place and to advise us on what additional steps we can take. We look forward to the results of Mr. Johnston's analysis in that regard.

[English]

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday Global News printed very serious allegations about a member who sits in the House. The allegations, according to two separate national security sources, state that he privately advised a senior Chinese diplomat in February 2021 that Beijing should hold off freeing Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor.

For the sixth time today, on what date did the Prime Minister first learn of these allegations from security officials?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we take the allegations of foreign interference very seriously, which is why we have ensured that our national security agencies have all of the powers and authorities, but with the corresponding transparency required to reinforce the confidence of Canadians in our institutions

At every stage, Canadians can be confident we are protecting our institutions. Canadians can be confident we are protecting our elections.

Above all, Canadians can be assured of the fact that this government worked 24-7 to ensure the return of the two Michaels to Canada. That is something we did.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the allegations from two separate national security sources state that a member of the House privately advised Beijing officials to hold off freeing two Canadian hostages held captive for over 1,000 days.

*Oral Questions*

After all of the new evidence that Canadians have learned on election interference, it would be difficult for them to believe that security sources told Global News about the Liberal member's actions without anyone trying to inform the Prime Minister.

I will ask for the seventh time today: On what day did the Prime Minister first learn of these allegations against a member of his own caucus?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I assure my colleague that the government has set up the appropriate mechanisms to deal with the allegations with regard to foreign interference in our elections, through the creation of NSI-COP, through the creation of NSIRA and now through the appointment of Mr. David Johnston, who was initially appointed by Steven Harper, a former Conservative prime minister. Mr. Johnston is an eminent Canadian who possesses the qualifications, the experience in the law and the wisdom to help us navigate around the important challenges of foreign interference.

No member in the chamber should have any doubt whatsoever as to the way in which we are protecting our institutions and ensured the return of the two Michaels to Canada.

**Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the evidence is mounting. Every day, we are finding new pieces to the foreign interference puzzle. Just yesterday, new allegations were revealed, which led to the resignation of a long-standing member of the Liberal caucus. We will continue to ask questions until Canadians get a straightforward answer.

For the eighth consecutive time, on what date did the Prime Minister first learn of these serious and troubling allegations?

• (1435)

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, since we took the reins of government, we have raised the bar of transparency through the creation of the National Security Intelligence Review Agency; through the creation of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, which sees parties work across the partisan aisle; and now with the most recent appointment of David Johnston as an independent expert who will look into these questions to reassure Canadians they can have confidence in our institutions, in our elections and in our defence of human rights, which manifested in a campaign to see the two Michaels returned to Canada.

That is something every member of the chamber and all Canadians can be confident in.

**Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, new serious allegations about foreign interference in federal elections led to a high-profile resignation from the Liberal caucus, a caucus member whom the Prime Minister has staunchly defended.

We have already asked this eight times today. I will give the Liberals a ninth chance to answer. On what day did the Prime Minister first learn of these troubling allegations?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to answer the question from my colleague from Miramichi—Grand Lake in New Brunswick. As has been said on many occa-

sions in the House, we think Canadians benefit from a non-partisan, fact-based conversation about these very serious issues.

We know the Conservative Party is seeking to turn this issue into a partisan circus. What we are trying to do is reassure Canadians that we have a robust system to protect our democratic institutions. Our government has taken these allegations seriously since we formed office, and the right honourable David Johnston is the right person to give us ideas on the next steps to—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton.

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, day after day, there are new questions about what the Prime Minister knows about Beijing's interference. Yesterday, it was reported, based on national security sources, that a Liberal MP advised Beijing's Toronto consul general that the two Michaels languished in a Communist Party jail because somehow their release would benefit the Conservatives. This is about as serious as it gets. The Prime Minister needs to come clean.

For the 10th time, when did the Prime Minister learn of these allegations?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when it comes to making sure the two Michaels, Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, would be coming home, it was this government's utmost priority. For two years, the Prime Minister and foreign affairs ministers were heavily involved. All members of cabinet were talking to counterparts from around the world. Implying that this was not the case is absolutely false. We hope that all members in the House are convinced we were working together to make sure to bring them back home.

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, again, for the 11th time, on what date did the Prime Minister first learn about the allegation that a Liberal MP suggested to Han Tao, the PRC's consul general in Toronto, that the PRC delay the release of Mr. Kovrig and Mr. Spavor?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we will continue to be transparent with Canadians when it comes to the ways in which we are fighting foreign interference, through the collaboration of all parties in NSICOP, through accountability of NSIRA and now through the appointment of David Johnston, an eminent Canadian previously appointed by Stephen Harper, a former Conservative prime minister. He is someone who will lay out the next practical steps, including and up to a public inquiry, so that all Canadians can be confident we are protecting our institutions.

*Oral Questions*

No one should doubt, not for a single moment, that we did everything in our power to secure the return of the two Canadians. It was the right thing to do. The two Michaels are back home, and that is something that should be celebrated by all members in the chamber.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we know that CSIS warned Ontario Premier Doug Ford of potential interference in the last provincial election.

More importantly, we know that this interference targeted the area around Don Valley North, the riding represented by the federal MP named in the Global News allegations yesterday. We know this because Mr. Ford has said so publicly and transparently.

Did CSIS warn the Prime Minister that it was talking to Doug Ford about potential Chinese interference during the Ontario election?

• (1440)

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as we have been saying for months, threats of foreign interference are not just at the federal level. Democratic institutions in the provinces have likely been targeted by the same kinds of threats that we are seeing right now in the context of federal elections.

That is why we have always kept up a constructive dialogue with the premiers. I myself have spoken with Mr. Ford about the importance of strengthening democratic institutions. We have given provincial governments access to senior intelligence officials who can provide the information they need.

**Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we also know that Vancouver's outgoing mayor, Kennedy Stewart, discussed potential interference from China with CSIS before the last municipal election. We know that because he, too, said it publicly.

Did CSIS advise the Prime Minister that it had discussed China's potential interference in the Vancouver municipal election?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as we said many times and as I already said before the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs several weeks ago, as ministers, we get regular briefings on threats of foreign interference. We also provided provincial authorities with briefings or access to the senior officials responsible for our intelligence agencies so that they could understand the nature of the threat, which is always changing, and take the necessary measures in their jurisdictions to do what we did, which is to strengthen our democratic institutions.

**Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in summary, CSIS is openly talking about Chinese interference with cities and it is openly talking about Chinese interference with provinces, but we are to believe that CSIS is not talking about it with the federal government? Apparently the Prime Minister had to find out from the news that one or more of his MPs had diplomatic ties to Beijing. Either CSIS is keeping the Prime Minister abreast of everything that is happening at every level, except in his own backyard, or CSIS is talking to everyone but the federal government. What are we to believe? When will there be a public, independent inquiry?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague is fully aware that CSIS senior officials talk to federal government authorities on a regular basis to advise us on ways to strengthen our democratic institutions. That is precisely what we have been doing ever since we formed government. The appointment of the Right Hon. David Johnston is a measure that will allow us to further strengthen our democratic institutions. We have always recognized the threat of foreign interference, and we have taken measures to counter that threat.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, Global News published very serious allegations about a sitting MP. These allegations came from two separate national security sources. They are saying, and I quote, that he advised a senior Chinese diplomat in February 2021 that Beijing should hold off on freeing Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig. I am asking the same question that was asked 11 consecutive times today.

On what date did the Prime Minister first learn of these allegations from security officials?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have said a number of times in the House, bringing back the two Michaels was the utmost priority of this government. That was the priority of the Prime Minister, of several foreign affairs ministers and of all the members of the House. We worked with numerous counterparts around the world to ensure support for the two Michaels and to put pressure on China to achieve a positive outcome. Finally, September 24, 2021, was a great day for Canada: The two Michaels, two individuals arbitrarily detained by China, came back home to Canada.

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know what is so hard for the minister to understand. The question is simple. The allegations are serious. The government's failure to respond is revealing. For the 13th time, I will ask a very simple question that needs a very simple answer. When was the Prime Minister informed of the serious allegations revealed by Global News yesterday?

• (1445)

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what my colleague opposite needs to understand is that bringing home both Michaels was a priority. It was a priority for this government. Any insinuations to the contrary are absolutely false. Thus, I am answering the question, or the premise of the question: Canada, the government and all Canadians worked extremely hard to bring home Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, two people who were arbitrarily detained.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I find it really hard to believe that national security officials would have chosen to deliberately inform the media about such a sensitive matter before informing the Prime Minister. Again according to the Global News article, the Liberal MP “was already the subject of a CSIS probe started in the summer of 2019, three sources said, because the service believed a ‘subtle but effective’ election-interference network directed by the Toronto Chinese Consulate had clandestinely supported Dong's 2019 candidacy”.

We have asked the Prime Minister this question 13 times. On what exact date was the Prime Minister made aware of these serious allegations?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague knows perfectly well that we believe Canadians will benefit from a non-partisan discussion based on the facts that are properly framed within institutions that we have established since we formed government, including a committee of parliamentarians with Conservative Party members.

We appointed the Right Hon. David Johnston last week to advise us on what additional measures we can take. We will of course follow Mr. Johnston's transparent and public recommendations.

\* \* \*

[English]

**FORESTRY INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, just days after the Prime Minister met with President Biden in 2021, the U.S. announced it was doubling the duties on softwood lumber. Workers in communities that rely on Canada's forest industry are hoping for better this time.

The WTO agrees that we need a better deal. Is the softwood lumber deal on the agenda with the President? Will the billions in excess duties collected finally be returned to the forest industry?

**Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is an important question. My hon. colleague and I had a good conversation about this the other day.

I have been very clear about the forestry sector: We will always stand up for it and will always stand up for its workers. With respect to this issue, we have always said that we are ready to be at the table to negotiate, but we want a good deal, not just any deal.

\* \* \*

**NORTHERN AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, the climate emergency and foreign actors are threatening Canada's Arctic sovereignty and the rights of indigenous peoples in the north. Meanwhile, the Canadian Rangers, who know the lands they serve, have been failed by the government. A stronger relationship with the U.S. means more predictability and resources and, hopefully, more supports for Canadian Rangers.

Will the government work with the United States to ensure Canadian Rangers are equipped with more efficient supports and the tools they need to help keep northerners safe?

**Mr. Bryan May (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, whether it is search and rescue, domestic operations or training of fellow CAF members, Canadian Rangers provide key support to Canadians when and where needed. The CAF recognizes that Rangers need to replace personal items quickly, because Rangers, and often their community, require them for daily tasks and functions. The CAF has recently streamlined the compensation process. This will expedite the process for Rangers to receive their reimbursements. Our government is committed to ensuring that CAF members always have the tools they need to do their job.

\* \* \*

**AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government has been working hard to bring significant investments to Canada to create good jobs in Kitchener—Conestoga and throughout our nation to support our priority of creating a greener economy. Can the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry update this House on the exciting news that was announced regarding Volkswagen and how this will strengthen southwest Ontario's and Canada's electric vehicle battery ecosystem?

• (1450)

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is a great question. Bringing Volkswagen to Canada is a home run for the country. It is the first manufacturer we have brought into our country in 35 years, and it is the first time we bring a European manufacturer to Canada. This is a huge vote of confidence for Canada, it is a huge vote of confidence for the auto sector and it is a huge vote of confidence for our talented auto workers across this nation. Canada can win big, and this is another example.

\* \* \*

**DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, Global News printed very serious allegations about a member who sits in this House. The allegations, according to two separate national security sources, stated that he “privately advised a senior Chinese diplomat in February 2021 that Beijing should hold off freeing Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor”.

For the 15th time today, on what date did the Prime Minister first learn of these allegations from security officials?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague knows full well that this government has set up the appropriate mechanisms to be transparent and upfront with Canadians in the ways we are protecting our institutions, including our elections, from any allegations of foreign interference. We have had two independent panels, made up of non-partisan, professional public servants, verify that the elections were free and fair in 2019 and 2021. Now we have appointed an eminent Canadian in David Johnston to map out the next steps so we can continue that work. This is something we will do transparently with Canadians as well.

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, these non-answers are eroding public trust in our democracy.

The allegations from two separate national security sources state that a member in this House privately advised Beijing officials to hold off on freeing Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, two Canadians who were held captive for 1,000 days.

For the 16th time, on what date did the Prime Minister first learn about these allegations against a member of his caucus?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we think what erodes Canadians' confidence is the continued attempt to seek partisan advantage from what is a very serious national security issue, one that our government has taken very seriously.

Autocratic regimes around the world, including China, want to weaken democratic institutions in countries like Canada. These kinds of irresponsible partisan discussions do not advance the interests of ensuring that Canadians have confidence in their democratic institutions. There are non-partisan fact-based ways to get these answers and this reassurance. That is exactly what our government is doing.

**Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is very serious and is not partisan. Shame on the member for saying so.

The allegations by Global News yesterday were very disturbing. Two national security sources say that a Liberal MP advised Beijing to keep the two Michaels locked up to suffer for partisan political gain. That MP has now resigned from the Liberal caucus.

Canadians deserve to know the truth. Even more, the two Michaels and their families deserve to know the truth.

For the 17th time today, tell us on what date the Prime Minister learned of these horrendous allegations.

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I find it rather incredulous that my colleague across the aisle said that the Conservatives did not partake in any partisanship. What do they say about the attacks they made against Mr. Johnston, somebody who was appointed by Stephen Harper? What do they say about when they attacked my colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, when she appeared at committee to do her job, which included working around the clock to see the return of the two Michaels?

Those are examples of partisanship. It is the Conservatives who should reverse course and unite behind the cause of protecting our institutions. That is precisely what this government will continue to do.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it feels like the noose is tightening and every day brings more information to light.

The information reported yesterday is troubling. One Liberal MP even had to resign. These are serious national issues. Canadians have a right—and, more importantly, a duty—to be informed.

For the 18th time, when was the Prime Minister informed of these troubling allegations?

• (1455)

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians do indeed have a right to be informed. For two years, they were informed that it was this government's priority to bring home two Canadians, Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, who were arbitrarily detained in China.

For two years, people across the country were clear. This was their priority, so it had to be the priority of the government and all members of the House too. We reject the premise of the questions being asked by our Conservative colleagues.

Bringing the two Michaels home has been the Liberal government's priority at all times.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Global News is alleging that a Liberal MP advised the Chinese consulate in Toronto to hold off freeing the two Michaels who were imprisoned in China.

That in itself is extremely serious, but we also need to be concerned about the fact that the Prime Minister's Office seemingly only learned about this in the media. The Prime Minister was supposedly shocked. Nevertheless, CSIS warned him as early as 2019, even before the member was elected, of the close ties between the MP and the consul general.

How is it possible that this MP was able to continue to have free access to the Chinese diplomat?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Montarville for his question. It gives me an opportunity to remind the House that we believe that the best way to reassure Canadians regarding the robust measures that are in place and our government's efforts to continually strengthen those measures is to have a non-partisan, facts-based discussion.

That is exactly what the Right Hon. David Johnston has already begun to do. His work is important. He will table a report before the end of May that will show us the direction to take, and we look forward to his report.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister was aware of the close ties between his MP and the Chinese consul because CSIS warned him in 2019. He did nothing.

Yesterday, Global News reported that this MP allegedly used this relationship to try to influence Beijing so as to benefit the Liberal Party, even if it meant putting two Canadian citizens at risk.

The Prime Minister was naive at best, and his MP apparently took advantage of the situation. This completely disqualifies the government from deciding on the rules governing the inquiry into Chinese interference.

When will an independent public inquiry be launched? This is urgent.

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my friend from Montarville is fully aware of the efforts made by our government to build non-partisan institutions, for example a committee of parliamentarians to examine national security issues. In fact, my colleague sits on this important committee of parliamentarians.

It is one of the many forums that allow for informed and non-partisan discussion based on the facts. This helps reassure Canadians that we will always take these issues seriously and that we have measures in place to counter foreign interference.

We will stay the course.

[English]

**Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have asked one question 18 times. This question, if not answered, threatens the core of our Canadian democracy. It is time to stop disrespecting the House. These allegations are as serious as it gets.

For over 1,000 days, the two Michaels waited in a cell wondering if they would ever see their families again, so we will ask this again: On what day did the Prime Minister know of these horrendous and disturbing allegations of a Liberal MP who told the PRC consulate to leave them in their cells?

**Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we had an inquiry with Justice Iacobucci and Justice O'Connor, with Canadians who were wrongfully detained in other circumstances, and a set of recommendations was asked to be acted upon. Unfortunately, they were not acted upon by the prior government. They were acted upon by this government.

Let me be clear. When we are talking about what is at the very core of our democracy, I think we can all be united. There are autocratic regimes right now that are looking to destabilize western democracies. They seek to undermine democracy by engaging in partisan games on things like national security. It is important that we deal with these matters in a judicious, fact-based way.

• (1500)

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, allegations emerged that a Liberal MP urged Beijing not to

release the two Michaels. The ministers here today so far are evading being honest with Canadians.

For the 20th time today, on what date did the Prime Minister first hear about these serious allegations reported in the media?

**Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when we are dealing with something as serious and as fundamental as foreign interference in our democracy, how we engage in those conversations, how we talk to one another, is exceptionally important.

What we have said from the onset is that we have NSICOP, which allows members from all parties to look into every aspect and every corner of government on all of these issues. We have appointed an eminent expert, who was appointed, in fact, by the Conservative government to be Governor General, to look at these issues and whose commitment to our democracy is impeccable. He will make recommendations on the next step.

We have to be careful about throwing around allegations as though they are fact. Instead, we need to be judicious in how we deal with these matters.

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the premise of my question is a fact.

The allegations last evening levelled at a member of the Liberal caucus are so serious that Canadians need to know the truth. This affects our democratic institutions and our national security.

For the umpteenth time, when was the Prime Minister informed of these allegations against a member of his caucus? On what date?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government always takes foreign interference issues very seriously.

That is why we have already given all the power necessary to our agencies that deal with matters of national security, and we have done so transparently. We created a committee of parliamentarians and the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency Secretariat, and we have now appointed Mr. Johnston, who will make recommendations. The government will abide by Mr. Johnston's recommendations.

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**HEALTH**

**Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, many Canadians suffer from rare diseases that affect their quality of life and that of their families. Among these rare diseases is sickle cell anemia. It is an inherited and incurable disease that affects people from the Mediterranean region and Black people.

*Oral Questions*

The Minister of Health has made an important announcement. Could he tell us more about it?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Bourassa for his hard work and for joining me yesterday in Montreal as I made an important announcement regarding the first-ever national strategy for drugs for rare diseases.

This three-year, \$1.5-billion strategy will help improve the lives of thousands of Canadians, including children, with rare diseases such as sickle cell disease. Through this strategy, thousands of Canadians of all ages will have access to early and improved diagnostics and screening. This means access to earlier treatment based on their needs, no matter where they live in this country.

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[English]

**DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**

**Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, all day today the Liberal government and Liberal members have said they want to have a fact-based discussion. Well, we are only asking for one fact, and it is a very simple one. When was the Prime Minister briefed on these deeply troubling allegations about a member from the Liberal caucus who has now resigned?

We have asked for this simple fact now for the 22nd time. Why will they not answer this simple fact-based question?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, by now my colleague will have heard that the answer to that question lies in the mandate provided to Mr. Johnston, who will look into all allegations related to the 2019 and 2021 elections. I also want to assure the member that two independent panels have verified that those elections were free and fair.

Now Mr. Johnston will put forward recommendations up to and including a public inquiry, which this government will respect, so that we can reinforce the confidence of Canadians in all our institutions, most especially our elections.

**Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister absolutely had to be briefed on this. That is unequivocal.

Twenty-two times today, Liberals have refused to answer a question. Let us ask ourselves why they will not answer it. It is because the answer to this question is so damaging to the Prime Minister and the Liberal government that they will continue to obfuscate. For the 23rd time, I have a question of simple fact. When was the Prime Minister briefed?

• (1505)

**Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is why we do not play with national security using partisan theatre. The member just stood in his place, as we have heard many times, and talked about allegations as if they are fact. He said that things must be true and they know things that, of course, they could not possibly know.

What we have said throughout this process is that when we are dealing with national security and foreign autocracies trying to un-

dermine our democracy, we need to have the maturity to allow our institutions and process to answer these questions as opposed to playing this out in partisan theatre.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this afternoon, Canadians are witnessing a government that refuses to set the record straight on very specific and troubling information. We will ask the question again, for the umpteenth time, to ensure that Canadians get clear and accurate information.

When was the Prime Minister informed of the allegations reported by Global News yesterday to the effect that a Liberal MP wanted to delay the release of the two Michaels for partisan political purposes?

When was the Prime Minister informed of this sad reality?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect for my colleague, the government has created not one, not two, but three independent, non-partisan processes with the goal of increasing and strengthening transparency in every instance where we have had to counter foreign interference.

Now, we are very much looking forward to receiving recommendations from Mr. Johnston, a distinguished Canadian who has all the qualifications to do a great job.

\* \* \*

[English]

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Iqwinder Gaheer (Mississauga—Malton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I have heard from constituents about the ongoing mass suspension of Internet services in Punjab, India. Canadians have family and friends who are visiting Punjab and who do not have access to the Internet.

Could the Minister of Foreign Affairs update the House on the ongoing situation?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Mississauga—Malton for his important question. We appreciate his concerns and those of many members in the House.

We are aware of the evolving situation in Punjab, and we are following it very closely. We look forward to a return to a more stable situation. Canadians can always count on the Government of Canada to make sure that we will continue to address the concerns of many members of the community.

\* \* \*

**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, generations of Métis and first nations children were stolen from their homes and forced to attend Canada's horrific residential schools, including the Île-à-la-Croix residential school in Saskatchewan.



*Routine Proceedings*

Despite the violence, terror and neglect experienced, survivors have been denied the justice, recognition and compensation they deserve. Instead of breaking the cycle of intergenerational trauma, the Liberals are fighting the survivors in court. It is shameful.

When will the government finally commit to justice for the Île-à-la-Crosse residential school survivors, before it is too late?

**Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, indeed, it is a disgrace that these survivors have not been compensated up to now. I sat down with a number of them this summer and had the opportunity to hear the pain that they continue to be going through. This is retriggered by a number of the settlements that we are achieving across Canada.

These survivors deserve justice. Unfortunately, the Government of Saskatchewan has not acted up to this date, and it needs to be at the table with us. These were administered by the Government of Saskatchewan. It needs to be held accountable. Reconciliation is not only the job of the federal government, which is to be held to account, but for all levels of government. We need the Government of Saskatchewan to step up.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, on December 2 and February 15, I asked the government about a 30-year-old tax law whereby Canadian companies, like Zenit Nutrition, are penalized by our tax system despite the fact that they use only local and healthy ingredients.

Following my questions, a minister and a parliamentary secretary offered to help me. The problem is that I have not received a single response or even an acknowledgement.

In the meantime, these men and women entrepreneurs are fighting multinationals and are only asking to be able to compete on an equal footing.

Why will the Liberals not take the time to listen to them?

• (1510)

**Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, tax evasion has always been a priority for our government. That is why we have invested billions of dollars.

I would be pleased to work with my colleague to get him some answers.

\* \* \*

[English]

**SECURITY MEASURES ON PARLIAMENT HILL**

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations, and I hope that if you seek it, you will find consent for the following:

I move:

That this House acknowledge the need to improve and enhance security measures on Parliament Hill within a framework that affirms the Parliamentary privilege of Members that are deemed necessary for the House of Commons, as an insti-

tion, and its members, as representatives of the electorate, to fulfill their functions, including their freedom from obstruction, interference and intimidation.

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

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

(Motion agreed to)

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[English]

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed from March 22 consideration of the motion.

**The Speaker:** It being 3:11 p.m., pursuant to order made Thursday, June 23, 2022, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion to concur in the 25th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

[Translation]

Call in the members.

• (1525)

[English]

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

(Division No. 284)

**YEAS**

Members

Aboultatif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Angus	Arnold
Ashton	Bachrach
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blaikie	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Cannings	Caputo
Carrie	Chabot
Chambers	Champoux
Chong	Collins (Victoria)
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
Davies	Deltell
d'Entremont	Desilets
Desjarlais	Doherty
Dong	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Fortin
Gallant	Garon
Garrison	Gaudreau

*Routine Proceedings*

Gazan	Généreux	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Cormier
Genuis	Gladu	Coteau	Dabrusin
Godin	Goodridge	Damoff	Dhaliwal
Gourde	Gray	Dhillon	Diab
Green	Hallan	Drouin	Dubourg
Hoback	Hughes	Duclos	Dzerowicz
Idlout	Jeneroux	Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Johns	Julian	Fergus	Fillmore
Kelly	Kitchen	Fisher	Fonseca
Kmiec	Kram	Fortier	Fragiskatos
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek	Fraser	Freeland
Kusie	Kwan	Fry	Gaheer
Lake	Lantsman	Gerretsen	Gould
Larouche	Lawrence	Guilbeault	Hajdu
Lehoux	Lemire	Hanley	Hardie
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Hepfner	Holland
Liepert	Lloyd	Housefather	Hussen
Lobb	MacGregor	Hutchings	Iacono
Maguire	Martel	Ien	Jaczek
Mathysen	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Joly	Jowhari
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)	Kayabaga	Kelloway
McLean	McPherson	Khalid	Khera
Melillo	Michaud	Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Moore	Morantz	Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Morrice	Morrison	Lametti	Lamoureux
Motz	Muys	Lapointe	Lattanzio
Nater	Normandin	Lauzon	LeBlanc
O'Toole	Patzer	Lebouthillier	Long
Paul-Hus	Pauzé	Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
Perkins	Perron	MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
Plamondon	Poilievre	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Raves	Redekopp	Martinez Ferrada	May (Cambridge)
Reid	Rempel Garner	McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
Richards	Roberts	McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Rood	Ruff	McLeod	Mendès
Savard-Tremblay	Scheer	Mendicino	Miao
Schmale	Seebach	Miller	Morrissey
Shields	Shipley	Murray	Naqvi
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné	Ng	Noormohamed
Singh	Small	O'Connell	Oliphant
Soroka	Steinley	O'Regan	Petitpas Taylor
Ste-Marie	Stewart	Powlowski	Qualtrough
Strahl	Stubbs	Robillard	Rodriguez
Thériault	Therrien	Rogers	Romanado
Thomas	Tochor	Sahota	Sajjan
Tolmie	Trudel	Saks	Samson
Uppal	Van Popta	Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Vecchio	Vidal	Schiefke	Serré
Vien	Viersen	Sgro	Shanahan
Vignola	Villemure	Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Vis	Vuong	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Sorbara
Wagantall	Warkentin	Sousa	St-Onge
Waugh	Webber	Sudds	Tassi
Williams	Williamson	Taylor Roy	Thompson
Zarrillo	Zimmer— 172	Trudeau	Turnbull
		Valdez	Van Bynen
		van Koeverden	Vandal
		Vandenbeld	Virani
		Weiler	Wilkinson
		Yip	Zahid
		Zuberi— 149	

**NAYS**

## Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Atwin
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Battiste
Bendayan	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Blais
Boissonnault	Bradford
Brière	Casey
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Chatel
Chen	Chiang

**PAIRED**

## Members

Desbiens	Duguid— 2
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**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

[Translation]

FINANCE

The House resumed 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 motion to concur in the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Finance.

[English]

The question is on the amendment.

• (1540)

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

(Division No. 285)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Berthold	Bezan
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chambers
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	Deltell
d'Entremont	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Findlay
Gallant	Généreux
Genuis	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	Maguire
Martel	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
Melillo	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	O'Toole
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Perkins	Poillievre
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ruff	Scheer
Schmale	Shields
Shipley	Small
Soroka	Steinley
Stewart	Strahl

Stubbs  
Tochor  
Uppal  
Vecchio  
Vien  
Vis  
Wagantall  
Waugh  
Williams  
Zimmer — 115

Routine Proceedings

Thomas  
Tolmie  
Van Popta  
Vidal  
Viersen  
Vuong  
Warkentin  
Webber  
Williamson

NAYS

Members

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

*Routine Proceedings*

Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod	McPherson
Mendès	Mendicino
Miao	Michaud
Miller	Morrice
Morrissey	Murray
Naqvi	Ng
Noormohamed	Normandin
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Pauzé
Perron	Petitpas Taylor
Plamondon	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sarai
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Schieffe	Seeback
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Singh	Sorbara
Sousa	Ste-Marie
St-Onge	Sudds
Tassi	Taylor Roy
Thériault	Therrien
Thompson	Trudeau
Trudel	Turnbull
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koevorden	Vandal
Vandenberg	Vignola
Villemure	Virani
Weiler	Wilkinson
Yip	Zahid
Zarrillo	Zuberi— 208

## PAIRED

## Members

Desbiens

Duguid— 2

**The Speaker:** I declare the amendment defeated.

The next question is on the main motion.

[*Translation*]

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

• (1545)

[*English*]

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

• (1555)

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

(*Division No. 286*)

## YEAS

## Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bergeron
Bérubé	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
Blois	Boissonnault
Bradford	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Champoux
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
Desilets	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Garon	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gould
Green	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Ien
Jaczek	Johns
Joly	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lemire	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McDonald (Avalon)
McGuinty	McKay

*Business of the House*

McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)  
 McPherson  
 Mendicino  
 Michaud  
 Morrice  
 Murray  
 Ng  
 Normandin  
 Oliphant  
 Pausé  
 Petitpas Taylor  
 Powlowski  
 Rayes  
 Rodriguez  
 Romanado  
 Sajjan  
 Samson  
 Savard-Tremblay  
 Schiefke  
 Sgro  
 Sheehan  
 Sidhu (Brampton South)  
 Sinclair-Desgagné  
 Sorbara  
 Ste-Marie  
 Suds  
 Taylor Roy  
 Therrien  
 Trudeau  
 Turnbull  
 Van Bynen  
 Vandal  
 Vignola  
 Virani  
 Weiler  
 Yip  
 Zarrillo

McLeod  
 Mendés  
 Miao  
 Miller  
 Morrissey  
 Naqvi  
 Noormohamed  
 O'Connell  
 O'Regan  
 Perron  
 Plamondon  
 Qualtrough  
 Robillard  
 Rogers  
 Sahota  
 Saks  
 Sarai  
 Scarpaleggia  
 Serré  
 Shanahan  
 Sidhu (Brampton East)  
 Simard  
 Singh  
 Sousa  
 St-Onge  
 Tassi  
 Thériault  
 Thompson  
 Trudel  
 Valdez  
 van Koeverden  
 Vandenberg  
 Villemure  
 Vuong  
 Wilkinson  
 Zahid  
 Zuberi— 210

Martel  
 McCauley (Edmonton West)  
 Melillo  
 Morantz  
 Motz  
 Nater  
 Patzer  
 Perkins  
 Redekopp  
 Rempel Garner  
 Roberts  
 Ruff  
 Schmale  
 Shields  
 Small  
 Steinley  
 Strahl  
 Thomas  
 Tolmie  
 Van Popta  
 Vidal  
 Vis  
 Warkentin  
 Webber  
 Williamson

Mazier  
 McLean  
 Moore  
 Morrison  
 Muys  
 O'Toole  
 Paul-Hus  
 Poilievre  
 Reid  
 Richards  
 Rood  
 Scheer  
 Seeback  
 Shipley  
 Soroka  
 Stewart  
 Stubbs  
 Tochor  
 Uppal  
 Vecchio  
 Viersen  
 Waganall  
 Waugh  
 Williams  
 Zimmer— 114

**PAIRED**

Members

Desbiens

Duguid— 2

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

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 44 minutes.

\* \* \*

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC):**

Mr. Speaker, it is tradition for the official opposition to ask the Thursday question. This Thursday, we asked the same question 24 times. I understand that the hon. member is looking forward to the question. The question is this: On what date did the Prime Minister first learn about the allegations now being reported by Global News?

I wonder, when the government House leader gives us that answer, if he would also tell us what the legislative plans are for this upcoming week.

**The Speaker:** Before I let the hon. government House leader answer, I just want to remind the hon. members that usually the question pertains to what is going to come up next week as far as legislation is concerned, and is not a continuation of debate. I know it is kind of fuzzy these days, but I just thought I would clarify that for next Thursday, so we can make sure it is done the way we want it.

**Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member across the way, having not had an opportunity to ask the Thursday question and not having been granted that opportunity, might be somewhat confused about the nature of the Thursday question or what it would be about, so of course we excuse him for that.

**NAYS**

Members

Aboultouf  
 Albas  
 Arnold  
 Barlow  
 Berthold  
 Block  
 Brassard  
 Calkins  
 Carrie  
 Chong  
 Dalton  
 Davidson  
 d'Entremont  
 Dowdall  
 Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)  
 Epp  
 Falk (Provencher)  
 Ferreri  
 Gallant  
 Genuis  
 Godin  
 Gourde  
 Hallan  
 Jeneroux  
 Kitchen  
 Kram  
 Kurek  
 Lake  
 Lawrence  
 Lewis (Essex)  
 Liepert  
 Lobb

Aitchison  
 Allison  
 Baldinelli  
 Barrett  
 Bezan  
 Bragdon  
 Brock  
 Caputo  
 Chambers  
 Cooper  
 Dancho  
 Deltell  
 Doherty  
 Dreeshen  
 Ellis  
 Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)  
 Fast  
 Findlay  
 Gagné  
 Gladu  
 Goodridge  
 Gray  
 Hoback  
 Kelly  
 Kmiec  
 Kramp-Neuman  
 Kusie  
 Lantsman  
 Lehoux  
 Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)  
 Lloyd  
 Maguire

### *Government Orders*

This afternoon, we are going to be concluding second reading debate of Bill C-26, concerning the critical cyber systems protection act. I would also like to thank all parties for their co-operation in helping to conclude that debate.

As all members are aware, and as I am sure you are aware of and quite excited for, Mr. Speaker, the House will be adjourned tomorrow for the address of the United States President, President Joe Biden.

On Monday, we will be dealing with the Senate amendments in relation to Bill C-11, the online streaming act.

Tuesday, we will continue the debate at second reading of Bill C-27, the digital charter implementation act, with the budget presentation taking place later that day, at 4 p.m.

Members will be pleased to know that days one and two of the budget debate, which I know members are anxiously awaiting, will be happening on Wednesday and Thursday, respectively.

On Friday, we will proceed to the second reading debate of Bill C-41, regarding humanitarian aid to vulnerable Afghans.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1600)

[English]

### TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-26, An Act respecting cyber security, amending the Telecommunications Act and making consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in some respects, Bill C-26 is quite complicated, but it is also quite simple. It aspires to have the risks of cybersecurity systems identified, managed and addressed so we are at much less risk because of our cyber system.

In the last while, I have had the good fortune to be the chair of the public safety committee in the previous Parliament, and I am now the chair of the defence committee. As such, I have listened to literally hours of testimony from people who are quite well informed on this subject matter. My advice to colleagues here is this: It behooves us all to be quite humble and approach this subject with some humility because it is extremely complex.

The first area of complexity is with respect to the definitions.

For instance, cybersecurity is defined as “the protection of digital information, as well as the integrity of the infrastructure housing and transmitting digital information”. Cyber-threat is defined as “an activity intended to compromise the security of an information system”.

Cyber-defence, according to NATO, is defensive actions in the cyber domain. Cyberwarfare generally means damaging or disrupting another nation-state's computers. Cyber-attacks “exploit vulnerabilities in computer systems and networks of computer data”.

Therefore, with respect to the definitions, we can appreciate the complexity of inserting yet another bill and minister into this process.

Let me offer some suggested questions for the members who would be asked to sit on the committee to look at this bill if it passes out of the House. I do recommend that the bill pass out of the House and, if it does, that the committee charged with its review take the appropriate amount of time to inform itself on the complexities of this particular space.

The first question I would ask is this: Who is doing the coordination? There are a number of silos involved here. We have heard testimony after testimony about various entities operating in various silos.

For instance, the Department of Defence has its silo, which is to defend the military infrastructure. It also has some capability to launch cyber-attacks, but it is a silo.

Then there is the public safety silo, which is a very big silo, because it relies on the CSE, CSIS and the RCMP, and has the largest responsibility for the protection of civilian infrastructure.

While the CSE does not have the ability to launch cyber-attacks domestically, it has the ability to launch a cyber-attack in international cyberspace. It is a curious contradiction, and I would encourage members to ask potential witnesses to explain that contradiction, because the more this space expands, the more the distinctions between foreign attacks and domestic attacks become blurred.

The bill would charge the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry with some responsibility with respect to cybersecurity.

• (1605)

I would ask my colleagues to ask questions about how these three entities, public safety, defence and now the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, are going to coordinate so that the silos are operating in a coordinated fashion and sharing information with each other so that Canada presents the best possible posture for the defence of our networks. Again, I offer that as a suggestion of a question to be asked. We cannot afford the luxury of one silo knowing something that the other silo does not know, and this is becoming a very significant issue.

CSIS, for instance, deals in information and intelligence. The RCMP deals in evidence. Most of the information that is coming through all of the cyber-infrastructure would never reach the level of evidence, whether the civil or criminal standard of evidence. This is largely information, largely intelligence, and sometimes it is extremely murky. Again, I am offering that as a question for members to ask of those who come before the committee as proponents of the bill.

The other area I would suggest is to question is how this particular bill would deal with the attributions of an attack. To add to all of the complications I have already put on the floor of the House, there is also a myriad of attackers. There are pure state attackers, hybrid state criminal attackers and flat-out criminals.

For the state attackers, one can basically name the big four: China, Russia, North Korea and Iran. However, there are themes and variations within that. Russia, for instance, frequently uses its rather extensive criminal network to act on behalf of the state. It basically funds itself by with proceeds of its criminal activities, and the Russians do not care. If one is going to cripple a hospital network or a pipeline or any infrastructure on can name, then they do not care whether it happens by pure criminal activity or hybrid activity or state activity. It is all an exercise in disruption and making things difficult for Canadians in particular. We see daily examples of this in Ukraine, where the Russians have used cyber-attacks to really make the lives of Ukrainians vulnerable and also miserable.

The next question I would ask, and if this is not enough, I have plenty more, is on the alphabet soup of various actors. We have NSICOP, CSE, CSIS and the RCMP. I do not know what the acronym for this bill will be, but I am sure that somebody will think of it. How does this particular initiative, which, as I say, is a worthy initiative to be supported here, fit into the overall architecture?

Finally, CAF and the defence department are now doing a review of our defence posture, our defence policy. Cyber is an ever-increasing part of our security environment and, again, I would be asking the question of how Bill C-26 and all of its various actors fit into that defence review.

• (1610)

**Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am looking for the member's commentary on something I will read to him. It reads:

There are several legislative changes that could be implemented to enhance cybersecurity in Canada. Some of these changes include:

1. Strengthening Privacy Laws...
2. Mandatory Reporting of Cybersecurity Incidents...
3. Improving Cybersecurity Standards...
4. Increasing Cybersecurity Funding...
6. Strengthening Cybercrime Laws...

Overall, these legislative changes could help strengthen cybersecurity in Canada and better protect individuals and organizations from cyber threats.

I am reading this and I could have read more, but this was all generated by ChatGPT. I could have also given some negatives around certain legislation. My point is that I think this emphasizes the importance of the bill and getting it right because we have artificial intelligence getting to the point where it can literally write speeches for us for the House if we want it to. I would like the member's comments on that.

**Hon. John McKay:** Madam Speaker, that was an excellent question. I wish I had written it myself, but apparently someone, or something, else already had.

Prior to question period, I was sitting with my colleague from Scarborough—Rouge Park. He wrote a speech for me, through ChatGPT, on my modern slavery bill. We just sat there, and after he

### *Government Orders*

had fed in a few words, an entire speech was spit out. Yet again, we have another challenge for us as legislators.

I sometimes think that we are so far behind that we do not even know how far behind we are. Cheney said that we do not even know what we do not know. Bill C-26 is an opportunity to bring ourselves into the game.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his speech and his series of responses. I also want to thank him for being the chair of the defence committee.

I know this is a little outside the topic of the bill, but I had asked another colleague from the same committee two questions that have come forward during our study of cybersecurity. The first was on his thoughts and ponderings on international calls for the International Criminal Court to consider cyber warfare an act of war. The additional thought was that 90% of what the Canadian government sees as classified information could actually be declassified, and the ability to help our organizations sort through a lot of these cyber-attacks and information, when in fact we could eliminate and limit the amount we classify.

**Hon. John McKay:** Madam Speaker, that is two impossible questions in a row, and I congratulate the member for them.

The first was whether cyberwarfare should be declared an act of war. To my mind, an attack is an attack. If someone is running cars off the road, or interfering with pipelines or hospitals, they are putting people's lives at risk and sometimes even killing them. That does strike me as an act of war.

The second issue, and the member was probably there when I raised that question with one of our witnesses, was our levels of classification for information. The question I put to one of the witnesses was as follows: I have been in on some of the security briefings, and I am sitting there wondering whether I read it two weeks ago in *The Globe and Mail*. We seem to have a very high threshold of classifications, and maybe this could be an opportunity to reduce that threshold.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, this is an area where I appreciate the member's expertise in identifying where the actors are that attack our cybersecurity.

Does the member think, from what he knows, that there is any level of response from the Canadian government that would not always be playing catch-up with cybercriminals who are ahead of us?

*Government Orders*

• (1615)

**Hon. John McKay:** Madam Speaker, the brief answer is no. I think we will always be playing catch-up. In this case, things are moving so quickly.

**Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC):** Madam Speaker, these are the words spoken yesterday by President Xi of China to Vladimir Putin as they departed company in Moscow: “Change that hasn’t happened in 100 years is coming and we are driving this change together.” Their meeting, which took place under the shadow of Russia’s onslaught in Ukraine, was one that the experts stated was a meeting to build Russia’s and China’s alignment against the U.S. and the west, “and a world order more suited to their more autocratic agendas”.

Before us is a very serious bill at a very serious time, and it also would work in coordination with a lot of other serious bills we have on the floor right now. Bill C-34 is on the Investment Act, which looks closely at what investments are security minded and good for Canada. Bill C-27 would enact the consumer privacy act and look at the protection of Canadians’ privacy. We have stated all along that privacy for Canadians needs to be a fundamental human right. The bill on interoperability and the right to repair look at different ways in which we are dealing with our IP and technology in Canada.

Today at the science and research committee, we continued the study of IP commercialization, ensuring we can develop technology and hold technology in Canada. We lose a significant amount of our IP to the Americans, to other nations and to foreign entities.

We talk about the world order and what is happening in the world. Albert Einstein famously said that he was not sure what weapons would be used in World War III, but that the weapons of World War IV would be sticks and stones. The weapons being used right now are joysticks and software. We should make no mistake that, at this moment, we are already at war. We are not only talking about Ukraine. The member previous spoke about some of the attacks that are happening from a centre of cyber-attacks in Ukraine.

Cyber-attacks are happening across the world, and they are happening right now in Canada. There has been a lot of different alarming statistics on cyber-attacks and malware attacks in Canada. We know the Canada Revenue Agency was attacked in August 2020, impacting nearly 13,000 Canadians, who were victims of that. There was also a hospital in Newfoundland in October 2020 where cybersecurity hackers stole personal information from health care employees and patients in all four health regions. That affected 2,500 people.

Black & McDonald, a major defence and security company and contractor, was hit with ransomware just two weeks ago. That is our security being hit by the very thing it is trying to protect us from. Global Affairs Canada was attacked in January 2022 right around the time Russia engaged in the illegal invasion of Ukraine. It was reported that it may have been Russian or Russian state-sponsored actions responsible for the cyber-attack on Global Affairs.

Most famously, there was a ransomware attack on critical infrastructure in the United States back in May 2021 where pipeline infrastructure was attacked. President Biden, who will be here tomorrow,

issued at that time a state of emergency, and 17 states also issued states of emergency. It was very serious, which shows the capabilities of some of those cyber-threat actors. With ransomware, there are companies that attack companies and then demand a ransom or money before they return those computers or the networks back to the owners. It is now worth \$20 billion. That is how much money ransomware is costing businesses. Back in 2016, it was only \$5 billion.

The technology is rapidly advancing, and it is a war. It is a war that is affecting Canadians at this very moment, and it is something we have to be very serious and realistic about looking at what cybersecurity is, what it means and what we have to do as Canadians and as a Canadian government to combat attacks.

We know that the bill is something we support. We, of course, support the bill. Cybersecurity is very important, and as the member noted earlier, we have to make it right. We do not have time for a flawed bill or to race something through. Because of the advancements and because of the need to be very serious and realistic about cybersecurity, let us make sure we get the bill to committee and make sure then that we look at certain amendments that would get it right.

The question at this very moment is whether the government is taking this seriously enough. Despite a ban on Huawei announced by the government in May 2022, this week it was ascertained by the member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, as we were talking about IP commercialization in the science and research committee, that UBC is still working with Huawei after May 2022.

• (1620)

The minister assured us that Huawei was banned, that Huawei was done. Of course, there were reports months ago of a crackdown on IP being stolen and shared from Canadian universities. It has already been projected that 2023 will be the worst year for ransomware, for cybersecurity and, of course, for IP leaving Canada.

We have to take this seriously, and I know that members across the way have talked about it. Of course, this bill does that, but we need to be serious. We need to talk about cybersecurity, which means being realistic and bold in how we counter, and how we aid the west in winning, the war over cybersecurity.



There are amendments to the bill that we would like to see. Number one is to ensure that we protect and safeguard our national security and infrastructure. I know a member talked earlier about the different silos that exist. Probably the most important function is to ensure that silos in the government dealing with cybersecurity are talking to one another. The Americans deal with their cybersecurity concerns through the National Security Agency, the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Defense. They all work alongside each other to enhance the cybersecurity establishment that was developed in 2018.

Similarly, Canada has the Communications Security Establishment, part of which is the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security, but as a member noted previously, is it talking to NSICOP and CSE? Are we making sure we are talking to the different departments? We know that the government is pretty large and unwieldy. We have to make sure that these departments are working together.

We also have to make sure we are looking after our businesses, as 40% of Canadian SMEs do not have any cybersecurity protection. It is going to be very costly for those businesses to implement that. As a business owner, I know the single biggest cost when it comes to cybersecurity is actually insurance. Insurance premiums just for cybersecurity attacks are going up and up. Every year they have increased by 20% to 30%. Of course, that is aligned with the \$20 billion we are seeing from malware and ransomware across the world and the increase in cyber-attacks.

We have to make sure that we help our businesses, so perhaps we need to look at tax credits. One thing we can do is ensure that we share best practices and that businesses get support from the federal government to enhance their cybersecurity.

Another concern we have is how much power the minister will get, as the minister is supposed to get all the power. We have seen this with other bills. We have seen this in bills on the right to repair and interoperability. We have seen it in Bill C-27. Perhaps it is better to look at an ombudsman. We have talked about the Governor in Council and orders in council, but we want to hear from the security experts at committee to ascertain who exactly should be making these decisions instead of bringing them back to one minister. This bill right now could fit under the INDU committee and the industry minister, but it is going to the public safety committee, so already we have two different departments managing this bill. Why does one minister have to handle it? Why can it not be a broader process to ensure that we are seeing some congruence?

Privacy is something we talked about quite a bit. We will be debating Bill C-27 in the House tomorrow, and I certainly feel that privacy needs to be a fundamental human right. Part of this bill has different groups and organizations concerned about how we are protecting Canadians' right to privacy. When they lose their privacy, who is responsible for that? There will be a lot of different witnesses coming to committee. When we look at cybersecurity, we have to ensure we are protecting Canadians' fundamental right to privacy and ensure we are doing all we can so that if their privacy is breached, Canadians can find some relief.

We have talked about Bill C-27 and a tribunal, and maybe giving more powers to the Privacy Commissioner, who should have more

### *Government Orders*

power to look at whether we should go after criminals or organizations for breaches. We also have to look at the law and at what we are doing to go after criminals who are engaging in cyberwarfare and who continue to be a threat to Canadians.

Russia and China are very concerning right now, and there are a lot of different reasons for that. Russia is growing increasingly reliant on China as both an import market and an exporter of electronics. Both leaders are building a closer energy partnership on oil, gas, coal, electricity and nuclear energy. They are going to build the Power of Siberia 2 pipeline through the territory of Mongolia. This is important because Taiwan is coming up—

● (1625)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I am sorry, but the hon. member's time is up. I am sure he will be able to add more during questions and comments.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Scarborough—Guildwood

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I pretty well agree with everything the member said. However, what I am concerned about is that partisanship is a debilitating exercise around here and this is serious business.

Does the member have any thoughts as to how to inoculate this bill, in particular, from the partisanship that may inevitably follow it? Then we can deal with this as serious legislators and serve all of our public.

**Mr. Ryan Williams:** Madam Speaker, as I have heard, members from across this side of the House are in agreement with the bill and think that cybersecurity is needed. I think the difference is that on our side, we just want to make sure that we slow down a bit, get the bill right and are realistic and bold about what the Canadian government needs to do to ensure we tackle cybersecurity.

I think we can come together at committee. I have heard from many Conservative speakers, and we all agree that we should bring the bill to committee. However, let us bring in the best witnesses to ensure we get it right so that in the end we are leading the world, not catching up.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Madam Speaker, like all members of the House, I believe, experts are concerned about Chinese equipment in our critical infrastructure, especially telecommunications infrastructure.

Should the Liberal government not be very concerned about the presence of Liberal MPs in its own ranks who are a threat to national security in their own way?

*Government Orders*

[English]

**Mr. Ryan Williams:** Madam Speaker, absolutely. We are seriously concerned in an ever-evolving world about national security, cybersecurity, infrastructure and investment security, protecting Canadian interests in IP and making sure we have fair, open and honest inquiries. If there are breaches and interference in our democracy, they should be tackled openly and honestly. We are certainly asking for that every day, and when it comes to the bill before us, it is no different.

We are at war with joysticks and software that threaten our infrastructure and the very livelihoods of Canadians and Canadian businesses. Let us get this right. Let us work together openly and honestly and make sure that we pass a good bill that protects Canadians.

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, I am glad the member mentioned the same concerns that we in the NDP have about the overly broad powers being proposed for the minister. Could he share with us whether he thinks some options, which the NDP might propose, to fix some of those concerns could possibly include parliamentary oversight, some kind of review mechanism and an independent review body as a fix to the overly broad powers being proposed for the minister.

**Mr. Ryan Williams:** Madam Speaker, yes, there has to be a lot of different options, and not just in this bill. There are a lot of bills that suggest to give broad powers to one minister, which makes no sense. I do not know how the minister has time to deal with that.

Certainly we are open to a lot of suggestions and some suggestions sound good, like an ombudsman. There have been suggestions of tribunals to make sure we have broad bodies that can oversee this so we do not just give power to one minister. One hundred per cent we support that.

- (1630)

**Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the member talked a bit about silos and the inability for governments to sometimes work in them. I know he has a great background in innovation and business. Maybe he could expand a bit more on the importance of collaboration with respect to cybersecurity and in business in general.

**Mr. Ryan Williams:** Madam Speaker, collaboration from government agencies is key, but those who are really going to solve this, which is the same in the U.S., are Canadian businesses, inventors and entrepreneurs who can develop software and technology for cybersecurity that can be world-leading, help Canada, help Canadians and help the world in combatting this awful thing.

[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 South Okanagan—West Kootenay, Climate Change; the hon. member for Victoria, Climate Change; the hon. member for Spadina—Fort York, Democratic Institutions.

## POINTS OF ORDER

## ALLEGED UNPARLIAMENTARY LANGUAGE

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, unless I misunderstood, the Bloc Québécois member whose riding escapes me suggested in his question that there are government MPs who may pose a threat to national security.

That is a bit of a stretch from the allegations that have been made. It is unacceptable to suggest that members may pose a threat to national security. I would ask the member to either clarify his comments or apologize.

If I misunderstood, then I apologize, but that is indeed what the member said in his question during the previous debate.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I am sorry, but I did not hear the member's specific remarks. We will check the Hansard and come back with a response if required.

\* \* \*

[English]

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-26, An Act respecting cyber security, amending the Telecommunications Act and making consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East—Cooksville, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, let me start off with the point you were just talking about, because in the 21st century, cybersecurity is national security. It behooves us all as parliamentarians to work as hard as we can to protect our businesses, consumers and institutions from cyber-threats. That is why I am so grateful and delighted to be here today in the House to speak to the second reading debate of Bill C-26, which concerns the important topic of cybersecurity.

Cybersecurity is a matter of great concern to my constituents of all ages. I firmly believe both the public and private sectors need to be able to protect themselves against malicious cyber-activity, including cyber-attacks. As parliamentarians, it is our duty to establish a framework for secure critical infrastructure that we can all rely on.

The past few decades have seen remarkable advancements in computer and Internet technology. Online connectivity has become an integral part of the lives of Canadians and people around the world. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us how we rely on so much on the Internet for everything we do, from education to conducting business and staying in touch with loved ones. With more and more people depending on the Internet, including young children and seniors, our most vulnerable, it is crucial to ensure that we have a secure and reliable cyber-connectivity.

Our government is committed to improving cybersecurity to safeguard our country's future in cyberspace. However, as technology and cyber systems continue to evolve, our infrastructure is becoming more interconnected and interdependent. This brings new security vulnerabilities.

For instance, personal interactions like banking and credit card transactions are now mainly conducted online, making cybersecurity even more important. According to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, ransomware attacks were among the most significant cybersecurity threats in recent years.

Cybercriminals continue to use sophisticated tactics to gain access to critical systems, steal sensitive data and extort money from victims. In addition to ransomware attacks, other common cybersecurity threats include phishing attacks, malware, insider threats and distributed denial of service attacks. I know members have all received emails or phone calls with these types of threats. We do not know where they are coming from, but they are trying to crack our system and do criminal activity.

As more organizations adopt cloud computing, like we do here, Internet of Things devices and artificial intelligence, these technologies are also becoming significant targets for these cybercriminals.

Cybersecurity threats can have severe consequences for individuals, businesses, all levels of government. These include financial losses, which we have heard are in the billions, reputational damage, legal liabilities and even physical harm. We have read and heard the stories of those who have taken their lives because of these harmful attacks. It is crucial to take proactive steps to prevent and mitigate cybersecurity risks.

Bill C-26 is a landmark legislation that would amend the Telecommunications Act and other consequential acts to enhance cybersecurity. The bill proposes to add more security as an express policy objective of the telecommunications sector, bringing it in line with other critical infrastructure sectors.

The key objectives of the bill are twofold. First, in part 1, the bill proposes to amend the Telecommunications Act to add security expressly as a policy objective. This amendment aims to align the telecommunications sector with other critical infrastructure sectors.

The changes we are bringing about through this legislation would authorize the Governor in Council and the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, after consultation with stakeholders, to establish and implement the policy statement "Securing Canada's Telecommunications System", which the minister announced in May of 2022. The primary objective is to prevent the use of products and services by high-risk suppliers and their affiliates. This would enable the Canadian government, when necessary, to restrict telecommunications service providers' utilization of products or services from high-risk suppliers.

• (1635)

With such restrictions, consumers would not be exposed to potential security risks. This approach would allow the government to take security measures similar to those of other federal regulators in their respective critical infrastructure sectors.

### *Government Orders*

The second part of Bill C-26 pertains to the introduction of the critical cyber systems protection act, or CCSPA, which mandates designated operators in federally regulated sectors such as finance, telecommunications, energy and transportation to undertake specific measures to safeguard their critical cyber systems. It would include the ability to take action on other vulnerabilities, such as human error or storms causing a risk of outages to these critical services. In addition, the act would facilitate organizations' capacity to prevent and bounce back from various forms of malevolent cyber-activities like electronic espionage and ransomware. Notably, cyber-incidents that surpass a certain threshold will necessitate mandatory reporting.

Both parts 1 and 2 of Bill C-26 are required to ensure the cybersecurity of Canada's federally regulated critical infrastructure, and in turn, protect Canadians and Canadian businesses. The need to intensify our efforts is apparent because of the advent of new technologies we are hearing about like 5G.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted our growing dependence on technology. In addition, in my riding of Mississauga East—Cooksville, there is a growing concern about Russia's unwarranted and unjustified invasion of Ukraine, which has resulted in international tensions and a range of potential threats. Such threats include supply chain disruptions and cyber-attacks from state and non-state actors.

We are not starting from scratch in our fight against this threat, though. Our government is always vigilant when it comes to any type of threat, including cyber-threats. Our government has made several investments in cybersecurity in recent years to improve the country's cyber-resilience and protect Canadians' data and privacy. For example, in 2018, we created the national cybersecurity strategy. This was based on the consultations that we initiated with Canadians in 2016. Our government adopted this strategy to establish a framework aimed at protecting citizens and businesses from cyber-threats while leveraging the economic benefits of digital technology.

Cyber-incidents involve a certain threshold at which reporting would be required. This legislation would give the government a new tool to compel action, if necessary, in response to cybersecurity threats or vulnerabilities.

*Government Orders*

Canada is working alongside other democratic nations around the globe, both in the context of our Five Eyes relationship and in the G7 alliance. These multilateral forums are intensely focused on devising strategies to counter a range of cyber-threats, such as ransomware attacks; the dissemination of false information, which we have seen too often; and attempts by malicious actors to engage in cyber-espionage.

To facilitate this collaboration, we are emphasizing the importance of sharing information and intelligence, thereby breaking down those silos. This would enable us to more effectively combat efforts made to destabilize our economies and undermine Canadian interests. While we are currently engaged in a debate regarding Bill C-26, we are also taking proactive measures to address the current gaps in our domestic cybersecurity landscape, while simultaneously partnering with like-minded nations to confront these challenges in a comprehensive manner.

We have listened to Canadians, our security experts and our allies, and we are following the right path. We will ensure that our networks and our economy are kept secure. A safe and secure cyberspace is important for Canadian competitiveness, economic stability and long-term prosperity.

Bill C-26 aims to enhance designated organizations' preparedness, prevention, response and recovery abilities—

• (1640)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I am sorry. The hon. member's time is up.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Northumberland—Peterborough South.

**Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I very much enjoy working on the finance committee with the member and enjoyed his thoughtful remarks.

I hope my question hits the other Liberals' concerns about partisanship, as this is substantive criticism and not partisanship. We have heard concerns from both the NDP and from the Conservative Party that the bill would provide a broad swath of powers to the minister. Is the government open to delineating some of those powers so it gives additional assurances to us and to the other opposition parties?

**Mr. Peter Fonseca:** Madam Speaker, I very much enjoy working with the hon. member on our finance committee. The member always looks for pragmatic solutions.

For our cybersecurity to work, we have to work right across party lines. We have to work across all levels of government, with all our institutions, the private sector and the public sector. That is the only way that we are going to implement a system that really has an effect and is able to combat these cybercriminals we find and what we are being bombarded with. They are always trying to stay one step ahead, and the only way for us to combat that is to work together.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I too would like to thank the chair of the Standing Committee on Fi-

nance, with whom I have the great pleasure of working. I thank him for his speech.

It is important to have a better way of dealing with all cybersecurity issues. Like the Conservative member who raised the issue, we have concerns that this bill gives the government a great deal of power to do this through regulations.

I would like the assurance of the hon. committee chair that proceeding by way of regulations is not a way to circumvent Parliament.

[*English*]

**Mr. Peter Fonseca:** Madam Speaker, it is also great to work with this member on the finance committee. The way that we work on the finance committee is how this bill is being structured and how it would work. The bill talks about ensuring that we work across party lines. This is a non-partisan thing. As parliamentarians, we are all here to protect Canadians in the best way that we possibly can. We know, in our distinctive ridings, that we get many calls, emails and letters from concerned citizens who are being hit by these attacks.

I can say to the member that we will do this in a non-partisan way. We will reach out to stakeholders, again, across all lines. We have too many silos. We heard the member for Scarborough—Guildwood say that we have to break down the silos. I feel that the legislation would be able to do this, and it would strengthen our cybersecurity systems.

• (1645)

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to encourage all members to look at the seventh report from the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security on Canada's security stance vis-à-vis Russia. A lot of that report covers why a bill like Bill C-26 is necessary.

We can see agreement on the principle of the bill, but like my two colleagues from the Conservative Party and the Bloc, I am going to express some frustration that the Liberals did not anticipate that we in the opposition would have concerns with this first draft of the bill in terms of accountability, oversight and transparency. I wish the Liberals could have anticipated that before releasing this draft of the bill because now it looks like the committee has its work cut out for it to improve those measures. Could my hon. colleague express some comments on that particular part of this?

**Mr. Peter Fonseca:** Madam Speaker, that is what committee work is there for. The committee has the opportunity to dig deep into the bill and look at ways to enhance and better the legislation. That is a very important aspect.

In the end, I believe that this bill is about bringing Canadians and our institutions together. It is about making sure that we break through those silos, as we have just heard, and being able to set up the type of cybersecurity system that we are all looking for. In no way do I see this to be a partisan piece of legislation. It is something that we wholeheartedly feel strongly about in the House and that we can make a significant difference on.

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Madam Speaker, as I rise to speak today, all of us in this place are acutely aware of the deeply concerning realities of foreign interference in Canada's affairs.

The Government of Canada cannot afford to ignore this troubling trend. While there are many angles from which we must consider how best to protect our national interests, as we examine the content of Bill C-26 we are focused primarily on matters related to cybersecurity. There is no question that Canada's critical infrastructure must be protected from cyber-threats.

In our modern world, computer systems are integral to the provision of health care, powering our homes and businesses, upholding our financial systems and so much more. While these incredible tools of our time may not be visible to the naked eye, they are tremendously powerful and we cannot afford for these systems to be compromised. The consequences from a criminal's or a foreign adversary's disruption of medical services in our hospitals or of our electrical grid would be incredibly dangerous and potentially deadly.

In its 2021 "Special Report on the Government of Canada's Framework and Activities to Defend its Systems and Networks from Cyber Attack", the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians concisely listed what is at stake when cyber-threats arise: things like the personal information of Canadians; proprietary information, intellectual property and research of Canadian businesses and researchers; government policies and policy-making; security and intelligence information and operations; and the integrity of government systems, to name a few.

I was grateful to hear the Minister of Public Safety, when introducing this bill, say that cybersecurity is national security. It is a simple statement, but it is true. If we truly recognize cybersecurity as an essential element of our national security, we are more likely to give it the attention it deserves.

Bill C-26 is not perfect, as has been stated here, and we must ensure we protect the privacy of Canadians, nor will it be a cure-all for every cybersecurity weakness. However, I am fully behind updating our cybersecurity legislation. I hope the Liberal government is open to improving the bill at committee stage, and I will offer my support to get it to committee.

The objective of this bill is solid: to equip government to quickly respond to cyber-threats. As any expert in the field would tell us, rapid response is critical when a serious attack is under way. However, there are key issues that remain with the bill as it is presented to us today. Make no mistake, this legislation would give the government the ability to insert itself into the operations of companies, and therefore their customers.

As Christopher Parsons of the University of Toronto wrote in a critical analysis of the bill, "There is no recognition of privacy or other Charter-protected rights as a counter-balance to proposed security requirements, nor are appropriate accountability or transparency requirements imposed on the government." As with any new power that a government gives itself, there must be extensive checks and balances. There must be transparency. Most of all, there

### *Government Orders*

must be oversight. What this legislation does not do is provide those much-needed guardrails. We need the safety oversight.

Giving a minister the power to order a private company "to do anything, or refrain from doing anything", particularly when it comes to the private information of its customers, is deeply problematic. While I understand that how the minister can wield this new power might be spelled out in future regulations, I believe it must be clearly outlined in the legislation, rather than leaving it up to cabinet to decide at a future date.

We must also have a fulsome airing of what information the government could collect from companies and their customers. Almost every aspect of our lives is interwoven with digital information. From banking to how we do business and how we communicate, numerous companies have that information on each of us.

● (1650)

Therefore, the question that remains is this. If we grant the government access to information from companies, even for the most altruistic reasons or for national security reasons, who is overseeing those government agencies? I can assure members that the government will not be giving new powers to members of Parliament or parliamentary committees to undertake that role. We can look no further than the stonewalling Parliament is receiving on foreign interference in our democracy now. It is absolutely imperative that oversight and guardrails be built into this legislation, and I implore my colleagues on the parliamentary committee that would be tasked with this legislation to do just that.

The fact is that the government has trouble protecting its own sensitive information from cyber-threats. Many examples of cyber-attacks against the government have already been cited during this debate. There was the attack against the Canada Revenue Agency in August 2020, which resulted in 13,000 victimized Canadians. Global Affairs was attacked in January 2022. Canada Post has filed several breach reports after cyber-incidents, according to records from the Privacy Commissioner. If the government is unable to protect itself from cyber-threats, how can it be expected to protect the sensitive cybersecurity plans of private companies? The Liberal government would do well to lead by example before it can truly ask private companies to beef up their own cybersecurity practices. The weaknesses of the government's own cybersecurity have been flagged over and over again.

*Government Orders*

In September 2020, the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians announced its review of the government's framework and activities to defend its systems and networks from cyber-attack. The review resulted in a number of findings, which deserve mention.

First, the committee found that cyber-threats to government systems and networks "are a significant risk to national security and the continuity of government operations." It also noted that nation-states "are the most sophisticated threat actors", although the threats do not come from nation-states alone. Second, the committee found that while the government has implemented a framework to defend itself from cyber-attacks, "[t]he strength of this framework is weakened by the inconsistent application of security-related responsibilities and the inconsistent use of cyber defence services." In plain language, the report found that not all federal organizations receive cyber-defence protection. The committee review identified that, while Shared Services Canada provides some cyber-defence services to 160 of 169 federal organizations, only 43 of those organizations actually receive the full complement of its services.

Given these findings, the committee recommended that the government "continue to strengthen its framework for defending government networks from cyber attack" and apply and extend cyber-defence policies and practices equally across government. At the time, the Liberal government agreed with the recommendations that were put forward. While this was an important step toward acknowledging the issue, taking action is another thing entirely.

Just days ago, a Globe and Mail headline read, "Ottawa makes little progress shoring up Crown corporations' cybersecurity". The report noted that this is despite 18 months passing since the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians raised concerns about the possibility that Crown corporations, which are still not subject to the government's cyber-defence policies, could inadvertently serve as gateways into the federal government's well-protected systems.

The public safety minister did not mention the NSICOP report and recommendations when introducing this bill, but I hope that the work of this committee, made up of parliamentarians from across party lines, can be helpful in enhancing the government's own cybersecurity defences. As NSICOP has underscored, "The data of organizations not protected by the government cyber defence framework is at significant risk. Moreover, unprotected organizations potentially act as a weak link in the government's defences by maintaining electronic connectivity to organizations within the cyber defence framework, creating risks for the government as a whole."

• (1655)

In closing, the government is aware of these risks, but it has been slow to rectify the issue. While Bill C-26 covers another angle of this discussion, it does not address the problem of the government's own house. As I said already, cybersecurity laws need to be updated here in Canada. Bill C-26—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I am sorry, but the hon. member's time is up.

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is interesting listening to the Conservatives speak to the legislation, because this morning they did not want to debate the legislation, and I think it is because they support it. It would be nice to see the Conservative Party actually allow the legislation to pass, come to a conclusion in debate and put it to a committee that would be able to deal with many of the issues they are talking about.

Does the member believe that there is any onus of responsibility whatsoever for the Conservative Party, once they recognize and support legislation, to at least give consideration to its passing to committee in a timely fashion so that we can see legislation being discussed at committee? Ultimately, if the Conservative Party wanted to, they could drag every piece of legislation out until 2025.

**Mr. Larry Maguire:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the interjection and question from my colleague for Winnipeg North. He and I are used to debating each other from our days in the Manitoba legislature, but not too much, because we were both in opposition in those days. However, we did teach him how to speak. When we had the opportunity to filibuster, we were always short a person to speak in the Manitoba legislature, but we could go to my colleague for Winnipeg North and ask him if he wanted a chance to speak. He was the only Liberal in the house at the time, and so he never refused us. I think he learned his lesson on how to carry on well. However, I will not try to do that.

The big thing here is that Canadians need to know that the minister still has extreme powers in the bill, which is why we are making sure that we put it on the record that there need to be some amendments coming forward at committee. The government is listening to that, and I would hope that it would be willing to look at some of those amendments when the time comes, and the bill will get to committee.

• (1700)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Madam Speaker, in this modern age, in 2023, we are finally about to pass a cybersecurity bill. We do not oppose the spirit of this bill, but some criticisms have been raised since the bill was introduced.

University of Toronto professor Christopher Parsons has made 29 recommendations to strengthen the transparency and accountability of the measures proposed in this bill. In his view, the bill is so flawed that it would allow authoritarian governments around the world to cite it to justify their own repressive laws.

I have met with groups that support these recommendations and have concerns. They think this bill might give the minister too much power. There may also be some privacy issues for citizens.

I would like to know if my colleague shares those concerns, if he has heard about them and if he is willing to work on this bill in committee with us.

*Government Orders*

[English]

**Mr. Larry Maguire:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her excellent question in regard to trying to move the bill forward.

I have indicated that I do want to see the bill go to committee, and I will support it to go to committee. I did refer to a couple of remarks that Christopher Parsons, from the University of Toronto, had made, in a very critical analysis of the bill when it was brought forward. His report states, “No recognition of privacy or other Charter-protected rights exists as a counterbalance to proposed security requirements”. He was very clear on the improvements that could be made to the bill. That is why we want to see it go to the committee, so that we can actually put some of those amendments forward, unless the government brings them forward.

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the intervention just before the last one was unusual, where the member for Winnipeg North said that any time a Conservative debates a bill, we are somehow obstructing it from getting to committee. However, right before the minister's speech, a Liberal member spoke. Therefore, when Liberals speak, they are debating, but when Conservatives speak, they are obstructing.

The debate on the bill may well collapse soon, but it is important to debate it. I would like the member, with the time he has left, to talk again about the serious concerns that people have with the bill and what we can look forward to at committee.

**Mr. Larry Maguire:** Madam Speaker, it is my expectation that we will send this bill to committee not to give it a quick rubber stamp, but instead to carefully examine it, amend it where it is needed and improve it in order to ensure that Canada's cyber-defences are the best they can be. That was the last paragraph of my speech that I did not get to present.

That would indicate to the Liberals a clearer analysis of what needs to be done.

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to join the debate on second reading of Bill C-26, an act respecting cybersecurity.

Several of my colleagues have already spoken at length about the importance of the bill and the details therein, but it bears repeating that Bill C-26 is critical to our country's national security, our public safety and our economy.

Not only would Bill C-26 introduce the new critical cyber systems protection act or—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I am going to bring the House to order a little bit. There are conversations. I would ask the members to maybe step out to have those conversations, to allow the hon. member for Fredericton to have the respect that she deserves during her speech.

The hon. member for Fredericton.

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin:** Madam Speaker, not only would Bill C-26 introduce the new critical cyber systems protection act, or CCSPA, to legally compel designated operators to protect their cyber systems, but it would also amend the Telecommunications Act to enshrine security as a policy objective and bring the sector in line with other critical infrastructure sectors.

Being online and connected is essential to all Canadians. Now more than ever, Canadians rely on the Internet for their daily lives, but it is about more than just conducting business and paying bills. It is also about staying in touch and connected with loved ones from coast to coast to coast and, indeed, around the world. That is also why the Government of Canada is connecting 98% of Canadians to high-speed Internet by 2026 and 100% of Canadians by 2030.

Our critical infrastructure is becoming increasingly interconnected, interdependent and integrated with cyber systems, particularly with the emergence of new technologies such as 5G, which will operate at significantly higher speeds and will provide greater versatility, capability and complexity than previous generations. These technologies certainly create significant economic benefits and opportunities, but they also bring with them new security vulnerabilities that some may be tempted to prey on.

At this time, I want to bring the perspective of my constituents in the riding of Fredericton to this important debate today. Fredericton is home to the Canadian Institute for Cybersecurity at the University of New Brunswick, with a focus on disruptive technology and groundbreaking research. The institute provides hands-on support for community and industry partners as they face emerging threats, with company-specific, cross-disciplinary research.

Led by Dr. Ali Ghorbani, Canada's research chair in cybersecurity, the institute generates datasets to help thwart malicious cyber-attacks and works in tandem with the National Research Council of Canada in an innovative hub model that will lead to discoveries and advancements in cybersecurity, including publications, patents and the commercialization of technology, as well as provide training opportunities for graduate students and post-doctoral fellows.

Innovative cybersecurity research is conducted with a focus on Internet security, artificial intelligence, human-computer interaction and natural-language processing. I was honoured to welcome many ministers to my riding and to connect them with researchers and leaders in the industry to showcase how my community distinguishes itself in this sector. Fredericton is at the forefront of this new age and the challenges it presents, and I could not be more proud.

Even if there is enormous potential for Canadian digital innovation and expertise in cybersecurity, and I am witnessing it every day at home, we also need to face the fact that cyber-threats are growing in sophistication and magnitude. In 2021, close to 200,000 businesses across the country were affected by cybersecurity incidents, and this number continues to grow. Each of those businesses is not merely a business. It comprises hard-working owners and employees, with families to feed and bills to pay. It is all the more maddening that many of these businesses must spend precious amounts of time and money preventing or fighting back against these incidents, many of which involve stealing money or demanding ransoms.

*Government Orders*

Canadian businesses have spent billions of dollars over the last years to detect and prevent cybersecurity incidents and, consequently, they have been experiencing downtime and a loss in revenue. Cybercrime is costly, and those who are bearing the brunt of it are Canadian businesses.

We also know that at all levels of government, we have not been immune from these kinds of attacks, even, horribly, hospitals. Earlier this year, the Toronto SickKids hospital was targeted by a ransomware attack affecting its operations. Closer to home, in Atlantic Canada, a ransomware group was behind the 2021 cyber-attack that paralyzed the Newfoundland and Labrador health care system.

Beyond the monetary implications, attacks like these have the real-life potential of impacting the health and safety of the ones we love, and we must do everything in our power as legislators to put in place effective safeguards. The effects on Canadians demonstrate beyond a doubt why we need to strengthen Canada's cybersecurity systems. As lawmakers, the least we can do is ensure that Canada and its institutions and businesses can continue to thrive in the digital economy and that our banks and telecommunications providers can continue to provide Canadians with reliable services.

Bill C-26 would modernize existing legislation to add security to the nine other policy objectives in the act, bringing telecommunications in line with other critical sectors. The bill would also add new authorities to the Telecommunications Act, which would enable the government to take action to promote the security of the Canadian telecommunications system.

As mentioned, in recent years, Canada's cybersecurity status has been tested by a variety of threat campaigns targeting critical infrastructure, businesses and individuals. The increase in digitization has led to the weaponization of digital tools and processes. This results in the disruption of critical systems and causes a lack of confidence in physical, psychological and economic well-being.

I am proud of all the work that has been done to secure Canada's critical telecommunications infrastructure, but I do not want us to lose sight of the work still to be done. The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic was a catalyst for bolstering national and international cyber-defence practices, requiring improved policies, guidance and cyber-intel.

• (1705)

Furthermore, given what is happening in Ukraine with the Russian invasion, we know that there are still military threats in the 21st century. However, we are also dealing with the emergence of new technologies that pose non-military threats.

With rising geopolitical tensions, government-driven hostile cyber-operations are more prevalent now than ever, posing an increased threat level to Canada's national security, economic prosperity and public safety.

In the 21st century, cybersecurity is national security, and it is our government's responsibility to protect Canadians from growing cyber-threats. That is exactly why we have developed Bill C-26.

It contains a multitude of important measures to protect Canadians and Canadian businesses. It is a carefully designed, multi-pronged approach. Part 2 of this act would enact the critical cyber

systems protection act to provide a framework for the protection of the critical cyber systems that are vital to national security and public safety.

It also authorizes the Governor in Council to designate any service or system as a vital service or vital system, and requires designated operators to establish and implement cybersecurity programs, mitigate supply chain and third party risks, report cybersecurity incidents and comply with cybersecurity directions.

Introducing the new critical cyber systems protection act would strengthen baseline cybersecurity and provide a framework for the government to respond to emerging cyber-threats.

It is essential that we keep pace with the rapidly evolving cyber-environment by ensuring we have a robust, legislative framework in place.

In short, Bill C-26 is essential to helping keep Canadians and their data safe. In a world as connected as ours, we cannot take that for granted. Once again, cybersecurity is national security.

I am looking forward to this bill being sent to committee, and I encourage all members to join me in supporting Bill C-26 in subsequent readings.

• (1710)

**Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is great to see my fellow 2019 member in the House.

My question is with respect to a theme from all the opposition parties. We generally support the idea of cybersecurity legislation and it is actually well overdue. The challenge is that many of the powers are not sufficiently delineated, and it gives the government quite a bit of power. Without being partisan and talking about particular failures, I think giving any government that much power without delineating it would pose concerns for any opposition party.

Is the government open to making amendments?

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin:** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague and I are part of the class of 2019.

That is why a bill works its way through the House. Hopefully this is something that could be discussed at the committee phase, once it has passed through.

It also speaks to the important role of the official opposition in questioning these kinds of powers and holding the government to account. Certainly, I think we are open to these discussions continuing. Any way we can strengthen the bill is a win for Canadians.



*Government Orders*

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I have a bit of a technical question for my hon. colleague. We are wondering how such legislation would apply, for example, to Hydro-Québec, the public utility in Quebec that generates electricity, since the legislation designates interprovincial power lines as a vital service and a vital system.

Does my hon. colleague have any idea what this could mean for Hydro-Québec, a public utility?

[*English*]

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin:** Madam Speaker, I do not have a technical response for the very technical question that the member asked. We have to consider the importance of protecting our electrical grids. New Brunswick relies heavily on our partners in Quebec, so it would certainly have implications for my constituents.

These are questions that we need to ask and hopefully consider during the committee stage, and hear testimony from witnesses that would be able to address those concerns.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to hear from my Liberal colleague that the Liberals are open to much-needed amendments to this bill to increase the oversight, transparency and accountability on the executive branch.

I just want to read a quote from Jérémie Harris, who is the co-founder of Gladstone AI. He said, “ChatGPT is a harbinger of an era in which AI will be the single most important source of public safety risk facing Canada. As AI advances at a breakneck pace, the destructive footprint of malicious actors who use it will increase just as fast.”

Does my hon. colleague have any comments on how fast this technology is advancing, and how important it is that we equip all of our agencies to keep those vital systems safe?

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin:** Madam Speaker, I have a lot of concerns about how fast technologies are developing, particularly around artificial intelligence and facial recognition technology. All these moving pieces have incredible implications, especially for vulnerable people in our communities. It deserves a hard look by all members of the House, particularly in the committee that would be studying this legislation, but I think beyond that as well.

We are in a new, unpredictable time. I mentioned, in my speech, a lot about geopolitical factors and a lot of threats that are coming in. We do not know what we do not know at this point, and I think that causes a lot of fear. This is a conversation that is long overdue, and I thank the member for allowing me the opportunity to enter into that space. I really hope we have more fulsome discussions around those aspects in particular.

• (1715)

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would be interested in the hon. member's thoughts on how we protect rights without going down the rights rabbit hole that leads to paralysis with respect to a space that is going so fast that very few of us can actually comprehend how fast it is moving.

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin:** Madam Speaker, it speaks to the concept that we need to modernize a lot of our legislation. We need to modernize a lot of our approaches and processes. As I said about not knowing what we do not know, things are happening so fast at this point that we need to protect those who are most vulnerable. We need to protect the generations to come.

There are a lot of unknowns right now, and legislation like this allows us to bring in those experts, have those conversations and ensure we are getting ahead of these things and being proactive.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour to speak today in the House on Bill C-26, an act respecting cybersecurity, amending the Telecommunications Act and making consequential amendments to other acts.

With every passing year, Canadians are increasingly moving their lives online. They communicate with loved ones through email, messaging, photo sharing, video calls and more. They can order their entire grocery orders, rent cars for the weekend and book appointments with a click in an app.

As more and more Canadians choose to put more of their lives online, it falls to us, as members of Parliament, to ensure our cybersecurity laws are as protective of their personal and private information as possible.

The next generation of Canadians are increasingly building their professional and personal lives online. At the same time, they face mounting threats from foreign actors, ranging from scammers to state actors. These actors have shown they would use any tactic, from identity theft to cyber-attacks, to exploit Canadians and attack our institutions.

That is why the legislation we have before us today is essential, and why getting it right the first time is even more important. In particular, it must protect our online information while not crushing our small business start-ups under mountains of red tape.

On this side of the House, my Conservative colleagues and I believe that, as currently constructed, Bill C-26 fails to account for the welfare of small business start-ups by adding more red tape and placing burdensome costs on our homegrown technology sector. As constructed, this bill would directly affect start-ups by adding further bureaucracy that would drive up their starting costs. It would overburden with regulation the small telecommunications providers, the companies that provide our families and businesses with access to a global market online.

### *Government Orders*

Wrapping them in red tape could risk our access to competing on the world stage. The Liberal government has already made it hard enough for start-ups, and the Liberal record on small business has been one committed to mazes of bureaucracy, punitive fines and penalties, and rising inflation. A Liberal economy of high tax and wasteful spending has already made it hard enough for start-ups.

Through the overarching premise of this cybersecurity bill, we know that it is needed. We absolutely need to update our cybersecurity laws, while at the same time we cannot allow Bill C-26 to add unnecessary burdens to business, especially small businesses.

I am particularly concerned about how this bill's regulations would also apply to businesses "irrespective of their cyber security maturity", implying that providers who already have advanced electronic protection measures would still have to comply with the new regulations of the bill. This means that businesses could not continue using their current, possibly more robust, cybersecurity systems. Instead, they would have to disregard their current cybersecurity measures and replace them with the newly proposed government model.

Even Canadian businesses that have already worked hard to protect their customer security at accepted global standards would still incur more cost despite their robust electronic security measures. They would need to invest in government-regulated security measures, incurring costs such as inspection, extra time, installation and further training. They may have to completely overturn their superior standards for the government's preference.

The thing is, we do not know what the regulations would be or how they would affect businesses, because the actual regulations have not been developed. That is how the government does a lot of its bills. There are great titles, with few details. We are expected to just trust the Liberals to figure it all out later, behind closed doors, with no opportunity to study them at committee with expert witnesses.

Imagine if this regulatory framework were applied to any other business. Suppose we were regulating changes in the banking security industry. We would require that every Canadian bank and credit union tear its building down to the ground, brick by brick, and then rebuild itself from scratch. That really does not make sense.

Now is the time when we should be encouraging competition and bringing in more telecommunications companies. We know Canada has some of the highest telecommunications costs in the world. As more and more Canadians move their lives online, whether for banking, social media or work, adding more tape in this bill, as mentioned, would make this transition far more difficult. Costs never remain in the businesses' ledgers forever; they are inevitably always passed on to the consumer.

As a government, we should encourage the next generation of Canadian entrepreneurs who are innovating.

● (1720)

I will mention, as a sidebar, that I was formerly on the industry committee and we did a quantum computing study, which was, frankly, terrifying. It was about how Canada could be exposed to bad actors, which could affect every part of our online lives. As

these technological advances develop, we have to be aware of risks and be able to stay ahead of technology.

These enterprises, businesses and telecommunications providers do not need more red tape; they need a stable market without uncompetitive government interference. We know very well how easy it can be for the government to build regulations that only the largest providers of an industry can shoulder. Without attention to scale, a single fault of noncompliance could instantly wipe out a smaller company. The legislation would allow ministers and bureaucrats to levy fines as high as \$15 million without special consideration, such as the size of a company's user base.

Nonspecific details like that are music to the ears of our largest telecommunications providers. Monopolization of our telecommunications sector is something Canadians are already concerned about. We must always proceed cautiously, so as not to turn away innovation and new businesses entering the market, which creates healthy competition. For example, these fines could also be enacted under the vague term of "protecting a critical cyber system". This vague terminology can leave a lot of leeway for government ministers to injure Canadian businesses with rampant fines.

There is already a shortage of online and electronic security professionals in Canada. According to the Business Council of Canada, an estimated 25,000 personnel are needed in the cybersecurity industry. Instead of dissuading these crucial professionals from joining this industry and helping keep Canada safe from domestic and foreign cyber-threats, let us provide a better framework and encourage them to build new businesses in this essential industry. Let us not scare them off with red tape and penalties.

As members can see, the legislation proposed for Bill C-26 has some significant concerns that require amendments at committee. Regulations being made with a lack of transparency behind closed doors, after the bill passes, is a concern. Conservatives will be looking to make amendments to the bill at committee as we hear from experts.

*Government Orders*

As I mentioned earlier, my Conservative colleagues and I encourage and support new, updated and secure cybersecurity measures being put in place, especially as more and more Canadians move their lives online. However, by placing more and more red tape on small and start-up businesses and providers that have already been in the industry for years, the bill would effectively dissuade businesses from entering this market and providing more services for Canadians. Large and mature businesses can handle the related costs of Bill C-26, but the associated expenses could crush small businesses.

I have worked, for much of my career, around various regulated industries and have seen, all too often, red tape and regulations making it too hard for small businesses to even start or to stay afloat without being acquired by larger firms, as small companies just cannot keep up with the regulatory compliance.

Cybersecurity threats affect all our communities. In January, an international ransomware group claimed responsibility for an Okanagan College cyber-attack in my region. Let us keep Canada safe by building clear online security measures that would encourage start-up professionals and businesses to help build up our cybersecurity infrastructure to a world-class standard. We will not accomplish this goal if we continue to add burdensome fines, penalties and red tape.

• (1725)

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I certainly hear my hon. colleague's support for small businesses and the concerns she is raising, but I come at this from a different standpoint where I feel there are protections here for small businesses. The bill is designed to protect them from unnecessary losses when they happen to be attacked or be subjected to ransomware.

Is there a balance here, where this is also about supporting them by preventing those losses?

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Madam Speaker, I think a part of the piece of legislation is that we really do not have the details, and that is part of the concern, so I am hoping that, if it goes forward to committee, some of that could be worked out, because that is part of the concern right now.

We have the topic and we know what the overarching desire is and what the fines may be, but we do not actually know what all of the regulations would be, and that does raise a lot of concerns, especially for small businesses that do not really know at this point what the bill would mean for them. Hopefully that will come out at committee and there will be more information added, potentially as amendments to the bill.

**Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's comments, particularly about not wanting to add more bureaucracy and more red tape to small and medium-sized enterprises, especially small start-ups. I am looking at a study from the public safety committee about Canada's security posture in relation to Russia. I will just read one of the committee's recommendations. Recommendation number 4 states:

That the Government of Canada instruct the Communications Security Establishment to broaden the tools used to educate small- and medium-sized enterprises about the need to adopt cyber security standards.

Therefore, it is about making education tools available versus adding more red tape. I would like my colleague's comments on that.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the great question from my colleague. That is a great recommendation, and I will just give a very specific example. One of the roles that I have had in my career was the privilege of being on the board of one of the largest credit unions in Canada for 10 years. We underwent extensive training and cybersecurity was one of the topics that we had to do.

I was able to take some of that training and bring it into my small business that I had at the time. I remember thinking that I wished a lot of other small business owners could be going through the extensive training that I just went through. That is a great approach and something that we should definitely work on.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ):** Madam Speaker, clause 13 of Bill C-26 essentially allows the government to take new measures to protect critical cyber systems by order in council. That gives it a lot of flexibility. There is more flexibility there than in the legislative process.

Does my colleague think that the bill should be amended in committee so that we can be certain the government will be accountable to Parliament?

[*English*]

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Madam Speaker, that is certainly something committee members could ask the expert witnesses when they are there at committee. Maybe they could delve into that more to see what those issues are and what the opportunities might potentially be for amendments. That is one of the things that could be looked at in the committee. Certainly the committee members there could ask those questions for the witnesses.

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, this bill would create tools for governments to support Canadian business and organizations in securing their networks and protecting personal and private information. I wonder if the member could share her thoughts on how this bill could better ensure that businesses are better protected.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray:** Madam Speaker, that is one of the parts of the bill that philosophically sounds like a great thing that the bill could work on, but again, we do not have any details. It is a great objective, but we do not really have any strategies or any other information, so that is something that definitely could be asked at the committee as well.

• (1730)

**Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC):** Madam Speaker, while sitting through this debate, I observed that it has been one of the highest in quality since I have been in the House. It has been a substantive discussion of a very important issue. I am proud today, as I always am, to be a member of Parliament and to be sitting in the House of Commons.

*Government Orders*

Today, we are speaking to Bill C-26, an act respecting cybersecurity, amending the Telecommunications Act and making consequential amendments to other acts. More broadly, it is a cybersecurity issue.

From the debate and other academic discussions, we can all agree that this is an area of substantial importance where legislation is required. In fact, it is one of my frustrations, which I think is shared by many Canadians, that this government is not agile enough in responding to a world that is quickly changing. We need to be more agile as a legislature, as the government, to reflect the changes that are going on.

We have had a little bit of talk about important changes, such as artificial intelligence, and the exponential speed in which it is changing is unbelievable. Any type of quick Google search will tell us, from many academics, about the great part artificial intelligence can serve in doing much of the hard work that human beings are now doing. However, those observers also say that its ability to do malicious work is equal, which is obviously very challenging. We see these threats, and as we go forward and see more and more powerful artificial intelligence and computing power, the potential for those threats is growing.

We have certainly seen our share, for lack of a better term, of run-of-the-mill cybersecurity threats just in the last couple of years. I was serving as the shadow minister for national revenue when there were substantial CRA breaches of confidential information. One such breach did not actually transmit any information, but it forced the CRA to shut down its entire system, which shut out over 800,000 people from their My Account or log-in system right around tax filing season, which was obviously a tremendous concern for Canadians who were attempting to file their taxes.

The unfortunate reality, as it stands today, is that we are vulnerable to cybersecurity attacks. My colleague for Kildonan—St. Paul spoke recently about a conversation she had with cybersecurity experts from the minister's department just last year. They warned her about the incredible implications of an attack on our critical infrastructure, such as our electrical infrastructure or pipeline technology.

Of course, it is no surprise to many, but maybe to some of my colleagues from British Columbia, that we are in a cold country. We can imagine what the impact could be. Our heating infrastructure, our electrical grid and our ability to get natural gas out to some of the coldest places in the world could literally be a matter of life and death. Members can imagine, for example, a cyber attack on one of our nuclear facilities and what that could potentially mean. All this is to highlight in the House today the significance and importance of cybersecurity legislation.

Another example, which I believe has been discussed and debated but I think deserves highlighting again, was in Newfoundland in October 2020 when cybersecurity hackers stole personal information from health care workers and patients in all four regions, as well as social insurance numbers of over 2,500 patients. This is deeply personal information, and as our information increasingly goes on that magical cloud both in the public and private sector, it is increasingly important that we put the appropriate measures to cybersecurity.

As I said, the spirit of the legislation before us is absolutely right. The intent, I believe, is also right. The timing is a little slow, but we need to get it in place.

• (1735)

The member for Winnipeg North did comment on the need for expediency, and I agree with him in one sense. We need cybersecurity legislation, new cybersecurity legislation, in place yesterday. Unfortunately, they brought this legislation in, and it is not complete. There are a series of regulations that we do not know.

This is our job, and I am honestly not trying to be partisan. Instead, this is a substantive criticism that it would have expedited this legislation if they had brought forward the legislation completely baked to show us the regulations and what they want to do.

Of course, I would feel this way about any government as a Canadian citizen. If we are going to grant them wide swaths of power, and maybe even necessarily, we just want to know what exactly those powers are. Do not do as Nancy Pelosi famously said, as the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to pass the bill and then read the bill.

Let us read it first and understand it because, quite frankly, I think the conversation in the House has been at a very high calibre and the more information one can feed us, the more information we can digest to do our job for Canadian citizens by improving the legislation, especially in matters of, as the member from the Liberal Party rightfully said, not just cybersecurity but also national security. We really, in all candour and all honesty, want to do our due diligence here.

As I said, part one of the act:

amends the Telecommunications Act to add the promotion of the security of the Canadian telecommunications system as an objective of the Canadian telecommunications policy and to authorize the Governor in Council and the Minister of Industry to direct telecommunications service providers to do anything, or refrain from doing anything

This is obviously a very broad power, and that is what we need to look at and work on at committee. Like I said, this legislation, if fully baked, would have meant less work at committee. It would have meant, perhaps, carrying forward with the debate quicker, but as we are left with many questions, those questions deserve to be answered here in the people's House.

The legislation continues:

Part 2 enacts the *Critical Cyber Systems Protection Act* to provide a framework for the protection of the critical cyber systems of services and systems that are vital to national security or public safety and that are delivered or operated as part of a work, undertaking or business that is within the legislative authority of Parliament. It also, among other things,

*Government Orders*

- (a) authorizes the Governor in Council to designate any service or system as a vital service or vital system;
- (b) authorizes the Governor in Council to establish classes of operators in respect of a vital service or vital system;
- (c) requires designated operators to, among other things, establish and implement cyber security programs, mitigate supply-chain and third-party risks, report cyber security incidents and comply with cyber security directions;
- (d) provides for the exchange of information between relevant parties; and
- (e) authorizes the enforcement of the obligations under the Act and imposes consequences for non-compliance.

I hope that I have highlighted the fact that this is an important piece of information and that there are gaps within the information, so my substantive ask would be for the government to publish some of those regulations, so that we can review them, perhaps even before committee, and come to it in a spirit of collaboration and discussion. This is a matter of national security.

Perhaps, as I am getting a little bit less young these days, I get a little bit more skeptical. I would love to see some accountability mechanisms where the minister reports back to Parliament or otherwise because the question with the government is always who will watch the watcher.

We have seen that all governments are not infallible and each can commit its own share of foibles, errors and mistakes, unintentional or intentional, so I would love to see some greater accountability come committee.

• (1740)

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would agree that this is a very high-level discussion we have been having this afternoon. I think that it has been well placed.

He mentioned the possible impacts of, say, a nuclear facility being attacked. It got me thinking about the military capabilities of Canada. My riding of Fredericton is home to CFB Gagetown, very proudly so. We are also home to the Canadian Institute for Cybersecurity, as I mentioned previously in my speech.

I am wondering if he could comment more generally on this expanding role and the necessity to have cybersecurity education and professionals in our Canadian military.

**Mr. Philip Lawrence:** Mr. Speaker, the short answer is that I agree. The longer answer is that I agree with the comment the member made earlier with respect to modernization. We need to modernize our view on security. The world changed dramatically a year and a half ago, and it continues to change. We need to be adept and agile, and quite frankly, willing to put the resources where they are needed for the future.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague knows that TikTok has been banned from all government devices.

My question is simple. Does my colleague believe that Beijing is using this platform to engage in political interference?

[*English*]

**Mr. Philip Lawrence:** Mr. Speaker, I agree with the government's recommendation or policy to remove TikTok from all gov-

ernment devices. I believe the CEO of TikTok is testifying in front of U.S. Congress today, so we will see what comes from that. I would agree with him that we need to be on guard against foreign interference in all forms.

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge that today we are having a serious debate about cybersecurity and amendments to the Telecommunications Act.

What strikes me is that as we discuss this issue in Parliament, there is an immense disconnect. Many communities here in our own country have barely any access to the Internet and the wired world that so many of us take for granted.

I am thinking particularly of first nations in my constituency, 11 of which announced a regional state of emergency today. The threat they face is not from the outside; it is from within. It is the threat of drugs, as well as the threat of federal neglect through the housing crisis and the public safety crisis. It is truly an unbelievable set of crises that they are facing in one of the wealthiest countries in the world. As their member of Parliament, I certainly share the concern that Canada is not taking the reality of first nations seriously in this country. There is a disconnect they are facing.

The big question is: What will it take for the Government of Canada to act and deal with the real threats that first nations, particularly the most marginalized here in our country, are facing right now?

**Mr. Philip Lawrence:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for bringing forward this important area of discussion with respect to this debate. It always merits taking time on the floor of the House of Commons to discuss these issues.

Unfortunately, my time is very brief. I believe that any child, born on or off reserve, deserves an equal opportunity to be successful in this country. It is my commitment to do that. I have the great privilege of having two first nations within the constituency of Northumberland—Peterborough South, and I am very proud to represent them here in the House of Commons.

**Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my biggest concern with the legislation, as the member brought up, is about the overreaching powers the government is giving itself. We do not know much about what it will be doing with that power or how it can implement that.

Can the member give his opinion on how overreaching these powers are?

• (1745)

**Mr. Philip Lawrence:** Mr. Speaker, there are a series of provisions talking about frameworks and giving the government powers to put itself within the private sectors to direct them without providing specific delineation of how that would happen. Like I said, it is difficult to get this type of legislation through in expedient ways without the government fully explaining what it wants to accomplish in this legislation.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour and a privilege to rise in this place, and it is nice to join the debate on the topic at hand.

When we talk about cybersecurity, there are so many different factors that go into it. I recognize that the bill before us largely has to do with telecommunications companies, bigger companies, and perhaps with government institutions as a whole. However, as we are having this conversation, we need to recognize and address the fact that the risk presented through cybersecurity extends much beyond that. With the current generation of kids being raised, kids are heavily involved in using cellphones, video game systems and computer consoles, for example, and are curious by nature. They are more at risk of clicking on a link that they do not know or realize is harmful. We know that is quite often how a lot of bad actors exploit weaknesses in computer systems in businesses or in homes. It is important to have that context out there early as we start the debate on this bill.

I want to get into a few specific parts of the bill at the start. First, it proposes to amend the Telecommunications Act to make sure the security of our Canadian telecommunications system is an official objective of our public policy, which is not a bad idea in and of itself. Second, it would create a new critical cyber systems protection act. The stated goal is to have a framework in place that would allow for better protection of critical cyber-services and cyber systems, which impact national security and public safety.

Some of the proposals include the designation of services or systems deemed to be “vital” for the purposes of this new act, along with designating classes of operators for these services or systems. The designated operators in question could be required to perform certain duties or activities, including the implementation of security programs, the mitigation of risks, reporting security incidents and complying with cybersecurity directions. Most significantly, Bill C-26 would authorize the enforcement of these measures through financial penalties or even imprisonment.

Anybody hearing these few examples listed in the preamble probably thinks this sounds like common sense, and I would generally agree with them. However, there is a problem, especially with the last one, which has to do with directions, because it is quite vague. These points should raise some obvious questions. How are we defining each of them? What are the limits and the accountability for using these new powers? It is fair to have these general concerns when we consider any government, but Canadians have reason to be especially wary with the one currently in power based on the Liberal record itself.

Unfortunately, the most recent and disturbing revelations related to foreign interference in two federal elections, which allegedly included working with an elected official, are not the only things we need to talk about. Here is another example. For a number of years, the Conservatives were demanding that the Liberals ban Huawei from our cellular networks. Despite all the warnings and security concerns, they delayed the decision and left us out of step with our closest partners in the Five Eyes. We had been calling it out for years before they finally decided to make the right decision thanks to pressure from Canadians, experts, our allies and the official opposition.

It was not very long ago, almost a year, when the announcement to ban Huawei came along. As much as it was the right decision, it should have been made much sooner. To say that is not a complaint about some missed opportunity in the past. The delay caused real problems with upfront costs for our telcos, and it created extra uncertainty for consumers.

Prior to becoming a member of Parliament, I worked for a telecommunications company in Saskatchewan. When we look at how big and vast our country is, we start thinking about how much equipment is required for one single telecommunications provider in one province, like SaskTel, the company I worked for. We can think about how much equipment it would have ordered or pre-ordered and potentially would have had to replace based on the government taking so long to make up its mind on whether or not to ban Huawei. If we look at some of the bigger companies out there, it is the same thing. There are the upfront costs they would have had to incur, and then the new costs if they had to replace all their equipment on top of that. This was simply because the government dragged its feet on such a big decision.

We have learned a lot of other things about foreign interference since then that need to be properly addressed and independently investigated. We need a public inquiry, at the very least, into some of these issues. However, once again, the Liberals are refusing to do the right thing for as long as they possibly can. It is clearer than ever before that we need to get a lot more serious about our cybersecurity, because what we are really talking about is our national security as a whole. These two things are closely intertwined, and having this conversation is long overdue.

● (1750)

We are happy to see the issue get more of the attention it deserves. Canadians have a lot of questions and concerns about it that should not be ignored. That is why it is a priority for Conservatives on our side of the House, and we are not going to let it go.

While we work to carefully review Bill C-26 in this place, we want to make sure that it will be effective and accomplish what it is supposed to do. It needs to protect Canadians living in a digital world. At the same time, it should not create any new openings for government to interfere with people's lives or abuse power.

After all, we are waiting for Bill C-11 to return to the House with all the problems it has, including the risk of online censorship. The problem is that whether it is about Huawei or the latest scandal about foreign interference, the Liberal government has failed to act, and it has undermined trust in our institutions. Therefore, it is hard to take it seriously when a bill like this one comes forward. The government's failure in this area is even more frustrating because we should all agree that there is a real need to strengthen cybersecurity. That is what experts and stakeholders have been telling us over many years. Canadians have had to wait for far too long for the government to bring something forward.

Make no mistake: This bill is flawed, and it will require more work to make sure that we get it right. However, the fact that we are talking about the issue right now is a small and necessary step in the right direction.

There are a few points I would like to mention.

Part 1 of this bill will allow the federal government to compel service providers to remove all products provided by a specified person from its networks or facilities. First of all, that puts a lot of companies at risk of having adversarial agreements signed in the future. If I were a company trying to sign an agreement, I would be doing everything I could to make sure that someone is not going to put a clause in there that if the government forces its removal, there is going to be an extra fine levied on the company. The problem with this bill is that it exposes companies to having these bad contracts negotiated, signed and forced on them by bad actors.

Under the new critical cyber systems protection act, the minister would be able to direct and impose any number of things on a service provider without giving them compensation for complying with the orders. Earlier, I was talking about the upfront costs paid by telcos trying to advance their networks to provide the products and services that their clients and customers want and need, especially as the world moves forward in a more digital fashion. The government is going to force them to do something without any compensation or without the ability to have help dealing with these changes. I think this is something that needs to be reconsidered in this bill.

That leaves service providers in a position where they have to pay for complying with potentially arbitrary orders or face legal penalties, such as the ones I mentioned earlier: fines or even imprisonment.

Again, we do have a desperate need to improve our cybersecurity regime, but these problems show that the bill is poorly written. By seeking to implement personal liability for breaches of the act, it will incentivize skilled Canadian cybersecurity professionals to leave Canada to find jobs elsewhere. This phenomenon, commonly known as the brain drain, is emerging as a severe issue for our economy, in some part thanks to the policies of the government.

Thousands of skilled, highly employable Canadians move to the United States thanks to the larger market, higher salaries and lower taxes, while very few Americans move to Canada to do the same. This issue is bigger than just the cybersecurity sector. Thanks to this government, we are losing nurses, doctors and tech workers to the United States. All the while, professionals who immigrate to

### *Government Orders*

Canada are being denied the paperwork they need to work in the field they are trained for because of the ridiculous red tape that plagues our immigration. Given that we are already short 25,000 cybersecurity professionals in Canada, is it wise to keep incentivizing them to go to the States?

Another massive problem with this bill is that it opens the door for some extreme violations of individual privacy. It also expands the state's power to use a secret government order to bar individuals or companies from accessing essential services. While we must improve our framework against cybersecurity attacks, drastically expanding what cabinet can do outside the public eye is always a bad idea. Accountability to the people and Parliament has always been an essential part of how we are supposed to do things in Canada. It is, however, not surprising that the current government would advocate for more unaccountable power. After all, government members have been anything but transparent. They have hidden information from Canadians to protect their partisan interests.

Canadians deserve to know what the government is doing. We must always uphold the principle that everyone is innocent until proven guilty. Giving cabinet the right to secretly cut Canadians off from essential services could threaten to erode this fundamental right.

• (1755)

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member seems to be concerned about the enforcement powers in this legislation. However, without those enforcement powers, it would be kind of a useless piece of legislation.

If I am sending an email to him to go over there, somehow or another, his entity may be the weak link. If, in fact, he is concerned about his piece of the infrastructure, the problem is: How would he propose changing that without some sort of significant power on the government's part to make sure that his piece of the cyber-infrastructure is not the weak link in the entire system?

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer:** Mr. Speaker, we need the government to talk to businesses, to be transparent in the process, to work with industry and to make sure there is a good process of approval so that equipment or the companies people are buying from are not already compromised. Let us work with them to make sure they know there are good actors out there that provide good equipment. There are many companies out there besides Huawei that provide good equipment. The government could work with those companies, rather than threatening them with fines and imprisonment, to make sure we have the proper equipment in our networks and make sure Canadians have not only the best services, but also the highest level of security they can possibly get.

*Government Orders*

**Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I sit on the national defence committee, and we are discussing a lot about cybersecurity, which relates to the debate today. Obviously, the armed forces are having quite a recruitment retention issue, but across the board we are seeing this with the labour shortage. One of the questions we were talking about regarding cybersecurity as it relates to national defence was around security clearances and what the government needs to do to attract people to the cybersecurity industry, potentially trying to ensure that people from outside Canada are attracted to this industry. Maybe the member of Parliament could address that a bit. I know it is a little outside our scope, but it certainly gets into how we start to address a lot of the problems we have been discussing all day.

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her question because it is an important one, whether in this debate or any other debate, that gets into credential recognition. Many other countries around the world are further along than us in prioritizing the digital environment.

There are lots of Asian countries and Pacific countries that are further along in their advancement of that, so if workers want to come to Canada, we should be working with them to make sure their credentials match up with the standards we have here in Canada, while removing red tape so we can get those people into jobs right away. Rather than having them come here and work in other jobs for a number of years without working in their professions, they should be able to come here and do the things they are able to do. We should have the credentialing system in place now so they can get the jobs they are here to do right off the bat.

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, earlier today, some of my colleagues, particularly the member for Scarborough—Guildwood, indicated the pillars involved in the bill. The member mentioned them as well in his presentation. There are so many different areas that need to be looking at the cybersecurity issues in Canada. As other colleagues indicated, some countries around the world are ahead of us in some of those areas.

I wonder if the member could expand a bit on that. I will give him an opportunity to look at the number of pillars that might be in place and the reasons he thinks it so important to deal with the cybersecurity issues that each one of those would have.

● (1800)

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer:** Mr. Speaker, we can look at some of the issues we are facing. The CRA has been subjected to relentless cyber-attacks over the last number of years. Even CERB fraud was committed by cyber-attackers. Somewhere between 1,200 and 1,800 individual accounts were exploited for fraud because the lack of cybersecurity was able to help them out. Eventually we got that under control, but it just shows how many attacks we have. Having a framework in place is good, and the government is trying to go in the right direction here, but there are things we need to do with this bill. Hopefully at committee we can help to establish some stronger pillars to make sure Canadians are protected.

**Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on Bill C-26, an act respecting cybersecurity, amending the Telecommunications Act and making consequential amendments to other acts. Cybersecurity is of the ut-

most importance to Canadians, and I am glad to see the topic debated in the House today.

Bill C-26 would amend the Telecommunications Act. I should note that any time the Telecommunications Act is changed, I am very interested. Not only am I the shadow minister for rural economic development and connectivity, but I also have a bill before Parliament, Bill C-288, that would amend the Telecommunications Act to provide Canadians better information when it comes to the service and quality they pay for.

The dependence on telecommunications throughout our society continues to grow. The uses of Internet and cellular services are foundational to both the social and economic success of Canada, so I appreciate seeing the government move forward with a bill to secure our telecommunications network through Bill C-26. However, I must ask this: What took so long?

It was over two years ago when this House of Commons passed a Conservative motion that called on the Liberal government to ban Huawei from our 5G network. Despite this motion passing in the House of Commons and the director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service warning the government in 2018, it took years to ban Huawei from Canada's 5G network. Therefore, is Bill C-26 important? It absolutely is. Did it take too long to get here? It absolutely did.

I should note that I recently asked if the University of British Columbia continues to work with Huawei in any form. The response was, "Yes, we do". The government has been warned about the risks to our national security over and over again, yet we fail to see concrete action.

Analyzing Bill C-26, I have a few questions and concerns.

In its current form, Bill C-26 allows the Minister of Industry to obtain and disclose information without any checks and balances. If passed, Bill C-26 would grant the minister the power to obtain information from the Canadian telecom companies. It could, "by order, direct a telecommunications service provider to do anything or refrain from doing anything...that is, in the Minister's opinion, necessary to secure the Canadian telecommunications system, including against the threat of interference, manipulation or disruption."

There are no specific details on what information can be collected when it comes to personal consumer data, nor is there any clarity on who the minister could share this personal information with. Could the minister share it with other ministers or other departments? As of now, it does not say the minister could not do so.



*Government Orders*

A recent research report entitled “Cybersecurity Will Not Thrive in Darkness: A Critical Analysis of Proposed Amendments in Bill C-26 to the *Telecommunications Act*” stated the following on this matter:

The legislation would authorize the Minister to compel providers to disclose confidential information and then enable the Minister to circulate it widely within the federal government; this information could potentially include either identifiable or de-identified personal information. Moreover, the Minister could share non-confidential information internationally even when doing so could result in regulatory processes or private right of actions against an individual or organization. Should the Minister or [any] other party to whom the Minister shares information unintentionally lose control of the information, there would be no liability attached to the government for the accident.

I think an accident by the current government happens quite a bit.

If Parliament is going to give the minister such powers, it is imperative that checks and balances exist. It is very important that, when we discuss the ability of a government to obtain personal information from Canadians, we ensure that Canadians are protected from the unauthorized use of such information.

I should also add to this conversation the impact Bill C-26 could have on smaller Internet service providers. Small Internet companies are foundational to improving competition within Canada's telecom industry, but they are sometimes left out of the conversation.

• (1805)

Bill C-26 would empower the minister to “prohibit a telecommunications service provider from using any specified product or service in, or in relation to, its telecommunications network or telecommunications facilities, or any part of those networks or facilities” or “direct a telecommunications service provider to remove any specified product from its telecommunications networks or telecommunications facilities, or any part of those networks or facilities”.

We do not know what types of telecom infrastructure and equipment will be deemed a risk to our national security in the coming decades, so imagine that a local Internet service company builds a network using a specific brand of equipment. At the time, no one raises security concerns with the equipment or the manufacturer. The local Internet company is just beginning its operations, investing heavily in equipment to build a network and to compete with larger telecom companies.

Imagine that, five years later, the government deems the equipment the company invested in to be a national security threat, forcing it to remove and dispose of such equipment. The small Internet company trying to compete, which acted in good faith, has just lost a significant amount of capital because of a government decision. There is a strong possibility that this local Internet provider can no longer afford to operate.

I am hopeful this conversation can be had at committee to ensure the government is not unfairly impacting small, local and independent Internet companies. As I said, I am glad the House is debating the issue of cybersecurity, as the discussion is long overdue, but it is imperative that the issues I raised be addressed at committee, it is imperative that the issues my colleagues have raised be addressed at committee and it is imperative that the issues experts have raised

be addressed at committee. That is why I will be voting to send Bill C-26 to committee in hopes that these concerns can be addressed.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see there is general agreement in the House on the principle of this bill and on the fact that, obviously, work is needed.

I know the member has a lot of experience in the agricultural field and brings that experience to Parliament. I want to ask him about the part of this bill that would allow the Governor in Council to designate any service or system as a vital service or vital system. I would ask him for his thoughts.

Obviously, our transportation sector can be considered a vital service, especially our railway lines, but what does he think about our supply chains, especially involving our agricultural products, and how those might be targeted? As he knows very well, many of Canada's farmers, producers and processors are really starting to move into more digital ways of doing business, and much of their equipment is linked to computer systems.

I would like to ask whether he has any thoughts to share on how those could be classified as vital systems and services.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Mr. Speaker, it is very important. The key takeaway is that this type of legislation is long overdue. That is why it is so important to get the amendments right and get this bill to committee as quickly as possible so we can all work on it. Let the experts review it and let the members get at it, but also let the industry get at it so we can come up with really good legislation to benefit all Canadians, especially farmers.

• (1810)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The question is on the motion.

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

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, 2022, the division stands deferred until Monday, March 27, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent to advance to Private Members' Business.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS***[English]***NATIONAL STRATEGY RESPECTING ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ACT**

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP)**, seconded by the member for York Centre, moved that Bill C-226, An Act respecting the development of a national strategy to assess, prevent and address environmental racism and to advance environmental justice, be read the third time and passed.

She said: Mr. Speaker, there are not really words to describe the joy, pleasure and deep sense of gratitude when a private member's bill gets to third reading, and the member who has proposed it gets to stand before colleagues, to both ask for further support and express gratitude for the support the bill has received.

I want to begin by acknowledging that we are here on the territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people. To them, I express a deep *meegwetch* every single day that we stand on their territory. Part and parcel of what we are addressing in the piece of legislation today is the impacts of the history of settler culture on Turtle Island and the impacts of policies of exploitation, of amassing fortunes, of capital raised and capital in bank accounts based on taking natural capital, taking it from what is alive to what is dead, at which point we see profit.

We also see a disproportionate impact for those people who are racialized, low-income or indigenous and the distance between those people and the large profits that are amassed quite far from where they have been exploited.

The concept of environmental racism may be new to some people in this House, but it certainly was not a new concept to the first member to bring this bill forward. Although Bill C-226 came to this House what feels like a long time ago, in terms of Private Members' Business it was not that long ago. This bill came to this Parliament on February 2, 2022 at first reading.

However, that was not its first incarnation. Its first incarnation was as Bill C-230. It was a private member's bill of a Liberal member of Parliament, who was at that time the member for Cumberland—Colchester. I can say her name out loud here. That is one of the sad things about this. When one of our friends and colleagues is not re-elected, their name is speakable. I thank Lenore Zann, who brought this bill forward. She is still rooting for it. We are still working together. In the previous Parliament, she did me the honour of asking me, a Green Party member of Parliament, to be her official seconder, even though she is a Liberal. It is quite unusual to ask someone from another party to second a bill, and I was honoured to do so.

We worked together on this, and it got all the way through second reading and all the way through the environment committee. It had amendments made to it in the last Parliament, and then, as we all know, there was an election that intervened, and the bill died on the Order Paper.

Since that time, in bringing it back, I have had so much support from so many members whose names I cannot say here because they are still members and working hard to help. I want to start, of

course, by thanking the Minister of Environment, who, as minister, has this in the mandate letter, but in discussions that were enormously collaborative he decided that perhaps it might advance more quickly as my private member's bill.

We really have a sense of urgency about getting the bill passed. As we know, the House calendar can get clogged with government bills. This one was ready to go, and I drew a low number in the lottery, so we moved forward.

From the very beginning, I had the support of my friend, the member for Victoria, who also laid hands on this bill. One could describe this bill as having many midwives. This is a process and we are not done yet. There is the hon. member for Nunavut and the hon. member for York Centre, who is seconding the bill here tonight. We had hon. members from many parties, including the hon. member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, the hon. parliamentary secretary from Winnipeg South and the hon. member for Toronto—Danforth. I know I am going to leave people out if I keep going.

- (1815)

*[Translation]*

I have many friends in the other parties, and I wish I had been able to convince my Bloc Québécois friends to support Bill C-226.

Unfortunately, right now, they are not on my side when it comes to this private member's bill, but perhaps they will change their minds before the final vote. I hope so. Right now, the Conservatives are opposing this environmental justice effort.

*[English]*

I would have loved to have every member of Parliament in this place support the legislation, but thank heaven, and thank all the members who have seen it in their hearts to support the bill, we have the votes for third reading support, please. Today is the last moment of debate at third reading.

I have another 10 minutes, and I do want to speak to the issues that this bill addresses.

We can name the places and think of them, and they conjure much longer stories, such as Grassy Narrows. What does environmental racism mean when we would allow Reed Paper to contaminate the community of Grassy Narrows with mercury, decade after decade?

The Sydney tar ponds are now cleaned up. However, for decades it was a racialized community with a Black population who came from the Caribbean to work in the steel mill. The land where the steel mill and the tar ponds were located was a toxic mess of carcinogenic toxic waste. It was the fishing grounds of the Mi'kmaq First Nation.

Pictou Landing, more recently, is still at threat from Paper Excellence, which bought the mill that was shuttered.

There is the illegal dumping of toxic waste in the Kanesatake First Nation, there is the Wet'suwet'en territory, and we can add Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, where Imperial Oil's Kearl mine leaked toxic waste for nine months. Not the regulator, not the province and not the company ever thought to warn the community.

In those cases, if members wonder what environmental racism is, they can just ask themselves this question: Can they imagine that happening in Westmount, the south end of Halifax, or any of the settler-culture neighbourhoods, which are the wealthy neighbourhoods, the white neighbourhoods? Would Imperial Oil have dared to poison a neighbourhood of their wealthy shareholders with the toxic waste seeping from the tar, from the tailings, from bitumen production in the oil sands? The answer that presents itself is obviously no. That is the difference.

There is a lot of academic work that has been done on this, so I do want to start by giving an enormous vote of thanks to Dr. Ingrid Waldron, who is the champion of environmental racism and promotion of environmental justice in Canada. Her book *There's Something in the Water* was turned into a film documentary. If members want more information on this, they can find it on Netflix. On Netflix, there is a film documentary made by Canadian actor Elliot Page. He based the documentary on Dr. Waldron's book.

Dr. Waldron founded the ENRICH project, which stands for environmental noxiousness, racial inequities and community health project.

Dr. Waldron's work has been central to this. Dr. Waldron worked in a collaborative fashion with Lenore Zann in developing this bill in the first place.

What does it look like? What kind of definitions does one bring to bear? Dr. Waldron's definition is more, but it includes this: "the disproportionate location or siting of polluting industries in communities of colour, indigenous communities, Black communities and the working poor." It is pretty comprehensive. We know what that means.

However, it is more than that. Dr. Waldron has also said it is "how racist environmental policies...have enabled the cultural genocide of Indigenous, Black and other racialized peoples".

Having looked at environmental racism, the question is this: What is it that Bill C-226 would do about it? It would demand of government to develop a strategy to promote environmental justice.

What does environmental justice look like? We do not have to look too far. Tomorrow, in this place, U.S. President Joe Biden will be speaking to us.

• (1820)

I hate comparisons where Canada does not look good compared to the United States of America, as I like the smugness of knowing that we set a good example, but unfortunately, we do not look good on environmental racism or climate. In 1994, the U.S. President acknowledged and created a program, by executive order, in the U.S.

### *Private Members' Business*

Environmental Protection Agency to promote environmental justice.

The environmental justice program and the U.S. EPA this year will spend \$100 million on programs at the community level to assist communities to have the tools they need to fight the polluters back; get cleanups; prove that the cleanups are needed; prove the health information; get access to epidemiologists, toxicologists and lawyers; and get the chance to beat back the polluters. The polluters will always say, "There is not enough here to poison anyone. That would be quite far-fetched." Environmental justice programs make the difference by empowering communities so that the polluters do not get away with murder, and I do not mean that purely rhetorically.

The U.S. EPA defines environmental justice as "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, culture, national origin, income, and educational levels with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of protective environmental laws, regulations, and policies."

We have a long way to go in this country, but we are not without a road map. We know what can be done. If we get this bill through third reading today and send it to the other place, it will then need to have the support from the government of the day and the support of the finance minister to fund the programs, so that communities of colour, indigenous communities and poor communities are not left without access to environmental justice.

We have made some changes in Bill S-5, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, thanks to the Senate. There is more recognition in that bill of aspects of environmental justice and environmental racism.

We are making progress. We are inching along, but we need to be bolder. We need to move fast. It is my deep hope that, if this bill passes, it will go through the Senate relatively swiftly. We will then be able to say to every Canadian that justice includes the right to a healthy environment, that justice includes climate justice, that justice includes the indigenous peoples who live in Saanich—Gulf Islands, that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans no longer can say, "Sir, one cannot harvest any shellfish from one's traditional waters because we have decided, without doing any testing, that that shellfish is probably not safe to consume." It is safe to consume, all right. It is just that it is an indigenous community and taking away their right to fish is perfectly okay with DFO, with no testing.

These are issues that can be solved. As someone who stands before us as a woman of privilege, by the colour of my skin, I am deeply honoured to work with the communities for whom this legislation will make an enormous difference, for all of the babies, the sons and daughters, of the peoples in those communities.

*Private Members' Business*

I ask members to please assist this bill to be more than a strategy, to be more than a private member's bill, but to be the law of the land to create new rights and bring environmental justice to every Canadian.

• (1825)

**Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to start my comments with respect to Bill C-226 and acknowledge that we are here today on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin people. The land acknowledgement is really important in understanding why we are talking about this bill. It is because what we are discussing really impacts the marginalized, racialized and indigenous communities of this country, which have struggled with environmental injustice for decades.

I am honoured to rise this evening to speak to Bill C-226 because, as mentioned, this bill has been sponsored by the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. I will note, as she did, that it was first introduced in the 43rd Parliament by a friend and colleague, Lenore Zann, who is the former member of Parliament for Cumberland—Colchester. I had the honour and privilege of working on that bill in the 43rd Parliament with my colleague from Victoria. As the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands noted, bringing the bill to this point really does feel like a mothering process in many ways. We are getting to see this day come for what we knew, as women, was so important for so many vulnerable communities across this country from coast to coast to coast, and we are getting the bill to where it is today in the chamber.

Until its introduction in the previous Parliament, environmental racism had been recognized as a problem for quite a long time, particularly in the United States, but it was still a fairly new concept here. We were not sure how to address it or discuss it. With its passage, this legislation would require for the first time a national strategy to address environmental racism. This whole process, whether it was in the 43rd Parliament or where we are now, has encouraged us to finally have this important conversation because many women and many leaders across this country have been having this conversation and pushing this issue for decades.

It comes at a time when Canadian society has a renewed focus on trying to understand the essential work of combatting both systemic racism and climate change. For many it was a question of how these things go hand in hand, but they do. Environmental racism really has to be part of the conversation when we talk about climate change. We cannot ignore what was really a blind spot for many in terms of addressing what environmental justice is.

We have talked about unconscious bias when it comes to racism and the potential unintended consequences, even in the House recently, of the many issues we are discussing that lead to racism in our society. Being Jewish, I see a rise in anti-Semitism now as well. We have to talk about these things, even when they are uncomfortable, and environmental justice is included in that.

We are in the process of updating the Canadian Environmental Protection Act at this time. It is a very good sign that here in this place, we are making sure that environmental racism and the right to a healthy environment are part of the debate and the discussion tonight, as well as in the environment committee and other spaces.

Environmental justice and the impacts of environmental racism are now an important part of the national conversation and not just here in this chamber but with the many folks we have met along the way. Whether we look back at Bill C-230 in the 43rd Parliament or we look at Bill C-226 today, the advocates across Canada have really been pushing us along and mothering this bill in many ways. It is important to define and frame the conversation so that we understand why it is so important.

Environmental racism happens when environmental policies or practices, like the placement of polluting industries, result in a disproportionately negative impact on groups or communities based on race or colour. Affected marginalized communities often lack the political power to influence decisions or advocate for stronger standards. That is why they rely on us, as parliamentarians and as these women's voices, to push this along.

It has become increasingly apparent that environmental benefits and harms are not shared equally. We talk about equity in many other aspects of Canadian life, but it is important that it is placed clearly here as well because environmental justice and environmental equity should be shared equally among all members of our society. This is not a new problem, but it is a new realization. Those in power have not discussed this in terms of addressing it with our marginalized groups, who have finally said it to us. Dr. Ingrid Waldron shared that for 70 years, communities in Nova Scotia have been waiting for us to have a substantive discussion on this. That time has come.

• (1830)

Indigenous and racialized communities, particularly those with lower socio-economic status, bear a disproportionate share of the environmental burdens and consequences when we deal with pollution, exposure to toxic substances, and land and water degradation. There is no magic bullet to fix this. I do not think anyone in good faith would suggest that the bill's purpose is to do that. I know that in previous debates, some of my Conservative colleagues said there is no point as we will never get it done. There is no magic way to fix systemic racism. There is no magic way to fix climate change. However, we have to start. We have to begin the process, and Bill C-226 clearly has the first steps.

At the end of the day, we want to make sure that no one's health is compromised and no one's quality of life is compromised because of where they live or, more importantly, because of who they are. This is about ensuring the health and dignity of all peoples regardless of their background. It is not a bill of one-off action. I know my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands has asked for us to consider a more robust approach than the national strategy, but I really want to applaud that we have gotten here to the first step.

*Private Members' Business*

Communities across the country have been affected, whether through higher rates of cancer and other diseases or through the destruction of local habitats and natural environments. At the end of the day, we have to address those environmental impacts so that the quality of life for these communities going forward, after years of disproportionate impacts, starts to change.

I know my time is coming to an end, so I want to circle back to the idea of women. I think there is a really important role for them to play. The member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, the member for Victoria and I have been involved in this process, as have others. As women, we are the ones who notice things first. We are the observers, often in silence, of the damage being caused around us. We know when things are off. We know when someone is not okay. We know when someone's health has been compromised because we have watched it from generation to generation.

To each of the women who were part of the journey for Bill C-226, including Dr. Ingrid Waldron, we have heard the journey to get to this point. The passing of this legislation today is really about the work of the women of these communities who have been fighting for the health of their communities, the health of their families, the health of their children and the health of the future so they can promise their children and generations going forward a safer and cleaner environment. Frankly, there is no other option than to push forward and contemplate these things.

In answer to my colleague in an earlier debate who said we will not get this done, I will share something that comes from my own tradition. We say, "It is not upon you to build the kingdom, but it is your responsibility to begin the work." Women have been doing the work on this, from our friend Lenore Zann to those who are here today to the women of the many indigenous and racialized communities across this country who care about the future and health of generations to come. By putting this into law, we are acknowledging their work and putting a process into place.

• (1835)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to join this debate on Bill C-226, which was introduced by the leader of the Green Party. I believe she once again holds what I would call a historic title, one she deserves. She took a few breaks during her career and her party has taken a few breaks, but I think that everyone recognizes that the leader of the Green Party, the member from British Columbia, is the embodiment of the Green Party across Canada.

The title of the bill is an act respecting the development of a national strategy to assess, prevent and address environmental racism and to advance environmental justice.

I want to set the record straight right away. We are all in favour of fighting against racism. Racism is a scourge, a problem, a cancer in all societies of the world. We need to address it. We are also all striving for greater justice, a better balance and better opportunities for everyone in society. Anytime we have been in office and have had the pleasure and good fortune of honouring people's trust, we have always focused on and achieved those objectives, while recognizing that in some ways this is a never-ending battle, because we must always strive for greater justice.

We recognize that climate change exists, that it is the result of human activity, and that, for this reason, humans must invest in reducing the impact of climate change. Of course, we also recognize that the right to live in a healthy environment must exist. In fact, this is reflected in Bill S-5.

The take-away from what I just said is that we all agree on the goals: striving for less racism and more justice, addressing climate change and ensuring we live in a healthy environment. The path we are proposing to get there, however, is quite different and, from our perspective, far more realistic and responsible.

I say this because for the past eight years, the Liberals have been governing by spending a lot of time lecturing everyone about climate change. They have been insulting us at every turn, as if we have done absolutely nothing. However, under our watch, the energy sector, for one, saw greenhouse gas emissions drop by 2.2%.

The government certainly enjoys lecturing others on the environment, but what has it actually accomplished over the past eight years? The news is not good. It did not achieve its targets, except recently and only because the Canadian economy, like the global economy, slowed down during the COVID-19 crisis. That is why emissions fell. Under their stewardship, the Liberals never managed to meet any targets whatsoever.

Need I remind anyone that they were very proud to say, back in 2018, when signing the Paris accord with 195 other countries, that Canada would be a leader?

I clearly remember the founder of Equiterre, now Minister of Environment and Climate Change, saying that he was finally proud to be Canadian because the Canadian government was going to take action. Unfortunately, the Canada of this Liberal government is not one of the 13 or 14 countries that hit the Paris targets.

It was quite a damning assessment to get during the recent COP in Egypt, which, as we know, is an ideal place to talk about climate change and bring the world together. Where did Canada rank? It is 58th out of 63 countries. The UN ranked 63 countries. After eight years under the Liberal government, what is Canada's rank? It is 58th out of 63.

In a lecture-giving contest, the Liberals would most certainly rank first. In terms of achievements, however, they are 58th out of 63. That is their record and their signature. The Conservatives—who are attacked daily by these people on the environment—are not the ones saying this. No, it is the UN, which made a neutral, objective and, above all, non-partisan scientific observation. What result has this Liberal government obtained for Canada? It is 58th out of 63.

*Private Members' Business*

What is their magical solution? They tax. According to them, taxation will reduce pollution. It does not work that way. Pollution has increased on their watch. The Conservatives' approach is completely different. Our approach to climate change has four basic pillars, which I will explain. The first is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by investing in high-tech solutions through favourable tax policies.

• (1840)

The people who emit pollution know why and how they emit it, and they are the ones who can lower emissions, because the objective is always the same: to reduce pollution. It is not to meet numbers and percentages pulled out of thin air. It is to reduce pollution.

[*English*]

Yes, we have to reduce it. When will we achieve a great reduction? Will it be this year? What will we do on January 1? We have to continue. It is a never-ending story. A government led by the member for Carleton, a Conservative government, would address it correctly with concrete solutions based on new technology.

The second pillar is “green light to green energy”: no more red tape, no more paperwork. We are fast-tracking the green light project, green light to green energy. This is exactly what we want.

[*Translation*]

I will give the following example. The current Government of Quebec, which was re-elected with a strong majority, is pondering the possibility of creating new hydroelectric dams. If, by chance, that is what it wants to do, we will respect the Government of Quebec's will to generate electricity with new dams. Contrary to the legislation passed by the Liberals here, we will not conduct a second environmental review of the project like they want to do. We think that the experts in Quebec are capable of assessing the environmental impact. There is no basis to assume that the people in Ottawa are better than the people in Quebec, yet that is exactly what the Liberals want to do. We will use the accelerated process and will not repeat what others have already done. We will give the green light to green energy.

That brings us to the third pillar. Let us be proud of being Canadian when it comes to the environment. We have here, in our country, a considerable amount of expertise in reducing greenhouse gas emissions when it comes, for example, to traditional energy, nuclear energy, hydroelectricity, solar energy and wind energy. Let us be proud of being Canadian. Let us export our expertise. Let us always be the first to defend Canadian energy.

As a Quebecker, I, like everyone else, saw that a report from the school of business Hautes Études Commerciales found that, last year, Quebeckers consumed 18 billion litres of gasoline. I do not see that as positive or negative; it is simply a statement of fact. What bothers me is that 47% of that energy comes from the United States and 53% of it comes from Canada. Canada is a producer, so why do we have to send billions of dollars to Texas and Louisiana? I have nothing against Texas and Louisiana, but I know that neither of those states contributes to equalization. I checked this morning, but perhaps things have changed since then.

Finally, the fourth pillar, which is at the core of all of this and the foundation on which everything must be built, is first nations. We need to work together with first nations to make them partners in our country's major environmental and economic prosperity projects.

About a month and a half ago, in Vancouver, our leader, the member for Carleton, launched a broad, positive consultation with first nations. That is the key to the solution. We must partner with the first nations that contribute to and approve these major environmental projects, which are needed to tackle the challenges of climate change. It has to be done in partnership with first nations.

That is why we believe that the best way to combat racism is to partner with first nations, who were subjected to racism in the past under horrible circumstances, to the great shame of our country.

Members will recall that, in June 2008, the then prime minister, the Right Hon. Stephen Harper, acknowledged the terrible wrongs that the Canadian government had committed against first nations over the course of more than 100 years at residential schools by delivering an apology in this place. That was the right thing to do. Now, it is in the past. The future must be built on prosperity, and we must put an end to racism, which is unacceptable.

There is no clear definition of environmental racism in my colleague's bill, nor is there any mention of the economic impact that it might have. Overall, we believe in what the member is proposing. Yes, we need to fight racism; yes, we need to advance justice; yes, we need to address climate change; yes, we need to live in a healthy environment, but the path proposed by the member is not the path we believe needs to be taken. What we want are concrete, immediate, realistic and responsible solutions with a real impact on the fight against climate change.

• (1845)

**Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I commend and thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for her hard work and her abiding passion. She is the epitome of environmental activism. We do not always agree, but I welcome her contributions.

The French Revolution introduced the concepts of liberty and equality and, in its wake, started a movement in support of those concepts. Since the liberties of some groups sometimes clashed with the liberties of others, there was inevitably a reckoning around the imbalance that was created among the various parties, an imbalance that led to inequality.

There is no doubt that the federal government has a responsibility to the people of Canada. Some citizens experience inequalities in their relationship with the environment. While we recognize that inequalities do exist, we cannot at this point conclude that these inequalities are attributable to race alone.

*Private Members' Business*

The Bloc Québécois supports the intention expressed in the title and preamble of Bill C-226, a bill that seeks to advance environmental justice. If Parliament is to pass new legislation, we believe that the concept of environmental justice must be the main subject or central concept, so to speak.

The living conditions that some individuals and communities in Canada find themselves in—and I am thinking here of drinking water, for one—are unacceptable. Governments must live up to their responsibilities in that regard. That is why we think that the House is justified in expressing its desire to act against the environmental inequality and discrimination covered in Bill C-226 and why we think that it should study these phenomena in greater depth in order to understand the mechanisms and explore possible solutions.

I would now like to talk about three assumptions.

The first is that, if Parliament is to pass a new law, we believe that the concept of environmental justice must be the main subject and central concept, the foundation on which we build, the starting point.

Second, there is no doubt that the federal government has a responsibility to certain populations in Canada who are facing inequalities in their relationship with the environment.

Third, the living conditions that some individuals and communities in Canada find themselves in, including their access to drinking water, are unacceptable, and governments need to live up to their responsibilities.

Before I talk about environmental justice, it is important to talk about justice itself. What is justice? Although everyone talks about justice, it is not an easy concept to understand or define. Is justice equality? Is it equivalency? Is it legality? Is it equity? What is justice?

To learn about and understand a concept, there is nothing like a bit of exploration to figure out what we are talking about. The concept of comprehension is interesting in and of itself. The roots of the word are *cum* and *prehendere*, which means “grasp the whole”. Comprehending means grasping the whole.

In a debate like this, we cannot have tunnel vision or a partial vision of the whole. Equality means we are all the same. Equivalence means we are all equal. Legality implies conforming to a standard. What do we do when there are no standards? The reason for our debate today is to determine whether there will be a standard.

In the absence of guidance, what we need to strive for is equity. Equity is the fair assessment of what each individual should get. I would add that it is the fair assessment of what each individual should get, but without letting ideology get in the way. Equity is a more perfect form of justice because it considers exceptions. When we introduce a rule or a law, we are essentially drawing a straight line between two points. However, by drawing a straight line, we are excluding people who are near the line, but not on the line. As a result, they are excluded often. Equity adapts in order to do justice to the greatest number of people, to do justice to everyone.

• (1850)

This bill strikes a good balance and includes some compensation. Our objective should be to ensure that Bill C-226 provides equity to all and does justice to all.

Before concluding, I would like to flag three major problems with Bill C-226.

First, the bill will probably not have any significant impact on the populations affected by pollution that the bill's proponents say they want to help. We are skeptical.

Second, the proposed pan-Canadian approach is not in line with Quebec's reality and goes against the clearly expressed will of Quebec's National Assembly.

Third, Bill C-226 focuses less on advancing real environmental justice and more on introducing the concept of environmental racism into Canadian discourse and law to secure an ideological victory in order to serve a cause.

In conclusion, I will reiterate what was said by my esteemed and irreplaceable colleague from Mirabel, whose community is going through a disastrous situation with respect to environmental injustice. His riding includes the neighbouring municipalities of Oka and Kanesatake, where the tension could be cut with a knife.

There is a recycling company that is depositing toxic and hazardous materials, or allowing them to be deposited, in a landfill located on indigenous territory, yet the federal government is not doing a thing about it. It is not lifting a finger. By failing to take action, Ottawa is allowing the residents of the nearby municipalities of Oka, Saint-Placide and Saint-Benoît in Mirabel to be called racist for complaining about the landfill located on indigenous territory, when they, too, are victims of this inaction. Residents are legitimately afraid to drink the water or to use it for their crops. The situation is serious.

In this case, we need to put things in perspective and not call this environmental racism when it basically boils down to inaction and deliberate indifference on the part of the federal government and the RCMP. I mention the RCMP because the media has repeatedly reported and proved that Kanesatake is controlled by criminal groups and that the band council is not taking action.

This is a clear case of environmental injustice, and the federal government already has the means to act in this matter. The people of Oka are entitled to clean drinking water too. Something needs to be done soon.

[English]

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to be here on the unceded territory of the Algonquin and Anishinabe people and to have the opportunity to talk a bit about this very important issue.

First, I want to thank Dr. Ingrid Waldron for her tireless work on this file. When it comes to addressing environmental racism, she has been a strong advocate. We would not be discussing this bill today if it were not for her work and the work of other amazing advocates. People who have shared their lived experiences are doing incredible work to address these issues.

*Private Members' Business*

I also want to thank my colleague, the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, not only for bringing this private member's bill forward but also for being a champion on environmental racism. I want to acknowledge former MP Lenore Zann for presenting this bill in the last Parliament and for her work and presentation of a similar bill in the Nova Scotia Legislature.

It is important to reiterate that this work comes from dedicated activists, researchers and advocates. I am incredibly grateful for their dedication and the knowledge they continue to share.

I want to touch on an environmental disaster that is currently unravelling. Since May 2022, Imperial Oil has been covering up spillage in an oil sands tailings pond site, where 5.3 million litres of water have spilled out of the tailings pond, leaking into the forest, lake and rivers nearby. For perspective, that is about twice the volume of an Olympic-size swimming pool of toxic water.

For months, members of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation have been hunting in these forests, fishing in these waters, breathing the air and harvesting food from this area without knowing that there were dangerous toxins. Chief Allan Adam has said, "Had this happened south of Calgary or right in Calgary, they probably would have notified everybody. It probably would shut down all the water systems...and they probably would have fixed the problem a lot quicker".

I find it appalling that the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, along with other first nations and Métis nations, were kept in the dark while an oil company knowingly polluted their land and waters. I believe that Chief Adam was correct in his assessment that this would not have happened in a major city. I want all members in this chamber to ask themselves if they could see this happening in Calgary, Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver or even Victoria. We all know that it would not, so why is it happening in indigenous communities?

Why is it that rich CEOs think they can get away with polluting indigenous lands and profiting from it? It is because they know that governments will let them. This was clear just a few weeks ago when Liberals and Conservatives teamed up in the environment committee and voted to delete the words "tailings ponds" from the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

The situation happening in northern Alberta is shocking, but it is familiar to many communities. In fact, it has been an ongoing theme in Canada's history. Africville, Nova Scotia, was a community of primarily Black residents that existed there from the early 1800s to the 1960s. Africville was not only denied amenities but also forced to deal with hazardous infrastructure. A dump was placed there, along with an infectious disease hospital. In the 1970s, the Nova Scotian government forced the relocation of the people of Africville.

Chemical Valley is another example. The area is home to 40% of Canada's chemical industry. The pollution from this industry impacts everyone in the surrounding area, but especially the people of Aamjiwnaang. Aamjiwnaang First Nation is dealing with things like skewed sex ratios, where there are more boys being born than girls. There are significantly higher hospitalization rates. There are higher rates of asthma, heart disease, high blood pressure and

chronic headaches. How can we expect people in communities like Aamjiwnaang First Nation to live in dignity when they are forced to deal with the devastating health consequences of environmental racism?

● (1855)

I was so disappointed that the government voted down multiple amendments to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act asked for by the Aamjiwnaang First Nation for enforceable air quality standards. Fifteen thousand people die in Canada each year because of air quality issues, and this was a key request.

I also want to share the words of Eddy Charlie, an indigenous residential school survivor and advocate in my riding, who raised the issue of the Crofton mill using the water from the Cowichan River: "For thousands of years the Cowichan people have relied on fish foods from the Cowichan river and the animals like deer, wolves, cougars and bears—to keep the forest around the rivers healthy. When predators hunt they take their kills into the forests and provide food for the plants and they grow strong. When wolves and cougars or bears stop going to the river the forests suffer. The mill in Crofton has for years lowered the river so much that salmon are no longer returning to their natural spawning grounds." He said, "Please get someone from the House of Commons to address this. *Huy ch qu.*"

We need to listen to Eddy, and to other indigenous voices. I have spoken to others who have expressed concerns around logging in the area around the Cowichan River. When it comes to indigenous people's relationship to their land, air and water, the reality is that environmental racism continues to impact communities, and often their voices are not heard by policy-makers.

While this bill is an important first step, we also need an office of environmental justice, with funding for impacted communities. We need enforcement of environmental regulations. For decades, first nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, as well as Black and Brown communities, have been outspoken about how their rights have been violated, how they face higher rates of illness due to pollution, and how their voices have been ignored.

This bill is a small step, acknowledging the problems we face and committing to a national action plan. I hope and I urge my fellow members of Parliament to support this important step.

● (1900)

**The Deputy Speaker:** If I am to recognize the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, it would be for her right of reply.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.



*Adjournment Proceedings*

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, it is good to have a right of reply when I started the speech by saying I was quite sure I would forget someone if I tried to thank all the people who have helped the bill. I also want to make sure to thank the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis, who was the seconder on the day this bill came forward for first reading, back in February 2022.

I also want to thank my colleague and friend, the member for Victoria, for reminding me of the suffering. I visited Sarnia, and I remember standing with the people of Aamjiwnaang First Nation. Their burial ground is behind barbed wire and fencing, because on all sides are the refineries and the pesticides and the chemical plants. Also, for the non-indigenous people of those neighbourhoods, it is not uncommon, and the mayor complains about it from time to time, to suddenly have “shelter in place” warnings. People have to go into their homes and close all the windows, because outdoors is no longer safe.

There are so many stories here. I hope that we get the bill through, that we get it through the other place and that it gets royal assent before another election. Dates are uncertain as to future elections. It would dash the hopes of so many people if we do not see this through. When it goes to the other place, I will be very grateful. I am not sure what the protocol is for thanking the senator who will be the sponsor in the next place. To avoid any protocol problems, I will wait until that senator stands in the other place to take control of the bill at first reading there. We have strong support in the Senate for this bill, but we also know the other place can find its own routes and sometimes things are not navigated as smoothly as we might want, not that everything runs smoothly every moment here.

I am deeply grateful to my colleagues, very grateful for what I hope will be a strong vote of support. At this point, what I mostly want to say is that this is the work of many hands. Earlier, I used the metaphor of midwives. There are many who have helped, and we hope that there will be a delivery of a piece of legislation that is not a bumper sticker, that is not a one-day wonder, but that actually makes change.

[*Translation*]

We need to make serious, radical changes in our environmental policies in order to create an environmental justice system. That is the goal of our efforts here today.

[*English*]

I still hold out hope that those who said they would not vote for the bill might change their minds. In any case, we have done good work here today and I thank all members.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The question is on the motion.

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

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

• (1905)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, 2022, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, March 29, at the expiry of time provided for Oral Questions.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this adjournment debate tonight arises from a question I asked regarding the impact of climate disasters on our country and specifically on our municipalities, and how the federal government must step up to help in a significant way.

We are living the effects of climate change because the chemistry of carbon dioxide and the physics of the greenhouse effect are locked in. We are trying, as we must, to reduce our carbon emissions to make sure we can get to net zero as soon as possible. However, even if we got there tomorrow, and it is clear we will not, we would still face the catastrophic fires, record-setting rainfall events, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes and other extreme weather we are now seeing every year. That could go on for centuries, so we must adapt to these changes. They impact our farms, forests and water supplies.

The most immediate impact from extreme weather events is on our built environments, such as homes, businesses, highways and railways, destroying livelihoods and, tragically, sometimes taking lives. Almost by definition, impacts on our built environment are impacts on municipalities, and it therefore falls to municipalities not only to clean up and rebuild after these disasters, but increasingly to plan for the future and build resilient infrastructure. Communities simply cannot do this by themselves. What little capacity they have to raise funds for capital expenditures is quickly swamped by the scale of work that confronts towns and cities after floods and fires.

In 2018, the city of Grand Forks, in my riding, was flooded. After a couple of years of hard work and painful decisions, the city came up with a plan to rebuild in a way that would minimize the chances of a future disaster. That plan was budgeted to cost over \$60 million for a city that regularly raises only about \$4 million in property taxes. Luckily, the Province of British Columbia and the federal government came through with promises to pay most of that. However, in the past five years, costs have continued to climb and the city is still very much stretched to meet the fiscal challenges of that catastrophe.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

The federal government has relied on the disaster mitigation and adaptation fund to provide money to municipalities through the provinces for disaster support. This fund has long been oversubscribed and underfunded. In last fall's national adaptation strategy, the federal government provided a top-up to DMAF, which was welcomed news, but it is still nowhere near enough. There must be more invested in adaptation projects that actually prevent future problems rather than just building back better after disasters. Analysis suggests that every dollar invested in adaptation saves up to \$15 in the future. It is a huge return.

The minister tells me that the government will be providing up to \$5 billion to B.C. after the 2021 atmospheric river event. We have to at least contemplate spending a similar amount in municipalities across the country every year to prevent future damage to infrastructure and livelihoods. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities is calling for the total \$2 billion top-up to DMAF, and long-term stable funding for projects of all sizes. I believe that long-term funding for adaptation must be at least \$2 billion a year. Otherwise, we will continually face enormous cleanup bills that will get larger every year.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will start by saying that Canadians know that climate change is one of the most pressing challenges facing our country and, indeed, the world. We continue to see the devastating effects in communities across the country as we endure fires, floods and severe storms at an increasing rate, as the member mentioned.

It is essential that we do all that we can to anticipate and mitigate disasters related to climate change; limit damage to persons, property and livelihoods; reduce cleanup costs; and get affected communities back on their feet more quickly. The Government of Canada continues to work with our provincial, territorial and indigenous partners to make communities more disaster resilient.

The \$9.2-billion green infrastructure stream of the Government of Canada's investing in Canada infrastructure program is providing support for climate change mitigation, adaptation, resilience, disaster mitigation, and environmental protection. The Canada community-building fund provides permanent indexed funding to provinces and territories, which can, in turn, direct this funding to municipalities to support local infrastructure priorities. The five-year, \$1.5-billion green and inclusive community buildings program will help to construct more community buildings and improve existing ones, while making them more energy efficient and resilient.

In 2018, the Government of Canada launched the disaster mitigation and adaptation fund, which remains a key federal program for resilient infrastructure with a total program envelope of over \$3.8 billion. The fund has, to date, committed \$2.29 billion toward 81 infrastructure projects that directly help communities, such as the member's community, to better prepare for and withstand the potential effects of natural disasters, prevent infrastructure failures and protect Canadians.

Recently, the Government of Canada introduced the country's first national adaptation strategy through the collaborative process with provinces and territories, indigenous partners and private sec-

tor, non-governmental organizations, adaptation experts, and youth. This landmark strategy establishes an overarching division and principles for climate resilience to set our transformational goals, objectives and targets, all which will guide the actions of the government, the private sector, civil society and individuals in Canada.

The historic, whole-of-society approach to climate adaptation includes \$1.6 billion in new federal funding to help protect communities across the country and introduces 84 specific measures to address the effects of climate change. The national strategy provides a framework for resilient infrastructure needs, such as roads, bridges and waste-water treatment.

The result will be healthier communities, enhanced biodiversity, nature conservation and a more climate-resilient economy. It will complement the adaptation work and strategies of provincial, territorial and indigenous partners. We will continue to advance our shared priorities as we work with partners to build a climate-resilient country.

● (1910)

**Mr. Richard Cannings:** Mr. Speaker, the government has been moving in the right direction, but it must show a lot more ambition to really make a difference, and to really help Canadians and Canadian municipalities adapt to these extreme weather events. I will be watching next Tuesday's budget closely to see where the government will be acting and how much priority it will be putting into climate adaptation.

I know it is always hard for governments to make big investments that might not pay off in the current election cycle, but that is what Canada needs from the federal government now. We need these dedicated funds for adaptation projects in every community. It will save money. It will save livelihoods, and it will save lives.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, I would just add that, as the member said, climate change is affecting communities throughout our country. It is important that we work with our provincial, territorial and indigenous partners as we develop strategies for this.

The member pointed out in the first half of his speech that he has seen investment in his community from the federal government and the provincial government. In my community, I have seen investment in shoreline reconstruction along Lake Ontario as a result of increased weather patterns and weather effects.

This is something that the government is seized with. We will continue to work on it, and I look forward, as he does, to future announcements that the government will make, perhaps next week with its budget for 2023.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we are at a critical moment. This week, the IPCC issued a final report, a final warning. It says, in no uncertain terms, that we must act now or it will be too late.

One of the report's authors noted, "The message in terms of urgency...is stop burning fossil fuels as fast as humanly possible." They explain that we are at a crisis point, not because we are lacking some important technology or some important information but because "the sense of urgency has been lacking in the places where the important decisions are made".

In Canada, that place where important decisions are made is here, in the House of Commons. The government lacks the urgency. It lacks the commitment and it lacks the courage to take the action we need.

The Liberals say they are committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, yet they continue to subsidize the fossil fuel industry. They are handing over billions of dollars to rich oil and gas executives.

I continue to call on the government to end subsidies to oil and gas, and instead invest those billions into clean energy, into climate solutions.

In the United States, the Biden administration has committed to spending \$60 billion on clean energy manufacturing. This goes directly into building solar panels, wind turbines and batteries. These are proven solutions.

Climate scientists agree that renewable energies are the best tools we have for reducing our emissions, yet the Liberals are instead giving massive tax breaks to oil and gas companies for unproven technologies that keep the fantasy of increasing oil and gas production alive.

The reality is that the current carbon capture projects in Canada capture only less than 1% of our emissions. The Liberals say that carbon capture technology is one of the many solutions they will use when it comes to fighting the climate crisis, but it happens to be the oil and gas industry's favourite solution. The Liberals' friends at McKinsey have published multiple articles touting CCS as a low-risk piece of the decarbonization puzzle, but according to the IPCC, carbon capture is one of the most expensive and least effective tools.

In fact, the report names wind and solar energy as the most effective solutions for reducing our emissions. If we want to meet our 2030 targets, there is a logical way forward: invest our tax dollars in renewable energy and make the oil and gas industry pay for its own carbon capture and storage.

Experts are already warning that the Liberals' tax credit on carbon capture and storage will be a fossil fuel subsidy, more handouts to an industry making record-breaking profits.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

In a report on fossil fuel subsidies, Canada and Saudi Arabia were named the worst performers, handing out the most money to these companies as they make more profit than they have ever made before.

We have now learned that Saudi Arabia lobbied to elevate the role of carbon removal in the latest UN climate science summary report. We also know that Canada lobbied to emphasize the importance of carbon capture in the last IPCC summary report, which begs the question, why is the Liberal government acting like a petrostate when Canada has a diversified economy?

Why are the Liberals doing the oil and gas lobby's dirty work? Why are they making Canadians pay billions to clean up the oil and gas industry's emissions?

● (1915)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member should know the countless number of initiatives the government has taken with respect to climate change and reducing our carbon footprint. The member should also know that the report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change talked about a portion of that being specifically about carbon capture.

I will read to her the exact quote. It says, "A net-zero energy system...can only be achieved with a broad suite of technologies. Carbon capture, utilisation and storage...is only a group of technologies that contributes to both reducing emissions in key sectors directly and removing CO<sub>2</sub> to balance emissions that are challenging to avoid—a critical part of 'net' zero goals." That is from the report, specifically.

The member should also know, and it is interesting because this did come up in the debate earlier today, that the finance committee did make a recommendation to the government to do exactly what she was saying, which is to reduce the fossil fuel subsidies and to put that money into renewable transition, specifically as it relates to a cleaner environment and a cleaner energy supply.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

When it comes to reducing the fossil fuel subsidies specifically, it might not be as quickly as we would like to see it. In my personal opinion, I might agree with the member more than she thinks, but the reality is that the government has been reducing the amount of fossil fuel subsidies over the year. The problem is that when the NDP members talk about this, they specifically include, in that calculation, money that is being used for abandoned or orphaned wells. The reality of the situation is that, although I would have loved to see the companies that abandoned those wells deal with them, they have not. A lot of them have left, so it becomes society's responsibility to deal with those wells, despite the fact that we let those companies get away with it in years and decades gone by.

When we talk about fossil fuel subsidies, I think it is disingenuous to do what the NDP does and include the money that is being used to deal with orphaned wells in that as a subsidy. If we exclude that, it clearly shows that the subsidies have been declining year after year and are on target to meet what the minister and the department have been proposing for the last number of years.

• (1920)

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Mr. Speaker, even without the orphaned well cleanup, there are billions of dollars being handed out to profitable oil and gas companies every year. The member did not answer my question about why the government is doing the oil and gas lobby's dirty work. Perhaps, since I have the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader here, I will ask another question on another topic.

The recent allegations about foreign interference are incredibly serious. They further erode confidence in our electoral systems, and the Liberals, today, voted against a public inquiry. They do not seem to see the damage they are doing to individuals and also to communities that are at risk of being stigmatized. We need a transparent, independent public inquiry. At this point, it is the only way to get to the bottom of this.

Will the member commit to pushing for a transparent, independent public inquiry?

**The Deputy Speaker:** I know there have been a couple of instances where members have brought in issues and then asked different issues as they come here. We have ruled that we would rather members stick to what they have booked, so I will leave it to the discretion of the hon. parliamentary secretary to answer or not.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, I have no problem answering that question. Notwithstanding that, I appreciate the ruling.

I have been very clear. I said in a speech earlier today in the House that when the issue first came to light, being on the procedure and House affairs committee, I initially asked myself why we are not having a public inquiry. It makes the most sense. However, expert after expert and witness after witness who came before the committee told us the best place to deal with highly classified information is not in the public domain. They full-on said they cannot provide any more information to a public inquiry than they can to that committee because of the sensitivity of the information. It is not the answer I was hoping to hear, but it is an answer that makes sense, and it is an answer that I think warrants consideration.

Having said all of that, the Prime Minister has appointed a special expert, the former governor general David Johnston, to look specifically at this issue. If the former governor general, the expert looking at this, determines the best way forward is a public inquiry, the Prime Minister and this government have said that they will accept that recommendation. We will leave it in the hands of an expert, in the incredibly well-deserved position that the former governor general was given, to make that determination.

## DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

**Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, it is time for the current government to stop the delays and its unexplained reluctance to shine a spotlight on foreign interference. Foreign operatives have been interfering in Canada's political system, in party nomination processes and in election campaigns to place Chinese Communist sympathizers in the provincial legislature and the House of Commons. Media have seen reports indicating that Liberal Party officials and elected representatives have been involved. We are also aware of reports that have involved a member of the federal cabinet.

The situation is not new. The Prime Minister, various cabinet ministers and senior members in the PMO were briefed about foreign actors and individuals who are complicit in illegal activities. However, the response from the Prime Minister has been to deflect this serious issue and delay doing anything.

Now, he has finally taken some action by appointing a special rapporteur to investigate foreign interference. However, it is not exactly clear what investigatory powers have been given to Mr. Johnston. While an individual of impeccable character, perhaps with the exception of his bad choice of charitable boards, Mr. Johnston will be handcuffed and saran-wrapped if unable to investigate the inner activities of the Liberal Party's elected and non-elected members. It would be unimaginable for the special rapporteur to have no authority to fully investigate the stated primary beneficiary of foreign interference: the Liberal Party of Canada. Why, then, has there been such reluctance by the Prime Minister to have a full independent public inquiry?

In other countries, there would not be a special rapporteur. There would be a special prosecutor who would have full investigatory powers, including interviewing political party members, subpoena powers and powers to examine documents.

Why is the government allowing Canada to become a doormat for foreign powers? Why is it extending protection to those who have deliberately interfered in our country's democratic processes? How is it possible for the Prime Minister to turn a blind eye to thugs who have intimidated and threatened Canadian citizens of Chinese heritage in the greater Vancouver and greater Toronto areas? How can the government ignore shady and undeclared financial contributors and buses of instant just-add-water Liberal nomination supporters and paid volunteers to assist China's chosen candidates to get nominated and elected to all levels of government?

*Adjournment Proceedings*

The goals of the foreign operatives are simple: Their first goal is to infiltrate political parties, assisting selected candidates to obtain elected positions from which they could support Beijing's interests. Their second goal is to defeat opposition nomination candidates and/or elected representatives who are not favourable to Communist China, or prevent them from being elected.

Is the Prime Minister's continuing reluctance to do something in the face of such mounting evidence a result of being worried about what may come out of a full inquiry? Perhaps he is troubled by the growing suspicions being cast on cabinet, caucus and party members. What is worrying our Prime Minister? What has made him turn a long blind eye? Would not the mounting evidence and allegations of foreign interference provide valid concerns to the Prime Minister? Is he worried about political fallout from the interference and his reluctance to do something? Is he worried that others in his party will be implicated?

Obviously, one must protect Canada's intelligence service networks and their methods of acquiring information, but when the network starts leaking information to the media about foreign interference, it kind of suggests they have lost faith in their political masters and their ability to do something about foreign interference.

• (1925)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member should try to educate himself on the difference between evidence and allegations.

The member used the term "mounting evidence". Those were his words. There is no evidence to date. As a matter of fact, the RCMP has said that it does not have any active investigations ongoing. What there have been are allegations. If the member is unaware of the difference between allegations, information and intelligence versus evidence, he should really take the time to educate himself on that.

What I think is even more remarkable about the member's speech is the massive misunderstanding of the reality of the situation when he opened his speech by saying that the government has done virtually nothing. That is categorically false. As a matter of fact, this government is the only government that has ever done anything on this issue.

I will inform the member what we have done since 2015. We introduced Bill C-76, which was a bill that tightened up financing rules and tightened up on opportunities for foreign interference specifically. The Conservatives, who this member seems to be cozying up a lot to lately, actually voted against that.

The other thing we did was install a special panel of experts who have the ability to monitor, in real time, what is going on during a writ period. They have the opportunity to assess, make decisions, inform parties, gather intelligence from political parties and take action when necessary. That is a panel that never existed before. Most importantly, after the election is over, a third party prepares a report based on the panel's information. That third party concluded, both after the 2019 and 2021 election, that the elections were done in a free, fair, open and transparent manner and were not influenced by foreign interference.

Finally, on the member's issue about the public inquiry. Perhaps the member did not hear my answer to the impromptu question from the NDP member just before him, but I laid it out very clearly. On the experts that the member gave a lot of credit to in his speech, and he sang the praises of CSIS saying that we have to respect its processes, I can tell him that CSIS came to the PROC committee and specifically told us that the place to do this is not in a public inquiry. We have the established organizations, such as NSICOP, which is another thing this government put together, that specifically looks at, and has the ability for parliamentary oversight over, highly classified information. That is the best place that we were told it should go.

However, notwithstanding that, and understanding the incredible position and incredible attention that Canadians are seized with on this issue, the Prime Minister went a step further and said that even though our experts were telling us that a public inquiry is not the best place, we understand that we need to put this in a non-partisan environment and will allow a special expert, the former governor general David Johnston, to determine what the best path forward is. As I said to the previous member, if it is determined that the best way forward is through a public inquiry, the Prime Minister has already said that we will accept that recommendation and proceed with it based on his advice.

• (1930)

**Mr. Kevin Vuong:** Mr. Speaker, there is a party line being towed here. The problem is, what party line, the Liberal Party's or the Communist Party of China's?

I call upon the government to step up and provide strong investigatory powers through the special rapporteur so that Mr. Johnston can unearth names and evidence of foreign interference in Canada, especially in Vancouver and Toronto during the last two elections.

Canadians deserve and demand to know what is going on. They want to see concrete action taken to protect our political and democratic processes and institutions from foreign manipulation.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, if I understood that member correctly, he just questioned whether I was towing a Liberal Party line or a Communist Party of China line.

My response to that member is this: Let us go outside and he can say that to me in public where he does not have the parliamentary privilege he has in this room.

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, pursuant to order made on Friday, March 10, the House stands adjourned until Monday next at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:32 p.m.)

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## APPENDIX

[English]

Address  
of  
The Honourable Joe Biden  
President of the United States of America  
to  
Both Houses of Parliament  
in the  
House of Commons Chamber,  
Ottawa  
on Friday, March 24, 2023

*The Honourable Joe Biden was welcomed by the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, by the Honourable George J. Furey, Speaker of the Senate, and by the Honourable Anthony Rota, Speaker of the House of Commons.*

**Hon. Anthony Rota (Speaker of the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. President, Dr. Biden, welcome to Canada and the House of Commons.

[Translation]

Prime Minister, Speaker Furey, party leaders, honourable parliamentarians, Your Excellencies and dear guests, allow me to welcome you to this extraordinary event.

[English]

On behalf of my colleagues, we are honoured by your visit. As we come together under one roof, we take a moment to celebrate the friendship and the shared values of our countries. We celebrate our people and the history of co-operation between Canada and the United States.

A prime example of this co-operation can be seen in my hometown, North Bay, in the riding of Nipissing—Timiskaming, where Canadian and American military personnel work side by side at NORAD to ensure our safety by patrolling the skies of North America. NORAD is proof that when Canadians and Americans venture to undertake a mission together, we accomplish great things and, more importantly, our great friendship grows. This visit reminds us all that we must never take our friendship, this co-operation and these shared values for granted.

[Translation]

I would now like to invite the right hon. Prime Minister to say a few words.

[English]

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Today, we welcome to our Parliament the 46th President of the United States of America, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

Mr. President, you are a true friend to Canada, and that matters more than ever in this consequential moment. Make no mistake: These are serious times. When the consequences of a warming planet are intersecting with the aftermath of a global pandemic, when an unjustifiable war in Europe has shocked the conscience of the world and exposed the vulnerability of energy markets and supply chains, when families are facing the pressures of inflation and struggling with affordability, when citizens around the world feel anxious about their future and their kids' futures, Mr. President, as it should be, our two nations stand united in this moment, finding solutions side by side.

[Translation]

We will continue to work together to create jobs, and build healthier and more sustainable economies. The economy, the environment and security are interwoven, and that has never been more clear.

[English]

It has never been more clear that everything is interwoven: economic policy is climate policy is security policy. People need us to think strategically and act with urgency, and that is exactly what brings us together today.

Mr. President, throughout our history, Canada and the United States, as friends and allies, have faced many challenges together: pandemics, recessions and wars. Here in the House, in September 1939, members of Parliament debated going to war. A few years later, Canadian and American soldiers were fighting against fascism, shoulder to shoulder. There are battlefields around the world where our soldiers lay in cemeteries, shoulder to shoulder.

War has now returned to Europe. As you well know, Mr. President, Canada will continue to stand strong with Ukraine with whatever it takes. Together, both of us are partners that Ukraine and the world can count on. Since Putin launched his brutal invasion, like you, Canada has provided significant military support. In our case, artillery, ammunition, armour and tanks. From 2015 to today, with Operation Unifier, the Canadian Armed Forces trained the brave members of the Ukrainian military, about 35,000 of them, and counting.

With partners and allies, we have both used sanctions and punitive economic measures to continue to deplete the Kremlin's war chest. After a terrifying spring, a violent summer and fall, and an exhausting winter, Ukraine still stands.

[*Translation*]

One year ago, our friend President Zelenskyy addressed this House to thank us for having supported him from the start. Today, together, we reiterate our message to President Zelenskyy and to Ukrainians: We remain by your side.

We will ensure the security of Canadians and Americans by defending democracies and the international rules-based order. Vladimir Putin underestimated the determination of Europe and NATO allies. He underestimated the strength and courage of Ukrainians and their will to defend their language, culture and homeland.

[*English*]

Mr. President, today I want to introduce you to Natalia, who I met just last week. Natalia arrived in Canada from Ukraine more than 10 years ago. She is safe here with her family, but she still has a lot of loved ones in Ukraine. Every time she hangs up after speaking with a cousin or a friend, she feels a twinge in her heart wondering if this conversation might be their last.

Mr. President, we cannot and will not let Natalia's loved ones down. The Ukrainian people are counting on us. We must stand shoulder to shoulder with Ukraine with as much as it takes, for as long as it takes. I bring up Natalia now, not just because of what is happening over in Ukraine as we speak, but also because she is key to what we are building here today and tomorrow.

[*Translation*]

I met Natalia last week in Nova Scotia where she currently lives near Bridgewater, a small town of 9,000 people. For over 50 years now, the Michelin tire factory in Bridgewater has been one of the most productive in the world. Thanks to the strength of its workers, Michelin has just announced major investments to modernize its facilities to meet the growing need for electric vehicles. Good, stable jobs like the ones in this factory are really important for people like Natalia and her family. They are also important for our communities, be they large or small.

[*English*]

When I was in Nova Scotia, meeting with Natalia and others, I met third-generation tire workers at that Michelin plant, and because of the work we are doing together and the investments we are making for the future, that community will have jobs for generations more to come. That does not just impact them in Bridgewater; it means there will continue to be vans delivering food to grocery stores in California and trucks delivering medical supplies to hospitals in Pennsylvania that roll on tires made in Nova Scotia, as it should be.

Mr. President, in 1987, Ronald Reagan addressed this House in a final big push toward the first Canada-U.S. free trade agreement. He pointed out that the U.S.-Canada border was a meeting place, rather than a dividing line. More than 30 years later, our border is no longer just the place where we meet each other; it is the place where we will meet the moment. It is the place where we will meet the future, a future not only with good jobs, but good, stable careers for generations to come.

We are also joined today by steelworkers from Dofasco in Hamilton. One of them is Neil. Neil's mother worked at Dofasco in the seventies. His father worked in the finishing steel area for 37 years. Now, with the investments we have made to help Dofasco phase out coal-fired steelmaking in favour of electric arc, Neil's kids, grandkids and great-grandkids will be able to choose careers making the clean steel the world needs to build EVs, buildings and bridges. Clean steel will be the backbone for manufacturing in the future, and workers like Neil, from generations past to generations future, will continue to be at the heart of the economy we are building for the middle class.

Economic policy is climate policy is security policy. With growing competition, including from an increasingly assertive China, there is no doubt why it matters that we turn to each other now to build up a North American market on everything from semiconductors to solar panel batteries.

Mr. President, with the Inflation Reduction Act, you are creating the jobs of today and tomorrow for the middle class in America. This also means more clients for Canadian critical minerals processors, for our clean-energy innovators, for our integrated auto workers, for our farmers, growers and producers, and so many others. It is an example of how we can make progress at home and as partners.

[*Translation*]

To support good jobs in the economy of the future, Canada has one of the cleanest electricity grids in the world. Approximately 83% of our electricity is already carbon neutral, and we are on track to reach 100% by 2035. To achieve that goal, we are working with local communities, including on indigenous-led projects across the country, be it for solar panels or wind turbines. All of our clean energy exports go to the United States. Across the globe, we need to accelerate our transition to renewable energy.

This week, the United Nations panel on climate change published a new report indicating that our planet will hit a critical global warming threshold in the next decade. This means more heat waves, more droughts, more floods and more endangered species.

[*English*]

When I think of the families I met on the Atlantic coast last fall who saw their houses being torn to pieces by hurricane Fiona, when I think of the people who live in B.C. whose town burned because of the wildfire during a record-breaking heat wave, I know that responsible leadership means doing more to fight climate change and more to protect families. Climate policy is economic policy is security policy.

[*Translation*]

As leaders, keeping people safe is our priority. Not only do we need to continue our work, but we need to move and to do it faster.

I know that you agree, Mr. President. I remember the discussion that you and I had in 2016 on the fight against climate change, during your visit to Canada as vice president. You had met with the premiers of the provinces and territories, as well as with indigenous leaders. That same day, during the first ministers' meeting, our government adopted the pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change, the cornerstone of which was pollution pricing across the country. I am very pleased, then, to welcome you back today, knowing that environmental protection remains one of your top priorities.

[*English*]

Mr. President, what makes this such a moment of consequence is that our world, our way of living, is facing multiple threats at the same time. That is why security policy is climate policy is economic policy, because climate change, inflation, war, energy shortages but also foreign interference, misinformation and disinformation, and constant attacks on our values and institutions all compound.

Democracies like ours, just like democracies around the world, did not happen by accident and will not continue without effort.

[*Translation*]

We need to be there for each other. We must continue to stand up against authoritarian threats, both at home and abroad, and continue to defend what is just.

[*English*]

This is not a moment to compromise on our values. This is a moment to double down on them. We must continue to show resilience, perseverance and strength.

Resilience, perseverance and strength, these are words that perfectly describe two men who are here with us today, Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor.

Mr. President, when the plane transporting the two Michaels landed on Canadian soil after their more than 1,000 days of arbitrary detention in China, Canadians proved that resilience, perseverance and strength are more than just lofty ideals. They are commitments that drive our actions and shape our character.

Canada got the two Michaels home, and we did it the right way, not just by respecting the rule of law but by anchoring ourselves to it. When under great pressure to undermine our commitment to our agreements and treaties, and to the rule of law, we did not capitulate. We did not abandon our values. We doubled down and we rallied our allies against arbitrary detention, and through that, with your support and your leadership, Mr. President, the rule of law prevailed and the Michaels came home.

[*Translation*]

With our allies and partners, Canadians and Americans must remain a source of inspiration to the rest of the world, but, above all, we must continue our work. We need to make the necessary efforts

every day to build a better future for people like Neil and Natalia, and for their children and their grandchildren.

[*English*]

We must and we will meet this moment.

Mr. President, in your most recent powerful state of the union address, you encouraged the American people to stay optimistic, hopeful and forward-looking. This is a vision that Canadians share too. Therefore, let us keep working hard, and together, let us continue to build a better future for our people.

Welcome to Canada, my friend.

Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States of America, Joe Biden.

**Hon. Joseph Biden, Jr. (President of the United States of America):** Good afternoon. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

*Bonjour, Canada.* I must tell you that I took four years of French in school. The first time I attempted to make a speech in French, I was laughed at, so that is as good as I can get. Seriously, thank you very, very much.

Speaker of the House of Commons, Speaker of the Senate, members of Parliament, thank you for the very kind welcome to my wife and me.

Prime Minister Trudeau, you were my first meeting with a foreign leader just one month after my presidency, during the hardest days of COVID-19. We had to make the visit virtual, but since then we have been all over the world taking on some of the toughest issues our nations have faced in a very long time. I want to thank you for your partnership and for your personal friendship. I thank you very much. Jill and I are grateful for the hospitality you and Sophie have shown us.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am honoured to have the opportunity to hold on to a tradition, carried out by so many of my predecessors, of addressing the hallowed halls of the Canadian democracy, although this is a different hall. You have done a hell of a job. This is really very beautiful.

This is a custom that speaks to the closeness of our relationship. Americans and Canadians are two people, two countries, in my view, sharing one heart. It is a personal connection. No two nations on earth are bound by such close ties of friendship, family, commerce and culture. Our labour unions cross borders, as do our sports leagues: baseball, basketball, hockey.

Listen to this: hockey. I have to say I like your teams, except the Leafs. I will tell you why. They beat the Flyers back in January, and that is why. I married a Philly girl. If I did not say that, I would be sleeping alone, and fellows, I like you, but not that much.



It can be easy to take a partnership between Canada and the United States as a given, but when you stop to think about it, it is really a wonder. It is a 5,552-mile-long border, more than 8,800 kilometres, defined by peaceful commerce and trading relationships that measure more than \$2.5 billion a day. Every day, hundreds of thousands of people cross the borders going to the north and south to work or just to visit, knowing they will find a warm welcome on the other side of the border.

Americans love Canadians, and that is not hyperbole. It is a data-driven fact. Earlier this week, the Gallup poll did a new poll showing American opinions on different countries in the world. This is a fact: Canada ranked at the very top, with an 88% favourable rating among Americans, up from 87% the year before. I take credit for that one point.

I suspect every politician in this room would do a hell of a lot to get those kinds of numbers. However, there is a reason for it. The same fundamental aspirations reverberate across both our nations, from the Atlantic to the Pacific: to live in freedom, and not just freedom but to live in freedom with dignity; to relentlessly pursue the possibilities of tomorrow; and to leave our children and our grandchildren a future that is better because of our efforts, those of the people in this room and in a similar room in the United States.

President Kennedy said, when he spoke here in 1961, “ours is the unity of equal and independent nations, co-tenants of the same continent, heirs of the same legacy, and fully sovereign associates in the same historic endeavor: to preserve freedom for ourselves and all who wish it.” Through more than a century of that historic endeavour, Canada and the United States have had each other’s backs. In war and in peace, we have been a stronghold of liberty and a safeguard of the fundamental freedoms that literally give our lives meaning. We have gladly stepped into the responsibilities of global leadership, because we understand all that is at risk for Canadians and Americans alike when freedom is under attack anywhere in the world.

Today, our destinies are intertwined and are inseparable, not because of the inevitability of geography, but because it is a choice we have made again and again. The United States chooses to link its future with Canada because we know we will find no better partner, and I mean this from the bottom of my heart, no more reliable ally and no more steady friend, and today I say to you and to all the people of Canada that you will always be able to count on the United States of America. I guarantee it.

Together, we have built a partnership that is an incredible advantage to both our nations. That does not mean we never disagree, as any two countries will do from time to time, but when we disagree, we solve our differences in friendship and goodwill because we both understand our interests are fundamentally aligned.

We stand at this inflection point in history. I had a professor who once explained an inflection point. When you are going down the highway at 60 miles an hour and rapidly turn in one direction five degrees, you never get back on the same path again, but you’re on a different course. The decisions we make in the coming years will determine the course of our world for decades to come. It happens every five or six generations, but we are at that point. Nothing gives

me greater confidence in the future than knowing Canada and the United States stand together still.

Today, I would like to speak a bit about the future, if I may, a future that is ours to seize. I get criticized at home sometimes for saying that. President Obama used to always kid me, because I would always say to him in our private meetings that a country is never more optimistic than its president or its leaders. I have never been more optimistic in my life about our prospects, and I really mean this from the bottom of my heart. We are so well positioned for a future built around our shared responsibilities, prosperity, security and values.

First, it is a future built on shared prosperity, where Canada and the United States continue to anchor the most competitive, prosperous and resilient economic region in the world. That is a fact. Our supply chains are secure and reliable from end to end because we are creating value at every step right here in North America. We are mining critical minerals, manufacturing and packaging the most advanced semiconductors in the world and producing electric vehicles and clean energy technology together. It is a future where we understand that economic success is not in conflict with the rights and dignity of workers or meeting our responsibilities of investing in the climate crisis, but rather that those things depend on us doing that, factually.

Since becoming President, I have been laser-focused on rebuilding the U.S. economy from the bottom up and the middle out. Not a whole lot trickled down from the top down at my dad’s kitchen table. By the way, when the middle class does well, the wealthy do very well. No one gets hurt.

The United States made historic and, to the chagrin of some of our critics in the press, bipartisan investments in infrastructure and innovation that are already bringing together and delivering concrete benefits to the American people. As we implement these legislative achievements, there are enormous opportunities for Canada and the United States to work even more closely together to create good-paying jobs in both our countries.

The Inflation Reduction Act, which was not bipartisan but nonetheless all of a sudden I am finding we have more adherence, represents the single largest commitment in tackling climate change in our history, as a matter of fact, the single largest investment in all of human history, and it is going to spur clean energy investments all over the world. It explicitly includes tax credits for electric vehicles assembled in Canada, recognizing how interconnected our auto industries and our workers are. I am the most pro-union president America has ever had, and I speak to a hell of a lot of Canadian union members. This is a model for future co-operation, with both our nations investing at home to increase the strength of our industrial bases, making sure not only that the products manufactured in North America are manufactured, but that they are the best in the world. We are going to amplify our shared commitment to climate action while growing our economies.

I will just stop for a second to say that when I announced for president, I was always known as one of those kind of green Democrats, and Republicans used to be the same. Well, guess what? I did not announce my environmental plan, and I was getting beat up: "Why is Biden all of a sudden changing?" The reason is that I brought all the unions together and I brought them into the White House, not a joke, because they all said they were going to lose their jobs. I pointed out that every single solitary initiative required to do with the environment creates union jobs, creates thousands of jobs.

For example, I met with the IBEW and pointed out that we were going to build 5,500 electric charging stations. Guess who builds them? It is union workers. We are coordinating a stand for new electric vehicles and charging stations so that Americans and Canadians can continue to easily cross the border without ever hitting a snag in their American- or Canadian-built zero-emissions vehicles. Moreover, we are going to build batteries and technologies that go into those vehicles together.

We have learned the hard way during the pandemic that when we rely on just-in-time supply chains that circle the globe, there are significant vulnerabilities due to disruptions and delays, and it drives up costs here at home, both in Canada and in the United States. However, there is a better way. Our nations are blessed with incredible natural resources. Canada, in particular, has large quantities of critical minerals that are essential for our clean energy future, for the world's clean energy future. I believe we have an incredible opportunity to work together so that Canada and the United States can source and supply, here in North America, everything we need for reliable and resilient supply chains.

Folks, to make our critical mineral supply chain the envy of the world, the United States is making funding available under the Defense Production Act to incentivize American and Canadian companies to responsibly mine and process critical minerals needed for electric vehicles and stationary storage batteries. We are also building integrated supply chains for semiconductors, a critical computer chip that I know was invented in America and we lost control of it; not only control of it, we lost producing them and the power in so much of our daily lives.

The IBM plant in Bromont, Quebec, is the largest semiconductor packaging and testing facility in North America. Chips made in Vermont and upstate New York are shipped to Bromont to be pack-

aged into electronic components, but now Bromont is expanding with the support of the Canadian government.

There is going to be a lot more work to do. Thanks to the bipartisan CHIPS and Science Act that I signed into law last year, companies are breaking ground for new semiconductor plants across the United States, representing billions of dollars in new investments in American high-tech manufacturing: \$12 billion from the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company in Arizona; \$20 billion and counting for Intel in Ohio; and \$100 billion in New York, the single largest investment of its kind ever in the world.

When the chips begin to roll off of these new production lines in America, a lot of them are going to be coming to Canada to be packaged. That is a lot of jobs, good-paying jobs. Today, I am also making available, through the Defense Production Act, \$50 million to incentivize more U.S. and Canadian companies to invest in packaging semiconductors and printed circuit boards.

That brings me to a second pillar of our future, because our shared prosperity is deeply connected to our shared security. The past years have proven that Canada and the United States are not insulated from the challenges that impact the rest of the world. The world needs Canada and the United States working together with our partners around the world to rally strong and effective global action. Nowhere is that more obvious than our united response to Russia's brutal aggression against Ukraine. We have stood together to defend sovereignty, to defend democracy, to defend freedom for ourselves and all who wish it. As I told President Zelenskyy when I visited with him in Kyiv last month, people all over the world are with the brave people of Ukraine. Are you not amazed at the personal bravery they are showing? It is incredible.

I know there is a large Ukrainian diaspora here in Canada, not just the lovely lady we were all introduced to a moment ago, who feel the same way. Canada and the United States, together with a coalition of 50 nations we jointly worked to put together, are making sure Ukraine can defend itself. We are supplying air defence systems, artillery systems, ammunition, armoured vehicles, tanks and so much more. It is tens of billions of dollars so far. Together with our G7 partners, we are imposing a significant cost on Russia as well, denying Russia critical inputs to its war machine. We are independently holding Russia accountable for the war crimes and crimes against humanity that Russia is committing and continues to commit as I speak today.

Canada and America alike have opened their arms to Ukrainian refugees. Our people know well the high price of freedom. Your Peace Tower stands as a testament to the sacrifices of the more than 60,000 brave Canadians who perished in World War I, forever making this nation a champion of liberty. The words of a Canadian poem by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae still call to us from Flanders Fields, echoing their charge through the ages:

To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.

Today, let us once more affirm that we are going to keep that torch of liberty burning brightly and support the Ukrainian people. We will not waiver.

Putin was certain that he would have been able to break NATO by now. He was certain of that, but guess what. His lust for land and power has failed thus far. The Ukrainian people's love of their country is going to prevail. In the face of President Putin's aggression against Ukraine, Canada and the United States are also making clear our commitment to our NATO allies. We will keep our alliance strong and united. We will defend every inch of NATO territory. An attack against one is an attack against all.

As we look forward to the 75th anniversary of NATO next year, Canada and the United States share a responsibility and a commitment to make sure NATO can deter any threat and defend against any aggression from anyone. That is the bedrock of the security of both our nations.

Canada and the United States are not only partners in transatlantic security. We are Pacific nations as well. Earlier this month, the U.S. and Canada held our first Indo-Pacific dialogue to deepen our co-operation in that vital region and promote an Indo-Pacific region that is free and open, prosperous and secure.

We are also an Arctic nation. We both recognize the critical importance of this region to our collective security, and the interests of other nations, all of a sudden, in the Arctic. We are working in close coordination to steward and protect the northern-most reaches of our world. We are American nations, deeply invested in ensuring that the western hemisphere is peaceful, prosperous, democratic and secure. That starts with our commitment to defending our people and our own sovereign territory.

NORAD is the only binational military command in the world, which is yet another way in which our partnership is exceptional. It is an incredible symbol of the faith we have in one another and the trust we place in each other's capabilities. Soon NORAD will have a new next-generation, over-the-horizon radar to enhance our early warning capacity; upgraded undersea surveillance systems; and modernized infrastructure, which is necessary to host the most advanced aircraft. I am looking forward to continuing to work in close partnership with Canada, as we deliver on these needs so that our people can continue to rest soundly knowing NORAD is on the watch.

We are also coordinating closely to take on the human security challenge throughout the region. We are working in partnership with the people of Haiti to try to find ways to provide security and humanitarian assistance, and to help strengthen Haiti's stability.

We are tackling the scourge of synthetic drugs that are devastating Canada and American communities, particularly our young people. Fentanyl is a killer. Almost everyone knows someone who has been affected by this, lost a child or lost a friend. Canada and the United States are working closely with our partner Mexico to attack this problem at every stage, from the precursor chemicals shipped from overseas to the powder, the pills and the traffickers moving into all of our countries. We all know the synthetic opioid epidemic has its roots around the globe, not just here, so today we are announcing a commitment to build a new global coalition of like-minded countries, led by Canada and the United States, to tackle this crisis. This is about public health, our economic futures and our national security.

We are also working together to address the record levels of migration in the hemisphere. The Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection, which the United States and Canada, along with 19 other nations, signed last June, represents an integrated new approach to the migration challenge, which is real. It is an approach that unites humane policies that both secure borders and support people. In the United States, we are expanding legal pathways for migration to seek safety on a humanitarian basis, while discouraging unlawful migration that feeds exploitation and human trafficking.

Today, I applaud Canada for stepping up with similar programs, opening new legal pathways for 1,500 migrants to come to Canada from countries in the western hemisphere. At the same time, the United States and Canada will work together to discourage unlawful border crossings and fully implement the updated safe third country agreement. Finally, as we advance our shared prosperity and security, we must never lose sight of our shared values, because our values are literally the linchpin holding everything else together.

Welcoming refugees and asylum seekers is a part of who Canadians and Americans are. In fact, the United States recently launched a new private sponsorship program for refugees. We call it welcome corps, which draws on Canadians' decades of leadership in refugee resettlement, where both countries built upon the nation-to-nation relationship with Native Americans and first nations.

We have both been influenced and strengthened by the contributions of generations of immigrants. We believe to our core that every single person deserves to live in dignity and safety, and to rise as high as their dreams can carry them. We strive to defend human rights, to advance equality and gender equality, to pursue justice and to uphold the rule of law.

I want to note the outstanding work Canada has done to build a coalition of nearly 70 countries endorsing the Declaration against Arbitrary Detention in State-to-State Relations. It is not only a statement of value. Our citizens are not bargaining chips. They are not diplomatic leverage. They are human beings with lives and families who must be respected.

I am very glad to see the two Michaels, Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig, are safely back with their families after more than 1,000 days in detention. If my mother were here, she would say, "God bless you both." Thank you for joining us today, and thank you for the opportunity to meet you earlier.

The incredible diversity that defines each of our nations is our strength. Prime Minister Trudeau, I know this is a belief that you and I share. We both built administrations that look like America and look like Canada. I am very proud both of us have cabinets that are 50% women for the first time in history.

We took the lesson from you because the bottom line is this: If we make it easier for historically under-represented communities to dream, create and succeed, we build a better future for all our people, so let us continue the work. Where there are no barriers, things look better. Where there are barriers to equal opportunity, we need to tear them down. Where inequity stifles potential, where we unleash the full power of our people, where injustice holds sway, let us insist on justice being done. Those are the shared values that imbue all of our efforts, our very democracy, our vitality and our vibrancy.

It is what seems to drive us all. Some places and some persons are kind of forgetting what the essence of democracy is. It is what allows to reach beyond the horizon.

Let me close with this. The year after President Kennedy spoke in Canada's Parliament, he delivered a famous speech at Rice University. He issued a challenge for Americans to go to the moon in a decade's time. Remember what he said, and you probably do, because we had to learn it when we were in school:

We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard...because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win.

That speech tapped into something deep in America's character, something powerful, a belief that we can do big things. Just think about it. Turn on the television in the last two years, whether it is in your country or mine, and after two years of COVID, people are beginning to wonder if we can still do big things. We sure in hell can.

That confidence, I believe with every fibre in my being, can make the most audacious dreams reality. Less than seven years after Kennedy's speech, the entire world watched humanity leave its first footprints on those further shores. It inspired a generation and spurred much of the technology advancement that now enriches our daily lives.

Today, our world once more stands at the cusp of breakthroughs and possibilities that have never before even been dreamt of.

Canada and the United States are leading and will continue to lead the way. In just a few days, NASA is going to announce an international team of astronauts who will crew the Artemis II mission, the first human voyage to the moon since the Apollo mission ended more than 50 years ago. It will consist of three Americans and one Canadian.

We choose to return to the moon together. Together, we will return to the moon and from there, we look forward to Mars and to

the limitless possibilities that lie beyond. Here on earth, our children who watch that flight are going to learn the names of those new pioneers. They will be the ones who carry us into the future we hope to build: the Artemis generation.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are living in an age of possibilities.

Xi Jinping asked me on the Tibetan plateau if I could define America. I could have said the same thing if he had asked about Canada. I said, yes, one word, and I mean it, one word: possibilities.

Nothing is beyond our capacity. We can do anything. We must never forget that. We must never doubt our capacity. Canada and the United States can do big things and stand together, do them together, rise together. We are going to write the future together, I promise you.

God bless you all and may God protect our troops. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

[Applause]

**Mr. Speaker Rota:** Thank you, Mr. President.

Now I invite the Hon. George Furey, Speaker of the Senate, to say a few words.

**Hon. George J. Furey (Speaker of the Senate):** President Biden, Dr. Biden, Prime Minister Trudeau, Madame Grégoire Trudeau, distinguished guests, fellow parliamentarians.

[Translation]

On behalf of all the parliamentarians and all the guests present in the Chamber, I have the great honour, Mr. President, to thank you for your presence and for your address to the Parliament of Canada.

[English]

It is an honour to have you with us here in our Parliament. On behalf of all parliamentarians, and indeed on behalf of all Canadians, I would like to express our gratitude for the very powerful words you have shared with us here today.

I say, Mr. President, with no small measure of confidence, that your words have touched Canadians everywhere. Your message of hope, unity and partnership is one that reflects the shared values and ideals that unite us.

In May 1961, when former president Kennedy spoke to our joint session of Parliament, he said, "Geography has made us neighbors. History has made us friends." Your visit today, Mr. President, continues this very strong testament to the firm bond between our two countries, and it is a cherished reminder of our deep friendships.

With the return of war in Europe, with the rising global assault on the very foundations of democracy and with increased threats to the rules-based international order, we find ourselves living in a time of great strength, a time when the world looks to great leaders such as you, Mr. President, to restore calm, to strengthen the principles of democracy that unite us and to ensure that the world is a better place for our children and our children's children. I know I speak on behalf of all of us when I say that your call for renewed collaboration and co-operation on global security, on climate change and on economic recovery will not go unheeded.

Your lifetime, Mr. President, of dedication to public service, performed with a profound sense of duty as senator, as vice-president and now as President, is an inspiration for all of us who strive every day to reflect, with honesty and pride, the diverse views of those we represent. Today, more than ever, we must shine a light on the darkness of conflict, chaos and despair. We must all, despite our differing views and despite our diverging ideologies, come together for the betterment of our people.

I believe you expressed it best, Mr. President, when you wrote in your book *Promises to Keep*, "If you do politics the right way, you can actually make people's lives better." To make people's lives better is indeed a path that we must all follow in public life. It is right and fitting that we take this journey together as Canada and the United States of America, for the great task before all of us is to make this world a more peaceful and more prosperous place for everyone.

Thank you, Mr. President.

**Mr. Speaker Rota:** Mr. President, Dr. Biden, whether from the Oval Office, the Senate chamber or inside the classroom, you have given yourselves to public service, to bringing people together for common good and to lifting others up in a shared sense of purpose.

It has been said, Mr. President, that empathy is your biggest superpower, and what a superpower that is.

[*Translation*]

You have used it to help people set common goals and set aside their differences.

[*English*]

You embody the words of one of your illustrious predecessors, former president Jimmy Carter, who said, "What is needed now, more than ever, is leadership that steers us away from fear and fosters greater confidence in the inherent goodness and ingenuity of humanity."

[*Translation*]

I would like to take a moment to say that our thoughts and prayers are with President Carter and his family during this difficult time.

[*English*]

Mr. President, Dr. Biden, you have both shown to the world that devotion to family and country are not mutually exclusive. The events of your lives, some heartbreakingly tragic, stand testament to how a life of dedication to family nourishes and strengthens us so that we may better serve others.

Indeed, Mr. President, you have shown, through example indeed, the transformative power of leadership from the heart. For this, we thank you very much.

Thank you for being with us today.

[*Applause*]

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# CONTENTS

Thursday, March 23, 2023

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
<b>Government Response to Petitions</b>		Mr. Gerretsen .....	12510
Mr. Lamoureux .....	12497	Mr. Johns .....	12510
<b>First Nations Fiscal Management Act</b>		Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) .....	12511
Mr. Miller .....	12497	Mr. Champoux .....	12511
Bill C-45. Introduction and first reading .....	12497	Mr. Van Popta .....	12511
(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed) .....	12497	Ms. Gazan .....	12511
<b>Interparliamentary Delegations</b>		Mr. Gerretsen .....	12513
Mr. McGuinty .....	12497	Mr. Van Popta .....	12513
<b>Committees of the House</b>		Ms. Bérubé .....	12513
<b>Committee Travel</b>		Mr. Desjarlais .....	12513
Mr. Lamoureux .....	12497	Mr. Gerretsen .....	12515
Motion .....	12497	Mr. Patzer .....	12515
(Motion agreed to) .....	12497	Mr. Perron .....	12515
<b>Finance</b>		Mr. Gerretsen .....	12516
Mr. Lawrence .....	12497	Mr. Kelly .....	12519
Motion for concurrence .....	12497	Mr. Ste-Marie .....	12519
Mr. Gerretsen .....	12499	Mr. Desjarlais .....	12519
Mr. Savard-Tremblay .....	12499	Mr. Arya .....	12520
Ms. Gazan .....	12499	Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) .....	12520
Mr. Hallan .....	12500	Mr. Kelly .....	12520
Amendment .....	12501	Mr. Noormohamed .....	12522
Mr. Hardie .....	12501	Mr. Perron .....	12522
Mr. Trudel .....	12501	Ms. Gazan .....	12522
Mr. Johns .....	12502	Mrs. Gray .....	12522
Mr. Lamoureux .....	12502	Mrs. Atwin .....	12524
<b>Points of Order</b>		Division on amendment deferred .....	12524
<b>Allusion to Presence or Absence of Members</b>		<b>Petitions</b>	
Mr. Berthold .....	12503	<b>Medical Assistance in Dying</b>	
<b>Committees of the House</b>		Mr. Falk (Provencher) .....	12524
<b>Finance</b>		<b>Taxation</b>	
Motion for concurrence .....	12503	Mr. Kelly .....	12524
Mr. Lamoureux .....	12503	<b>Climate Change</b>	
Mr. Perron .....	12505	Mr. Johns .....	12524
Mr. Dreeshen .....	12506	<b>Genetically Modified Foods</b>	
Ms. Barron .....	12506	Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) .....	12524
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) .....	12506	<b>Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship</b>	
Mr. Trudel .....	12506	Mr. Van Popta .....	12525
<b>Points of Order</b>		<b>Questions on the Order Paper</b>	
<b>Allusions to Presence or Absence of Members— Speaker's Ruling</b>		Mr. Lamoureux .....	12525
The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes) .....	12507		
<b>Committees of the House</b>		<b>GOVERNMENT ORDERS</b>	
<b>Finance</b>		<b>Telecommunications Act</b>	
Motion for concurrence .....	12507	Bill C-26. Second reading .....	12525
Mr. Ste-Marie .....	12507	Mr. Arya .....	12525
		Mr. Trudel .....	12526
		Mr. Johns .....	12526
		Mr. Dreeshen .....	12527
		Mr. Kelly .....	12527

Mr. Hardie .....	12528
Mrs. Vignola .....	12528
Ms. Mathysen .....	12529
Mrs. Goodridge .....	12529
Mr. Van Popta .....	12530
Mr. Champoux .....	12530
Ms. Barron .....	12530

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

**Health Partners International of Canada**

Mr. Zuberi .....	12531
------------------	-------

**Agassiz Fire Department**

Mr. Vis .....	12531
---------------	-------

**Women's History Month**

Ms. Sidhu (Brampton South) .....	12531
----------------------------------	-------

**Pierre-Luc Leblanc**

Mr. Savard-Tremblay .....	12531
---------------------------	-------

**Canada-U.S. Relations**

Mr. Sorbara .....	12532
-------------------	-------

**Canadian Armed Forces**

Mr. Barrett .....	12532
-------------------	-------

**Agnes Macphail Award Recipient**

Mr. Oliphant .....	12532
--------------------	-------

**Endometriosis Awareness Month**

Ms. Diab .....	12532
----------------	-------

**Activism in Russia**

Mr. Bezan .....	12533
-----------------	-------

**Inn From The Cold**

Mr. Van Bynen .....	12533
---------------------	-------

**Taxation**

Mr. Mazier .....	12533
------------------	-------

**Carbon Tax**

Mr. Epp .....	12533
---------------	-------

**Maple Syrup Season**

Mr. Gerretsen .....	12533
---------------------	-------

**Dental Hygienists**

Mr. Davies .....	12534
------------------	-------

**Lorraine-Rosemère Novice Hockey Tournament**

Ms. Chabot .....	12534
------------------	-------

**Democratic Institutions**

Mr. Chong .....	12534
-----------------	-------

**Forest Stewardship Award**

Ms. Taylor Roy .....	12534
----------------------	-------

**ORAL QUESTIONS**

**Democratic Institutions**

Mr. Poilievre .....	12534
---------------------	-------

Ms. Joly .....	12535
Mr. Poilievre .....	12535
Ms. Joly .....	12535
Mr. Poilievre .....	12535
Ms. Joly .....	12535
Mr. Poilievre .....	12535
Ms. Joly .....	12535
Mr. Poilievre .....	12535
Ms. Joly .....	12535
Mr. Therrien .....	12535
Mr. LeBlanc .....	12535
Mr. Therrien .....	12536
Ms. Joly .....	12536
Mr. Singh .....	12536
Mr. LeBlanc .....	12536
Mr. Singh .....	12536
Mr. LeBlanc .....	12536
Ms. Lantsman .....	12536
Mr. Mendicino .....	12536
Ms. Lantsman .....	12536
Mr. Mendicino .....	12537
Mr. Brock .....	12537
Mr. Mendicino .....	12537
Mr. Stewart .....	12537
Mr. LeBlanc .....	12537
Mr. Cooper .....	12537
Ms. Joly .....	12537
Mr. Chong .....	12537
Mr. Mendicino .....	12537
Mr. Villemure .....	12538
Mr. LeBlanc .....	12538
Mr. Villemure .....	12538
Mr. LeBlanc .....	12538
Mr. Villemure .....	12538
Mr. LeBlanc .....	12538
Mr. Paul-Hus .....	12538
Ms. Joly .....	12538
Mr. Berthold .....	12538
Ms. Joly .....	12538
Mr. Berthold .....	12539
Mr. LeBlanc .....	12539

**Forestry Industry**

Mr. Cannings .....	12539
Ms. Ng .....	12539

**Northern Affairs**

Ms. Idlout .....	12539
Mr. May (Cambridge) .....	12539

**Automotive Industry**

Mr. Louis .....	12539
Mr. Champagne .....	12539

**Democratic Institutions**

Mr. Hallan .....	12539
Mr. Mendicino .....	12540
Mr. Hallan .....	12540
Mr. LeBlanc .....	12540



Mr. Morantz .....	12540
Mr. Mendicino .....	12540
Mrs. Vien .....	12540
Ms. Joly .....	12540
Mr. Bergeron .....	12540
Mr. LeBlanc .....	12540
Mr. Bergeron .....	12541
Mr. LeBlanc .....	12541
Ms. Ferreri .....	12541
Mr. Holland .....	12541
Mrs. Gray .....	12541
Mr. Holland .....	12541
Mr. Généreux .....	12541
Mr. Mendicino .....	12541

#### Health

Mr. Dubourg .....	12541
Mr. Duclos .....	12542

#### Democratic Institutions

Mr. Seeback .....	12542
Mr. Mendicino .....	12542
Mr. Seeback .....	12542
Mr. Holland .....	12542
Mr. Deltell .....	12542
Mr. Mendicino .....	12542

#### Foreign Affairs

Mr. Gaheer .....	12542
Ms. Joly .....	12542

#### Indigenous Affairs

Mr. Desjarlais .....	12542
Mr. Miller .....	12543

#### Taxation

Mr. Rayes .....	12543
Mrs. Lebouthillier .....	12543

#### Security Measures on Parliament Hill

Ms. Blaney .....	12543
Motion .....	12543
(Motion agreed to) .....	12543

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### Committees of the House

##### Procedure and House Affairs

Motion for concurrence .....	12543
Motion agreed to .....	12544

##### Finance

Motion for concurrence .....	12545
Amendment negatived .....	12546
Motion agreed to .....	12547

#### Business of the House

Mr. Warkentin .....	12547
Mr. Holland .....	12547

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### Telecommunications Act

Bill C-26. Second reading .....	12548
Mr. McKay .....	12548
Mr. Ruff .....	12549
Ms. Mathysen .....	12549
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) .....	12549
Mr. Williams .....	12550
Mr. McKay .....	12551
Mr. Desilets .....	12551
Ms. Idlout .....	12552
Mr. Lawrence .....	12552

#### Points of Order

##### Alleged Unparliamentary Language

Mr. Lightbound .....	12552
----------------------	-------

#### Telecommunications Act

Bill C-26. Second reading .....	12552
Mr. Fonseca .....	12552
Mr. Lawrence .....	12554
Mr. Ste-Marie .....	12554
Mr. MacGregor .....	12554
Mr. Maguire .....	12555
Mr. Lamoureux .....	12556
Ms. Michaud .....	12556
Mr. Kelly .....	12557
Mrs. Atwin .....	12557
Mr. Lawrence .....	12558
Mr. Ste-Marie .....	12559
Mr. MacGregor .....	12559
Mr. McKay .....	12559
Mrs. Gray .....	12559
Mrs. Atwin .....	12561
Mr. Van Popta .....	12561
Mr. Thériault .....	12561
Ms. Idlout .....	12561
Mr. Lawrence .....	12561
Mrs. Atwin .....	12563
Mr. Desilets .....	12563
Ms. Ashton .....	12563
Mr. Soroka .....	12563
Mr. Patzer .....	12564
Mr. McKay .....	12565
Ms. Mathysen .....	12566
Mr. Maguire .....	12566
Mr. Mazier .....	12566
Mr. MacGregor .....	12567
Division on motion deferred .....	12567

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

#### National Strategy Respecting Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice Act

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) .....	12568
Bill C-226. Third reading .....	12568
Ms. Saks .....	12570

Mr. Deltell .....	12571
Mr. Villemure .....	12572
Ms. Collins (Victoria) .....	12573
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) .....	12575
Division on motion deferred .....	12575

Mr. Gerretsen .....	12577
<b>Democratic Institutions</b>	
Mr. Vuong .....	12578
Mr. Gerretsen .....	12579

**ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS**

<b>Climate Change</b>	
Mr. Cannings .....	12575
Mr. Gerretsen .....	12576
<b>Climate Change</b>	
Ms. Collins (Victoria) .....	12577

**APPENDIX**

Mr. Rota .....	12580
Mr. Trudeau .....	12580
Mr. Biden, Jr. ....	12582
Senator Furey .....	12586



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