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# House of Commons Debates

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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, March 31, 2023

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1000)

[*Translation*]

### CANADA BUSINESS CORPORATIONS ACT

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.)** moved that Bill C-42, An Act to amend the Canada Business Corporations Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be here this morning to talk about Bill C-42, which is a very important bill. I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Canadians about the important role Bill C-42 will play in combatting money laundering and bringing greater transparency to corporate Canada.

[*English*]

Today, I am proud to speak to Bill C-42, which deals with amendments to the Canada Business Corporations Act as well as other acts, to create a public beneficial ownership registry for businesses incorporated federally. Our government is committed to a robust and effective regime that will combat money laundering and tax evasion, improve Canadians' trust in the marketplace and make Canada a leader in corporate transparency. Creating a free, public and searchable registry of beneficial owners of federally regulated Canadian corporations would increase corporate accountability and improve public trust in corporate institutions.

Why do we need a public beneficial ownership registry?

[*Translation*]

Corporations are the driving force behind our economic growth, innovation and competitiveness. They are the primary source of jobs and prosperity for Canadians. They are the means for entrepreneurs to make strategic investments and take calculated risks without jeopardizing their financial stability.

[*English*]

Unfortunately, bad actors can misuse the legal structures of corporations to engage in illicit activities such as money laundering,

corruption and tax evasion. Corporate entities can be misused to avoid economic sanctions and to impair the tracing or freezing of assets. This reprehensible conduct can in turn have serious negative consequences for Canadians, notably impacting crime rates and tax revenues. For these reasons, Canada's federal and provincial finance ministers agreed in 2017 to pursue legislative amendments to improve transparency with regard to the individuals who ultimately control businesses incorporated in Canada.

Shortly thereafter, the Canada Business Corporations Act was amended to require federal corporations to hold accurate, up-to-date information on their beneficial owners. Additional changes were enacted to allow law enforcement and tax authorities to requisition this information when they believed it would be relevant to an investigation. All of these changes came into force in 2019. Since then, nearly all provinces have followed suit and enacted similar amendments in their respective jurisdictions, and now our government is taking a significant step toward a more transparent marketplace.

Through this bill, we are seeking to implement a pan-Canadian registry of the beneficial ownership information collected by corporations. This is a bold and significant undertaking that we are doing as a government.

First and foremost, it would strengthen Canada's efforts to prevent and combat financial crimes by providing law enforcement agencies with timely leads on potential suspects, witnesses and evidence. The registry would also facilitate tax administration and the identification and seizure of suspected proceeds of crime and terrorism financing. More generally, the registry would improve corporate accountability and thus help protect the public, improve trust in business institutions and ensure a well-functioning marketplace.

• (1005)

[*Translation*]

Simply put, increasing beneficial ownership transparency will enhance Canada's good international reputation as a safe, fair and competitive place to do business and provide even greater legitimacy to law-abiding Canadian businesses.

*Government Orders*

Unfortunately, over the years, some individuals have managed to take advantage of Canada's corporate framework to try to hide assets and hide other criminal activity. We need to work together to tackle this unacceptable practice.

In budget 2022, our government announced plans to accelerate the creation of a public beneficial ownership registry. Obviously, since corporate law is a shared jurisdiction, the registry will apply to the approximately 500,000 entities governed by the Canada Business Corporations Act. However, in developing the registry, we will ensure that provinces and territories that agree to join forces with us to combat tax evasion will have access to that shared data.

[English]

I will note what Bill C-42 would amend.

The amendments proposed in Bill C-42 represent the second series of changes to the Canada Business Corporations Act in relation to the creation of the registry. The first series of amendments, which were adopted by Parliament last June, would require federally incorporated companies to proactively submit information on their beneficial owners to Corporations Canada on an annual basis or when a change of control occurs. They would also allow Corporations Canada to disclose all or part of that information to an investigative body, the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada, otherwise known as FINTRAC, and other prescribed entities.

Furthermore, the amendments proposed in Bill C-42 would require corporations to collect and send additional information about their individuals of significant control, namely residential address and citizenship. They would also require that Corporations Canada make publicly available a portion of this information, while introducing an exemption regime for certain at-risk individuals, including minors. The bill also includes protections for whistle-blowers, bolsters investigation powers of Corporations Canada and creates new penalties to ensure robust compliance with the new regime.

Bill C-42 further proposes consequential amendments to other federal statutes, namely the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act and the Income Tax Act, to facilitate information sharing and data validation in order to maintain the accuracy of the information in the registry.

Let me elaborate now on a few key features of the upcoming registry that deserve highlighting.

First, Bill C-42 would adopt a charter-compliant, made-in-Canada balance between corporate transparency and the protection of privacy. A number of key elements of information, including the name and address of each individual with significant control, would be publicly accessible and searchable. Other more sensitive data points, such as date of birth and citizenship, would only be available to law enforcement and certain authorized entities.

In addition, Bill C-42 proposes to permit exemptions from publication for minors as well as individuals who are incapacitated or who fear for their safety. All in all, this would ensure the registry is useful to foreign law enforcement agencies and regulated entities under anti-money laundering legislation, as well as media and not-

for-profit organizations, while ensuring that it is not being misused for fraud, discrimination or other nefarious activities.

• (1010)

[Translation]

Second, the government is making a significant effort to ensure the integrity of the data available to law enforcement and the public. The experience of other jurisdictions has shown that the value of a registry is directly correlated to the accuracy of the data it contains. If the information is not current or reliable, police, tax authorities and financial intelligence analysts will stop relying on it, which would defeat the purpose.

For that reason, the government is proposing a rigorous system to ensure compliance, and it will include administrative and criminal penalties.

For example, companies that fail to provide information about beneficial ownership to Corporations Canada may be prevented from obtaining a certificate of compliance, which is often required to support a loan application or to enter into a contract with a supplier or even a potential buyer.

Corporations Canada also has the power to carry out the administrative dissolution of a business, which is a powerful deterrent to repeated and extended lack of compliance.

From a criminal law perspective, an administrator or manager of a business who knowingly violates the requirements for beneficial ownership transparency could be fined up to \$200,000 or be sentenced to six months in prison. These are among the harshest penalties in the world for this type of offence.

[English]

The government is also taking a robust ecosystem approach to data verification and validation. The director of Corporations Canada would, to begin with, be empowered to request proof of the steps taken by a corporation to verify its beneficial ownership information, enabling the creation of a risk-based audit system. Whistle-blowers would be explicitly protected to incentivize the disclosure of corporate wrongdoings, and consequential amendments would ensure that the information can be cross-referenced with relevant data collected by the government pursuant to the Income Tax Act and the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act.

Third, I want businesses to know that we have made and will continue to make every effort to limit the administrative burden of the new requirements. The government is well aware that the vast majority of business corporations are small and law-abiding and wants to ensure Canada remains a place of choice to invest and grow.

The bill would minimize the administrative burden by leveraging existing intake and reporting mechanisms that businesses incorporated federally are already familiar with. Corporations would, for example, have to report their beneficial owners on an annual basis, which aligns with the annual updates they are already required to file on other corporate matters. The requirement for corporations to report information within 15 days of a change also aligns well with the requirement already in place for directors.

The government would also assist corporations by publishing guidance documents and engaging in education efforts to ensure corporations are not unwittingly failing to comply with their new obligations.

[*Translation*]

Now let us talk a little about collaboration with the provinces and territories.

We started working on beneficial ownership transparency with the provinces and territories just over five years ago, and that successful collaboration continues to this day.

We recognize that corporate law is an area of shared jurisdiction and that any legislative amendment to facilitate the collection of information on beneficial ownership under that umbrella would ultimately be up to the discretion of each legislature within the Canadian federation.

That being said, we are very aware of the importance of maximizing coverage to ensure that the pan-Canadian registry reaches its full potential.

That is why we are working hard to ensure that the federal registry is scalable and provides access to the beneficial ownership data held by provinces and territories that agree to participate, as we committed to doing in budget 2022.

I am pleased to see that the Government of Quebec will soon launch its own beneficial ownership registry, and my department is in regular contact with the Quebec teams to ensure the interoperability of our registries.

● (1015)

One of my colleagues in the House even told me that the registry was online as of today. We will do the same with all of the provinces and territories that have this same objective of enhancing corporate transparency.

[*English*]

Let me say a word about international best practices. Canada is working closely with many of its international counterparts that have introduced or are about to introduce a beneficial ownership registry. The majority of the G7 and Five Eyes countries, as well as 112 other countries, have promised to put this in place, but few have finalized the implementation. With financial crimes being increasingly cross-border, which I think all colleagues can agree on, we need to contribute to the global fight against these crimes.

Indeed, as a founding member of the Financial Action Task Force, which is the intergovernmental standards-setting body for financial transparency led by the G20, it is incumbent upon Canada to act in tandem with other countries and international partners to

### *Government Orders*

stem further proliferation of illicit corporate activity. Strengthening beneficial ownership transparency, as we are doing through this bill, would allow Canada to do its part in the global fight against financial crimes and align with international best practices.

Let me conclude with a few remarks.

[*Translation*]

The government has committed to protecting Canadians from money laundering, terrorist financing and tax evasion and avoidance, while ensuring that Canada remains an attractive place to do business.

[*English*]

Making beneficial ownership information publicly available supports broader corporate transparency, good governance and trust. Police and tax authorities will have ready access to the data they need to enforce the law; regulated entities such as banks and realtors will have a new tool to support their due diligence obligations; investigative journalists and NGOs will be better equipped to trace ownership across entities and jurisdictions; and entrepreneurs and consumers will know whom they are doing business with, injecting more trust in the marketplace.

We are already hearing from transparency organizations that this bill would be a massive blow to money launderers. I call on my colleagues in the House from all sides to join forces and support it. I think Canadians expect that from all of us.

[*Translation*]

I encourage all parties to support Bill C-42 and work with the government to ensure that it is passed quickly. I think that is necessary and it is exactly what Canadians want. The sooner the legal framework is in place, the sooner we can launch the registry and reap the benefits of enhanced transparency.

[*English*]

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC):** Madam Speaker, Canada is a safe haven for money laundering. It is a known fact, and it is getting worse by the day.

Would the minister be able to advise us of the following? First, how much would this bill limit or downsize the money laundering market in Canada and, second, what is the amount of money laundering in Canada that is known to the minister or the government?

● (1020)

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague knows I have enormous respect for him, and I take it from his comments that he will be supporting Bill C-42.

*Government Orders*

The genesis of Bill C-42 is to combat money laundering. It is to make Canada best in class. It is to make Canada a leader in the G7. The faster this House can pass Bill C-42, the better off we will all be. I dream that we could even do that by unanimous consent so that we can move to phase this in very quickly. The reason is that the longer we wait, the less we will be capable of fighting the fight that we need to fight, not only domestically but internationally. We want the public registry to be operational by the end of 2023.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. minister for this important bill and for his speech, which was very informative. We learned a lot, which is good. Obviously, the Bloc Québécois supports Bill C-42, and we are prepared to do what it takes to get it passed more quickly.

We were concerned about respect for jurisdictions and the different securities, but everything is there. As the minister said, this has been a successful collaboration. As I told him, the registry has been online in Quebec since 9 o'clock this morning. The Government of Quebec is the first government in North America to do this.

I have a bit of a technical question. If company A is owned by company B, which is owned by company C, then we can track down who the beneficial owner is, but what happens if a company is in another less co-operative country where there is no automatic information sharing, such as a tax haven? Will Bill C-42 make it possible to identify the real owner?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague. Every one of his colleagues holds him in high esteem, and he is always there to defend Quebec's interests and to help advance all financial matters and tax measures in the House.

On behalf of the government, I want to note his support for Bill C-42, which is important, because the more time that goes by, the longer we delay implementing measures to combat fraud and various crimes.

To answer his question, I will say that there are now 112 countries that have committed to implementing similar measures to combat illegal activities—that is, various types of fraud—and to ensure greater rigour and enable different organizations to identify the beneficial owners.

The act provides for measures requiring heads of corporations to trace beneficial owners with a positive obligation to ask questions and obtain that information.

It is clear that we will need to continue working with our partners around the world.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, we know that a well-designed registry is needed to facilitate the enforcement of sanctions, as in the case of Vladimir Putin and his Russian oligarchs.

We also know that it is important to ensure that the most wealthy Canadians pay their fair share. I am very pleased to see progress in that regard. We also know that the participation of the provinces and territories is vital to the success of this type of registry. Could

the minister provide an update on the state of negotiations between the federal government and the provinces and territories?

Does he have some idea of when all the provinces and territories will be contributing to the federal registry?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his important question. This is an esteemed colleague who, I believe, is also prepared to move this bill forward quickly. As I was saying, it is in Canada's best interest for us to adopt such a framework.

My colleague will have noticed that we ensured that this registry would be capable of what is known as interoperability. We chose to adopt a standard, in fact, the international standard, to enable this interoperability, not only with the registries that we hope the provinces and territories will adopt but also with international registries.

As my colleague was saying earlier, there may be businesses located in other administrative regions. Canada is positioning itself as a leader. Obviously, the House will send a strong message to the provinces and territories. Consequently, I implore my colleagues from all parties to support this bill. I think we will be able to count on support from the NDP and the Bloc Québécois, as well as, I hope, our Conservative colleagues to take a step in the right direction so that we have measures to ensure transparency and allow us to fight tax evasion.

● (1025)

[*English*]

**Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC):** Madam Speaker, proposed subsection 21.303(3), “Exemption on application”, notes, “the Director may choose to not make it available to the public, subject to any terms that the Director thinks fit”. Under proposed subparagraph 21.303(3)(b)(iii), at the top of page 4, it says, “prescribed circumstances apply to the individual.” There is a lot of leeway in the bill, as it is currently written, for the director of Corporations Canada to determine what information could be exempt.

I am wondering if the government is open to some clarification or any type of schedule that we could develop to ensure that the maximum number of corporations that should be in the registry are in fact covered. I would also note that the points on interoperability with the province will likely need some clarification as well, just to ensure that the registry is in fact pan-Canadian.

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my esteemed colleague for his contribution, and I think his words lead us to believe that the Conservatives will be supportive.

On the first issue, there are some exemptions. One that comes to mind is around minors, for example, and other people who could be at risk when providing that information. What we need to know is that what would be public and searchable would be the name and address of the beneficial owner. What law enforcement authorities would have access to, in addition to that, would be the date of birth and citizenship. We can have a split to make sure that we provide as much relevant information as possible to the public and other entities to be able to search, but I would be open to see what we can do on that, with the caveat that we go fast. The number of exclusions is very limited and they are based on consultation.

With respect to interoperability, my colleague will have noted that we developed and used the beneficial ownership data standard, or what we call BODS, which is the international standard, exactly to make sure we can have as many people as possible be able to contribute and ultimately provide the level of accuracy and searchability that we would want to see.

I welcome the member's contribution.

**Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, corporations exist basically to allow individuals to channel their capital for the benefit of making profits. I think the corporation as we know it came into existence in the 1844 act in Britain, and the shareholders were granted limited liabilities in 1855. In 1866, the United States code declared that a corporation is a natural person.

The key thing that I want to focus on is the tax evasion and tax avoidance. Supreme courts around the world have ruled on the difference between tax avoidance and tax evasion and identified that if there is any transaction in the process followed by an individual or a corporation that does not have any impact other than to reduce or eliminate tax, the transaction can be declared null and void.

Coming back to the corporations here, why should the public not be aware of individuals who are investing money into corporations, including their citizenship being known? It is not the fundamental right of any individual that he or she can be a shareholder. It is a privilege offered by the states through various acts, so why should the public not be aware of individuals who are the shareholders, including their citizenship—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I have to give the minister time to answer.

The hon. minister.

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague is a key member of our team and is always there to make sure that when it comes to financial matters, this government listens to different stakeholders.

What we see is a kind of compromise that we have been able to draw based on best practices, also with the OECD. What is going to be made public is the name and address. What law enforcement authorities will have access to is date of birth and citizenship.

There are reasons for that in terms of discrimination and misuse of information. I think that, on balance, we strike the right balance in the act, but I take the member's point and I want to thank him for his contribution. He is a very esteemed member of our team.

### *Government Orders*

**Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for tabling this bill today.

• (1030)

[*Translation*]

We are here today to debate Bill C-42, an act to amend the Canada Business Corporations Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other acts. The government's stated objective in introducing this legislation is to protect Canadians against money laundering and terrorist financing, deter tax evasion and tax avoidance, and make sure Canada is an attractive place to conduct business.

The Conservatives support the concept of a national public registry of beneficial owners of companies. This is an important tool in the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing. The Cullen commission in British Columbia has also called for the creation of such a registry. Created in 2019 by Premier John Horgan in response to four reports highlighting the alarming number of money laundering cases in my province, the Cullen commission made 101 recommendations. Recommendation 52 called on the province to work with its federal, provincial and territorial partners to ensure that, by the end of 2023, a publicly accessible, pan-Canadian corporate beneficial ownership registry is in place.

However, much can be done to improve this bill and guarantee that it is effective. The Conservatives believe that in order to reach the objectives of this registry, the bill must be amended. First, the government must work with the provinces and territories to ensure that it is a pan-Canadian registry. Second, there must be harsher sanctions for contravening the Canada Business Corporations Act, or the CBCA. Third, the threshold for significant control must be lowered. Fourth, the functionality of the public registry must be clarified.

[*English*]

In budget 2018, as the minister noted, the government amended the CBCA to introduce requirements for corporations to maintain a registry of individuals with significant control of the corporation. "Significant control" is defined as someone owning or controlling at least 25% of a corporation's shares. Budget 2022 added a requirement that corporations provide their registers to the government every year and to report any new information to the registry within 15 days. This bill would require Corporations Canada to make public some of the information collected under the 2022 reporting requirements.

Conservatives have long called for more action to combat money laundering and terrorist financing, so it is good to see the bill tabled in Parliament today. However, as I noted in French, there are many gaps in the legislation, and it is our objective to see some concrete amendments and considerations brought forward to this bill at the committee stage.

*Government Orders*

I wanted to take a minute to talk about the impact and history of money laundering. For far too long, Canada has had a reputation as a safe haven for dirty money. Our current laws that in place to combat money laundering and the proceeds of crime are perceived internationally as being weak. This has led to a wave of dirty money being laundered in Canada, particularly in my home province of British Columbia. Casinos, real estate, businesses and more have long been used to launder money in B.C., and the RCMP, local law enforcement and FINTRAC, in some cases, have been almost powerless to stop it.

When the Panama papers were leaked in 2016, it was exposed that international criminals have long exploited the gaps in Canada's corporate beneficial ownership regulatory scheme to engage in corrupt conduct through federally, provincially and territorially administered corporations. Organizations such as Transparency International have been calling on Canada to create a public registry of corporate beneficial ownership for a long time. As I noted in French, the Cullen Commission in B.C. has also called for this registry. Among the recommendations was a pan-Canadian registry to be established in 2023.

The commission's report highlighted how drug dealers utilize numbered corporations to stash death money from the fentanyl trade, then take that drug money and put it into the housing market in British Columbia, which has led, in some cases, to prices being driven up. Had a registry been in place sooner, perhaps less money from drug deals would have been laundered and perhaps it could have prevented lives from being lost. A corporate registry does have a lot of consequences, and that is why our party supports it.

Now I will briefly get into some of the shortcomings we see in this bill. The first is the lack of any requirement of the government to seek information-sharing agreements with the provinces and territories so the registry can be effective. The corporate registry will be only as strong as the provinces and territories that opt into it. Without them on board, this registry would only apply to about 5% of corporations in Canada. Thankfully, some provinces and territories have already taken the lead on this front and have been implementing registries since the changes to the CBCA were announced in last year's budget. Without all of them on board, criminals will just take their dirty money to the jurisdiction with the least strongest regulations.

It is my hope that, at committee, amendments will be adopted to ensure the federal government is required to pursue agreements with the provinces and territories on information sharing to ensure the registry is truly pan-Canadian and interoperable. I can note that, with many of the registries in place, there is a varying degree of information shared. Many do follow the amendments put forward in budget 2022, but I still think there is a lot of work we can do to make sure our registry is comprehensive.

The second is that we need to look at strengthening some of the penalties. Parliament needs to consider the registry in the context of the ability of law enforcement to combat the use of illegal funds. The current penalties under the CBCA, and the new ones proposed in Bill C-42, may be too weak to have the desired effect. We must ensure that corporations are compliant with the rules for the registry to be effective. The government should consider strengthening the penalties and making some offences indictable. Many of the fines

could simply now be perceived by some corporations using illicit funds as the cost of doing business.

Another issue with the penalties is that they do not punish corporations that violate the act nearly as strongly as they do individuals. All of the offences that currently exist, and those proposed in this bill that apply to corporations, are punishable by a fine of I believe \$5,000. However, the strongest penalty applying to individuals is found under section 21.4 of the CBCA, which has a fine not exceeding \$200,000 and a term of imprisonment of six months, as the minister also mentioned. We must ensure that corporations that do not comply with these regulations are held just as accountable as the individuals involved. A \$5,000 fine would be chump change for some people who would be affected under this proposed bill.

We need to also look at the threshold for disclosure. The CBCA currently defines significant control under section 2.1 as an individual who owns or controls a significant number of shares in a corporation, which is defined as 25% or more. This is quite a high threshold. Currently, security regulators in Canada, for example, Ontario Securities Commission, have a set threshold of just 10% for public disclosure requirements. Regardless of where we set the threshold, people will try to avoid reporting by ensuring their ownership or control is slightly below it. There are lots of ways for individuals with significant control to pass by the threshold. However, a lower threshold means fewer opportunities for criminals to simply slip under the radar.

We also need to be cognizant of how this will apply in the context of stacked ownership structures and trusts. It would be wise of the House to consider aligning these regulations with those currently imposed on publicly traded companies by amending this bill to change the threshold to 10% and look at the impact of trusts in very close detail at the committee stage.

We also need to look at the functionality of the registry. When it comes to how this registry will work and what information will be made available to the public, this bill is concerningly quiet. It does outline in section 21.303:

(1) The Director shall make available to the public the following information sent to the Director under section 21.21 for each individual with significant control:

- (a) their name;
- (b) their address for service, if it has been provided to the corporation;
- (c) their residential address, if their address for service has not been provided to the corporation;
- (d) the information referred to in paragraphs 21.1(1)(c) and (d); and
- (e) any other prescribed information.



*Government Orders*

● (1035)

The first issue here lies in paragraph (e). What exactly does it mean by “prescribed information”? This needs clarification, as the information made publicly available must keep in mind privacy interests. I will note the minister did partially answer my question during his debate when he said citizenship would not be required in the registry. I will take a moment to comment on that.

What if an individual in another country who does not reside in Canada has a corporation in Canada? Should citizenship information in the context of a foreign owner of a Canadian corporation apply or, as another member in the House of Commons mentioned, in the case of a stacked corporation where certain shares of the company are owned by an individual in another country, should citizenship information be applied in that context? In the context of terrorism and money laundering, perhaps it would be to our benefit in some cases where citizenship is, indeed, known.

I look forward at the committee stage to really delve into this in detail because I think everyone in Canada wants to get this registry right. Everyone in Canada wants to give our law enforcement the tools it needs to finally begin combatting money laundering. We have seen the impact of it in British Columbia. We have seen the empty condos and the illicit funds from the drug trade being used, through corporations, to launder that money. We need to move away from what many people call the “Vancouver model” to take action right now. The commitment of the Conservative Party is to work with the government to ensure that our laws are strengthened, and that fewer lives are lost because of the drug trade, by establishing some form of a beneficial ownership registry.

Finally, I would like to touch upon how the registry would function. The bill is very vague in what prescribed circumstances would be. Will law enforcement still be able to access the information of those exempted for the purposes of an investigation? Another issue with the guidelines for the registry are the exemptions that have been put in place. We do know, as the minister mentioned after my question, that it would not apply to people 18 years of age or younger, but we need to strengthen the language around exemptions.

In closing, this bill is a good first step. That is why the Conservatives will be supporting it at second reading. However, key oversights must be addressed during the committee process. We must ensure that the penalties for violating the act are strong enough, and I am not certain that summary convictions are strong enough. We must ensure that law enforcement and FINTRAC have the ability to easily access the information they need to track down those laundering money and financing terrorism. We must ensure that corporations involved in criminal activities are held just as accountable as individuals, and for the registry to be effective, we must make the participation of provinces and territories a key priority.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on the industry committee to strengthen this bill and ensure it truly provides transparency to the public and gives law enforcement the tools necessary to track down money launderers and those funding terrorism. More must be done to reduce the risk of corporations being misused for illicit activities such as money laundering and tax evasion.

● (1040)

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague mentioned a number of things that are really fundamental in illicit money being used in real estate, for example, in the city of Vancouver, which he mentioned.

I want to thank the member for being on board with Bill C-42. The best way to do more to combat illegal activities and increase corporation accountability is to adopt Bill C-42. How quickly are the Conservatives prepared to work with the government to put an end to money laundering in Canada and adopt Bill C-42?

**Mr. Brad Vis:** Madam Speaker, the objective of the Conservative Party on this legislation is to have a robust debate, in good faith, at second reading. There are a lot of experts in every party who have information on corporate trusts and how corporations are structured in Canada, and I think every party has something to contribute on that. We want to move quickly on this bill, but we also want to have a robust debate.

Our objective is to get the bill to committee where we can have a robust study. I could perhaps share more with the minister, and maybe our House leaders can determine what the priority of the House of Commons is with respect to seeing this bill pass.

● (1045)

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I want to point out that his French is very good, and tell him that I really appreciate the fact that he gave part of his speech in French.

I was also impressed with the quality of his speech and the research and thought that went into it. Like him, I recognize that Bill C-42 is a step in the right direction, but that there is still much to do to tackle money laundering, crime and the use of tax havens.

My colleague raised certain concerns. He spoke about possible amendments to be made to Bill C-42 to improve it. I would like him to present them again and provide a brief explanation.

**Mr. Brad Vis:** Madam Speaker, some of these amendments would seek to determine the role of the provinces and territories in guaranteeing the interoperability of this registry. We must also study the Canada Corporations Act threshold.

*Government Orders**[English]*

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon for his remarks, both for their substance as well as for their tone. So far, this morning's debate has been a great example of what we could accomplish as legislators if we avoided the temptation of hyperbole and we focused on the content of legislation.

The member talked a little about penalties and judging whether the penalties that are in the initial draft of the legislation are adequate. I wonder if he wants to speak a little more to that question. Perhaps he could give the House some sense of whether there are existing standards he thinks we should be looking to in order to come up with appropriate penalties and how we might determine adequate penalties.

**Mr. Brad Vis:** Madam Speaker, regarding penalties, I want to think of the worst-case scenarios. For years, we have heard so many stories in British Columbia about why the Cullen Commission was put in place, about the impact of money laundering and the billions of dollars that have been laundered into corporations, largely at the provincial level.

I do not want any fees or penalties to be seen as the cost of doing business for certain corporations. We need to look at strengthening those penalties. We need to hear from a suite of experts in law enforcement, maybe experts from FINTRAC and law enforcement at CSIS, to ensure that we get this right and that we use this tool to provide some trust for Canadians in our law enforcement institutions to be able to make a difference.

I do not have specifics. All I know is that, at \$200,000 or in some cases \$5,000, it would be seen as the cost of doing business. We want to make it actually hurt when someone tries to break the law in Canada.

**Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC):** Madam Speaker, there are a number of areas of clarification, in my mind, that need to be addressed, and perhaps it would be done through committee.

One is the type of asset that is caught by this legislation. For example, a beneficial owner is someone for whom an asset is held in trust. There could be shares of a corporation held in trust by a shareholder for someone else, whether that shareholder is an individual or a corporation. Also, the assets of a corporation could be held in trust for an owner or a group of owners.

One of the things that I would like to have clarified is whether this just applies to shares being held in trust for beneficial owners or if it actually applies to the assets of a corporation that are held in trust for owners. What happens, for example, when those beneficial owners, in turn, decide to set up trust arrangements with other people holding their beneficial ownerships in trust for others?

Second, there are 500,000 corporations under the CBCA. There could literally be tens of millions of these trust arrangements in existence across the country. What resources would be dedicated to making sure we could track them?

Finally, I was a little concerned that personal addresses would be published. Most of these trust arrangements are legitimate business practices and a much smaller number are for money laundering. I just want to highlight that—

• (1050)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I have to give the hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon the time to answer.

**Mr. Brad Vis:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate that very important question from my colleague from Winnipeg. One of the big gaps in this legislation is in clarifying the relationship between significant interests and the role trusts play in corporate structures at all levels of corporate registries in Canada right now and the impact that would have on the interoperability and the overall effectiveness of a corporate registry as we move forward. The member also pointed out the significance of this registry in the context of those provincial bodies. We need to make sure that there is interoperability, of course, to ensure its effectiveness in completing its stated goals.

**Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I agree with my hon. colleague on the question of disclosing the citizenship of the shareholders of a corporation. There should not be any legal protection offered to foreigners who invest in Canadian corporations. We have been seeing that corporations are being incorporated with no other purpose than to have transactions and processes that lead to nothing but tax avoidance and, in some cases, even to money laundering.

I want to touch on something the member mentioned about the significant shareholding and the threshold, which is 25% in some jurisdictions and 10% in some jurisdictions. As the member very clearly stated, that is a loophole where, very easily, five people could form a corporation with 20% each or 11 people could form a corporation. Therefore, should there be any threshold at all that prevents the disclosure of the beneficiary?

**Mr. Brad Vis:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate that my colleague from Nepean outlined the issue that probably needs to be studied the most in this legislation, and that is significant interest. I do not have a specific answer to his question right now, but we need to have that debate in Parliament about the impact of significant interest and corporate stacked ownership structures that need to be viewed in the light of money laundering and tax avoidance or tax evasion.

I will just quickly touch upon the impact of addresses as well, which is another point of this bill, and it relates to citizenship. We need to clarify our charter obligations regarding individual privacy, but we also need to make sure to be practical that in some cases Canadian corporations are used for illicit purposes and in some cases we should know the citizenship of those individuals who are using said corporations.

*Government Orders*

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Speaker, what do the Panama papers, the Pandora papers and the Paradise papers all have in common? They are leaks that revealed who was hiding behind shell corporations in tax havens, those anonymous companies for which it would be otherwise impossible to determine actual ownership. Without those leaks, it was only possible to identify the names of the administrators, typically a big corporate law or accounting firm.

By lifting the corporate veil, these leaks helped identify wealthy fraudsters hiding money from the tax man or criminals hiding dirty money out of sight. When it is impossible to identify who is hiding behind a shell company, that opens the door for profiteers and fraudsters of all kinds, people who refuse to pay their fair share of taxes at the expense of everyone else, people who recirculate ill-gotten gains in the real economy by hiding behind secret companies. It is not normal to need to rely on leaks, whistle-blowers, hackers or journalists to find out what is behind these companies. That information should be public.

There is nothing like transparency for combatting fraud. That is essentially what Bill C-42 addresses. It amends the Canada Business Corporations Act to force the directors of federally incorporated businesses to report their real owners to Corporations Canada. Then, Corporations Canada can create a registry of the real company owners, a public registry that anyone can consult. Bill C-42 will introduce a bit of transparency, which is a good thing. The Bloc Québécois supports the principle of Bill C-42, and I encourage all parliamentarians to do the same.

Before I get into the details of the bill, I want to tell members a secret. When I saw that the government had introduced a bill to amend the Canada Business Corporations Act, I was worried. As members know, business ownership and property rights fall under provincial jurisdiction. In Quebec, these things are governed by the Civil Code. Every province has its own securities commission. In Quebec, we have the Autorité des marchés financiers.

However, over the last several years, Quebec and the provinces decided to coordinate and harmonize their respective laws. Since they all have very similar legislation, registration with the Autorité des marchés financiers is automatically recognized by all of the provinces. That means that a Quebec company can easily raise capital and do business outside Quebec through mutual recognition under what is known as the passport system.

Since this works well, Ottawa has no reason to interfere, there is no need for federal securities regulations, and Quebec's jurisdiction over financial matters would be respected. Without that respect, we would likely see Toronto become the centre of financial activity at the expense of Quebec, particularly Montreal's financial sector.

However, this is viable only if governments continue to work together and essentially harmonize their laws. That is why I was concerned when I saw that the government wanted to change the Canada Business Corporations Act. If Ottawa acts unilaterally, as this government all too often does, if it has not aligned its efforts with Quebec and the Canadian provinces, if the laws are no longer similar, the mutual recognition system will not be as successful. Ottawa will then have the excuse it is looking for to justify its desire

to centralize everything, as it has been trying to do for three decades.

However, I did breathe a huge sigh of relief when I saw Bill C-42. As I mentioned earlier, Bill C-42 will establish a searchable public registry of the real owners of businesses. This commitment to transparency reflects a unanimous decision made at the G20. It has been implemented properly in Canada in a manner that respects each party, so I say bravo. The federal government and the finance ministers of Quebec and all the provinces have coordinated their efforts and agreed to work together, while respecting one another's independence.

In 2017, they all independently agreed to change their respective laws to require companies to collect, in their own registries, the data needed to identify the real owners. At the federal level, this was done in June 2022 with the passage of Bill C-19, a budget implementation bill. This data is beginning to be collated and made available to the authorities in the event of suspected fraud.

• (1055)

In 2018, they came to an agreement on how companies were to share this data with their respective governments and how the governments were to make the data public. That is what we are debating today. There was no need for federal standards where Ottawa would put itself in charge and tell Quebec what to do. Everything was done respectfully.

The National Assembly of Quebec passed Bill 78 in June 2021. This legislation reflects the agreements made in 2017 and 2018. Quebec was the first government in America to pass such legislation. It is interesting that this debate is being held today, on March 31, 2023, because Quebec's Bill 78 goes into force today. Since nine o'clock this morning, the registry of real owners can be consulted in Quebec on the site of the Enterprise Registrar.

Since not all businesses have provided their information as yet, the search engine is not yet active, but it will be soon. It will be operational within the year. With the passage of Bill C-42, the federal government will do the same for federally incorporated businesses. The provinces have passed or are preparing to pass similar legislation.

I see that members' statements will commence momentarily. I will continue my speech once we resume debate on this bill.

*Statements by Members***STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

● (1100)

*[English]***INTERNATIONAL TRANSGENDER DAY OF VISIBILITY**

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Madam Speaker, around the world we are seeing a rise in anti-trans rhetoric and legislation. This includes in the U.S., where this year alone, over 400 bills have been proposed or passed that attack trans human rights. Here at home, the rise in anti-trans hate has advocates saying it has never been as scary as it is now.

We must do better. I am grateful to organizations like SPECTRUM, Waterloo Region's first-ever rainbow community space, that serve, affirm and support the well-being of 2SLGBTQ+ people in my community.

Former SPECTRUM President and trans activist Caitlin Glasson recently initiated a petition that I have sponsored, calling for the federal government to be more open to transgender and non-binary asylum seekers from around the world. It has been widely amplified by the trans community, with over 145,000 signatures.

On this International Transgender Day of Visibility, let us recognize how much work we need to do and celebrate the power of the trans community in having their voices heard.

\* \* \*

**THE BUDGET**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, budget 2023 continues to demonstrate that the government truly cares about people and that we are building a stronger and healthier country. From helping people fight inflation by bringing in a grocery rebate to introducing a national dental program and supporting a greener economy, this year's budget reflects Canadians' interests and their expectations of the government.

To me, caring for people means lifting seniors and children out of poverty by increasing things like the GIS and the Canada child benefit program. It means investing \$198 billion over 10 years to secure health care services for future generations. It is about building a national child care program and a stronger economy employing two million additional people.

\* \* \*

**EASTER**

**Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC):** Madam Speaker, soon Christians around the world will be celebrating Easter. Good Friday marks the crucifixion of Jesus Christ at the hands of the Romans. The resurrection of Christ on Easter Sunday fulfills his promise to the people of the world that he is indeed the son and living embodiment of God on earth. All Christians, Protestants, Catholics and Orthodox will come together over Easter weekend to celebrate the most important days in the Christian calendar. For some of us, this means attending church services; for others, it means attending a big family party.

For some, like the Ukrainians fleeing the war crimes of Vladimir Putin, it will be the first Easter not in their home country, but here

in Canada instead. Regardless of how we celebrate, Easter is a reminder of how Christ sacrificed his life for us and made a way for each of us to know God personally.

I look forward to Easter Sunday when Christians around the world will say in Ukrainian:

*[Member spoke in Ukrainian and provided the following translation:]*

He is risen. He is risen indeed.

\* \* \*

**INCLUSION IN SPORT**

**Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Milton, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, a little over a decade ago, Patrick and Brian Burke launched "You Can Play", a social activism campaign dedicated to the eradication of homophobia in sports, particularly hockey. The campaign uses the slogan, "If you can play, you can play".

Most people have also seen pride tape on hockey sticks, a initiative co-founded by Dr. Kris Wells. These are meaningful steps in the right direction for inclusion in sport in this country and around the world for the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

Unfortunately, some NHL players have recently decided not to wear pride-themed warm-up jerseys for their games on pride nights or the league's "Hockey is for Everyone" campaign, saying it is contrary to their religious beliefs. A rainbow jersey is a simple but compassionate sign of solidarity and a way to say, "Hockey is a sport for everyone. You matter, and you are welcome here." While there has been a lot of progress, it is clear there is still much work to be done.

I grew up Catholic and attended Sunday school and catechism. If I know one thing about Jesus Christ, it is that he loved everybody. He would be marching on the front line in pride parades if he were alive today.

Sport is for everyone. To every young player out there I want to say this: Regardless of their race, gender or sexuality, hockey is a sport for them.

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**INTERNATIONAL TRANSGENDER DAY OF VISIBILITY**

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP):** Madam Speaker, today we join trans folks from around the globe in recognizing the International Transgender Day of Visibility. From Stonewall to Edmonton, the trans community has and continues to contribute greatly to a better and more just society. They have shown us the strength of community resilience, and they remind us of our everlasting pursuit of justice, even as our institutions and society continue to fail them.

*Statements by Members*

Every member of the House has a responsibility to stand up and speak out against the bigotry that is threatening the safety of trans people across Canada and the globe. Rising violence and extreme hatred against the trans community is a gruesome reality and a threat to democracy and freedom everywhere. A truly free society is one where everyone has the freedom to be who they are, love who they love and pursue happiness. The trans community has a right to joy, but this joy is under threat. We can and must do more.

\* \* \*

● (1105)

**CAROL YOUNG**

**Mr. Andy Fillmore (Halifax, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize my friend, Carol Young, a community leader, women's advocate and lifelong volunteer in Halifax. Sadly, she passed away over the weekend

Carol is remembered for her unwavering commitment to advancing women in the workforce, in boardrooms and in politics. She worked right here on Parliament Hill for the first Trudeau government as the first female special assistant to a cabinet minister. She was one half of a dynamic power couple; she met her late husband, the renowned lawyer, John Young, here on the Hill when he was working for Allan J. MacEachen. The pair set down roots in Nova Scotia, where Carol would work on many important boards, including those of Dalhousie University, Neptune Theatre and the Pier 21 Society.

Carol also devoted herself to many philanthropic endeavours, including Ronald McDonald House, the children's Discovery Centre and the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia. She also played a key role in the creation of the IWK children's hospital telethon.

For all this, she earned appointment to the Order of Canada and an honorary doctorate from St. Mary's University. She leaves behind a wonderful legacy, and I send my condolences to her family and all those whose lives she touched.

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**SS ATLANTIC**

**Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise in the House because tomorrow is the 150th anniversary of the sinking of the SS *Atlantic*, the biggest shipwreck in Nova Scotia and the biggest marine disaster in North America before the *Titanic*.

With nearly 1,000 people on board, the greatest passenger liner of her day left Liverpool for New York on March 20, 1873. Running low on coal, she diverted to Halifax to refuel. In unfamiliar waters on a stormy night with heavy seas, she went off course, hit Golden Rule Rock and rapidly sank. More than 500 people lost their lives that night, including all women and children aboard but one. My communities of Lower Prospect and Terence Bay rallied to rescue 439 survivors. They brought them into their homes and nursed the injured back to health.

On this anniversary of the disaster of the SS *Atlantic*, we remember the tragic loss of so many lives and take inspiration from the

courageous actions of the communities of Lower Prospect and Terence Bay.

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**VAISAKHI**

**Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, Sikhs across the world and in Canada are preparing to celebrate Vaisakhi. The celebration of Vaisakhi marks the founding of the community of baptized Sikhs, known as the Khalsa Panth. This year, the celebration will be held on April 14.

Canada is home to one of the largest Sikh diasporas in the world. More than 500,000 Canadians of the Sikh faith have helped make our country what it is today. The vibrant festival of Vaisakhi is a spring festival marking the solar new year for Sikhs and Hindus. Vaisakhi is also a time to reflect on the importance of upholding justice and promoting equality.

Together, let us celebrate the importance of the Sikh community within Cloverdale—Langley City, across Surrey and across Canada as well. One can also join me at the Surrey Vaisakhi parade on April 22. I would like to take this opportunity to wish all those celebrating this special occasion a very happy Vaisakhi.

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**MEDICAL ISOTOPES**

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, Canada is a global leader in the production of life-saving medical isotopes, which are used in medical imaging, cancer therapy, disease prevention and medical device sterilization. Canada's isotopes sterilize over 25 billion pieces of medical equipment a year, making up 70% of the world market. I have seen our leadership first-hand at Bruce Power. In a partnership, Bruce Power and the Ojibway Nation of Saugeen will jointly market a new isotope, lutetium-177, in support of the global fight against cancer.

Earlier this week I attended an event with the Canadian Nuclear Isotope Council to launch "Isotopes for Hope: Canada's Leadership Needed Now More Than Ever". This is a road map to strengthen Canada's global role in the isotope supply chain and double production by 2030.

Countries around the world depend on Canada for its expertise in the production of medical isotopes. Canada can support almost the entire supply chain for medical isotopes. We must remain a world leader and pursue innovative solutions to save lives.

\* \* \*

● (1110)

**EDUCATION AND SHARING DAY**

**Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Education and Sharing Day.

*Statements by Members*

Education and Sharing Day is a day established in honour of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, recognizing his lifelong efforts towards improving education. He was an advocate for children and spoke out about the need for each child to be given an education that would offer them the opportunities to succeed. He often spoke about the need for education to focus not only on academic achievements but also on character building.

The rabbi's emissaries established a network of several thousand Jewish schools and education centres around the globe. They sought to empower young people and inspire individuals of all ages. A high-quality education develops the mind, opens the heart, nurtures our talents and fortifies our character. We owe a tremendous debt to Rabbi Schneerson and to all those who promote education that embraces moral and ethical values.

This year, let us rededicate ourselves to teaching the love of learning that was championed by Rabbi Schneerson.

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**NATIONAL INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES DAY**

**Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in the House today on National Indigenous Languages Day. This is a day to bring attention to the critical endangerment of indigenous languages and to celebrate the rich and diverse heritage they bring to our country.

Today, there are at least 70 distinct indigenous languages spoken in Canada, and every one of them is fundamental to the identity, culture, spirituality and self-determination of first nations, Inuit and Métis. It is an inherent right to pass their knowledge, their stories and their histories in their own voices to all future generations.

This is a goal we are working toward in partnership through Bill C-91, an act respecting indigenous languages, to protect, preserve and revitalize indigenous languages throughout this great nation.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**JUSTICE**

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Madam Speaker, our streets are becoming more and more unsafe. People are afraid to go out alone and to take public transportation. That clashes with people's opinion of Canada.

Since the Prime Minister took office, violent crime has increased by 32% and crime related to street gangs has doubled. Rather than taking real action to address this problem, the government is making things worse.

Thanks to flawed legislation, dangerous criminals are being released, often the same day they are arrested. The only punishment for gun crime is a minimum sentence or even no sentence at all. A change is long overdue.

A Conservative government will bring back mandatory prison sentences for serious violent crimes. We will implement bail rules that will guarantee that those who commit serious, repeat and violent crimes will remain behind bars while awaiting trial.

A Conservative government will do what it takes to keep violent criminals where they should be, behind bars.

\* \* \*

[English]

**HOUSING**

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC):** Madam Speaker, a home is a haven where we feel safe, build memories and raise our families. It is the foundation of our lives and the place where we plan our futures, but for far too many Canadians, the dream of owning a home is completely out of reach. Even if someone works hard and does everything right, a home seems out of sight, and nine in 10 Canadians who do not own homes say they never will.

In eight years under the Liberal Prime Minister, rent has doubled and mortgage payments have doubled, leaving so many to wonder how they will ever get ahead.

All is not lost. Conservatives have a plan to build more homes and make housing more affordable. We will get rid of the gatekeepers preventing housing from being built, we will reverse the disastrous Liberal housing policies and we will tackle record-breaking inflation and rising interest rates.

Conservatives will restore the dream that home ownership is indeed possible. It is time to get to work and bring it home.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**SCIENCE FAIR**

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, this morning, I was thrilled to attend the launch of the Hydro-Québec Science Fair finale in the Outaouais region.

Over the next two days, more than 50 students from the Outaouais region will be exhibiting their science projects. It is inspiring, to say the least.

This science fair would not be possible without the invaluable support of the teachers in our region's schools. I want to say a huge thank you to them for engaging our youth in science.

I would also like to thank Technoscience Outaouais, an organization that is doing excellent work to promote the fields of science, technology and innovation. We have a new generation of scientists who are making their mark, and I am very proud of them.

I congratulate all the exhibitors and wish them success.

• (1115)  
[English]

### SPORT

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Madam Speaker, scandals in the sports world continue to plague our country. The scale of these abuses against athletes needs immediate attention. Athletes should have the right to participate in any sport free of maltreatment, abuse or harm.

Today, I stand up for my constituents, some of whom are survivors of abuse and help shed light on the seriousness of the issue.

I would like to thank Dr. Victoria Paraschak from the University of Windsor and many other advocates and sports organizations from across Canada working together to ensure the government recognizes the scope, urgency and importance of protecting our athletes from abuse in sport. They know we need a preventive approach to justice for survivors that examines these problems systematically, not on a case-by-case basis.

I proudly stand, together with these leaders and survivors in sport, to request that the government call a judicial inquiry that is completely independent of sport and that outlines a clear and consistent approach that is fair and immediate for these survivors. Without this transparent mechanism available in the form of a judicial inquiry, we will continue to see complaints, maltreatment and no justice.

It is time to protect our Canadian youth and athletes today.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY

**Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I have a little boy who wakes up before sun-up, who would eat nothing but shepherd's pie, cereal and ketchup if he could, and who likes to dunk his toys in my coffee cup, to the point where I have nearly swallowed several dinosaurs. My little boy will run the equivalent of several miles through the house, just for the sheer joy of it. My little boy knows neither fear nor danger and has never told me he loves me, but he looks at me with all the love in the world in his eyes.

I have a little boy who is not different; he has autism. My little boy is unique, as we all are. With every move he makes, my boy lights up every room he walks into, as every person with autism does.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, on World Autism Awareness Day, and as we do at every opportunity, I would like to shine a spotlight on all the joy these unique persons bring to our lives.

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[English]

### CARBON TAX

**Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC):** Madam Speaker, on April 1, the Liberal carbon tax will be increased to \$65 a tonne. Unfortunately, that is not an April Fool's joke. This means the price of gasoline, home heating and other fu-

### Statements by Members

els will rise, making it even more expensive for Canadians to get to work, heat their homes or operate their businesses. Canadians already face a cost-of-living crisis and cannot afford more taxes.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer reports that the carbon tax will cost the average family hundreds of dollars more than they receive back, and that is tens of thousands of dollars more for Canadian agricultural producers and small business operators.

A recent survey of my constituents indicates that 78% support removing the carbon tax. Businesses are struggling with the extra burden of this tax and some are unsure if they will even be able to survive this year due to the rising costs.

Overall, my constituents have no faith in the Liberal government's ability to offer hope for their financial stability or future prosperity. What Canadians need is a Conservative government that will axe the carbon tax.

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### EASTER

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, in the words of the newly installed Archbishop of Toronto, the Most Rev. Francis Leo, to our youth, "Do not be afraid of the world. Do not be afraid to give of your life in service for others. Do not be afraid to dream big dreams and to want to transform the world. Do not be afraid to commit to Jesus and to his Gospel. Do not be afraid to love the Church".

A week from today, Christians in Canada and around the world will observe the culmination of Lent, a time of prayer, fasting and almsgiving that prepares us for the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

From Good Friday to Easter Monday, family and friends will gather to reflect on the values of sacrifice, good stewardship and copious love. This is a time of renewal and hope, when we give thanks for our many blessings and recommit to being there for one another, spread kindness and, yes, indulge in delicious Easter eggs.

This Easter, I am thinking of the countless Christians who are persecuted around the world because of their faith.

*Buona Pasqua a tutti.* Happy Easter.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS**

● (1120)

*[Translation]***GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Madam Speaker, we can imagine the conversation between the Prime Minister and the minister: “Mr. Minister, how can we avoid being found guilty of breaking ethics laws? Oh, I know, Mr. Prime Minister, I will appoint my sister-in-law as the commissioner and we can discuss each case around the supper table. That’s a brilliant idea. I like appointing our family members and friends as independent officers to investigate us.”

There is just one problem. Having already appointed three people who are friends and members of the family, will they run out of family members and friends for these positions?

*[English]*

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the interim Ethics Commissioner is a career public servant who has served in a senior role in the Ethics Commissioner’s office for more than 10 years, beginning when the Harper government was in office.

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**TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Madam Speaker, Liberals love to suck up to big, oligopolistic corporations that raise prices for consumers and make life less affordable. They get lots of support from the NDP for this corporatist agenda. Lately, the Liberals have been on a real ride. Today, they announced that they think there is too much competition in the wireless and Internet business and that they have allowed for a massive merger.

When will the Liberals start standing up for consumers instead of standing up for price raising and high-cost corporate oligarchs?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives and their leader, that is for sure. We listen to Canadians, and I think they should do that more often. Canadians have told us one thing: they want lower prices. The way to have lower prices is through competition. The way to have more competition is to have a strong, fourth national player that will bring prices down. That is why the transfer of licence will go forward with 21 conditions. They have made a contract with Canadians, which is enforceable and with penalties. That is what Canadians want; they want lower prices.

\* \* \*

**CARBON PRICING**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Madam Speaker, despite that, the Liberals’ policy on energy is to deliberately raise prices. At midnight tonight, 12:01 a.m. to be precise, the carbon tax will rise on gas, heat and groceries.

The Liberals originally said it would cost less, but just yesterday, a report from their own Parliamentary Budget Officer demonstrated that 80% of Canadians will pay more in tax. On average, it will be \$1,500 more. Tomorrow morning, they are going to wake up to higher prices. It is April Fool’s Day and the joke will be on Canadians.

Why will the Liberals not cancel this tax?

**Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as much as the bench opposite would like to deny it, climate change is real. Do members know what else is real? The cheques that will arrive in people’s mailboxes over the next few weeks are real. This will mean \$1,000 to residents in Manitoba. Those cheques will arrive quarterly. This is going to help with affordability. This is going to help with cash flow. The Conservatives are doing nothing for affordability and they are certainly doing nothing on climate change.

\* \* \*

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it has been three years since a killer went on a rampage in Nova Scotia. We now know of the incredible incompetence at the top of the RCMP that has raged on ever since the Prime Minister took office. He named an incompetent commissioner and has tried to destroy our national police force, with deadly consequences. Worse yet, the commission ignored the victims and he has done nothing to reverse the original cause of the violence in the first place.

Will the Prime Minister reverse the damage he has done so Canadians can live in safety and peace?

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, although the work of the commission has concluded, we know that the grief and loss of the families and communities will remain forever.

Yesterday, we received the report from the commission. It is a road map to pursue necessary changes, whether within the RCMP or in regard to semi-automatic firearms or gender-based violence. We will work closely with all involved to pursue these reforms, because that is what Canadians expect and deserve.

● (1125)

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Madam Speaker, on Tuesday, I said there was a crisis with stabbings across the country. People are being stabbed in broad daylight. The Prime Minister stood up and said not to worry; he is going to ban hunting rifles, even though it is knives that do stabbings, not hunting rifles. It is not the Inuit hunter in Nunavut who is causing stabbings in downtown Vancouver.



All of these facts angered and frustrated the Prime Minister. He became visibly upset and ran out the back door. He has not been back since. The Prime Minister was obviously frightened and concerned by that debate—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. Leader of the Opposition knows the rules and that we do not mention the presence or absence of members in the House.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Madam Speaker, is the Prime Minister okay, and will he ever be back in the House of Commons to debate me?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I asked the hon. member to be wary of the rules, and the hon. member repeated comments that he knows are against the rules. We will take one question out of the next round of Conservative questions.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Manicouagan.

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### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the IPCC has just tabled its synthesis report on climate change, which it called a “survival guide for humanity”.

Greenpeace said, “This is the final warning...for this decade [which] will have impacts for thousands of years”.

However, the federal budget still provides at least \$37 billion in fossil fuel subsidies. Ottawa is still trying to greenwash pollution from dirty energy.

When will the federal government realize that its short-sighted budgets risk ruining the planet for thousands of years?

[*English*]

**Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, all members of this House know that we are working very hard to reduce emissions from the oil and gas sector. We are going to be capping oil and gas emissions. We will be implementing a clean fuel standard and a clean electricity standard. We are going to be investing in carbon capture and storage. Very importantly, we are going to be eliminating fossil fuel subsidies, and we are going to be doing that two years in advance of the predicted schedule.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ):** Madam Speaker, not only does this budget not decrease fossil fuel production, but it relies on climate change for future fossil fuel extraction in the Arctic.

Equiterre stated, “We are deeply concerned about planned investments in future Arctic offshore oil and gas development.”

Greenpeace said, “We are concerned to see new subsidies for oil and gas companies making record profits.”

When will Canada stop driving the planet into the ground for the benefit of oil companies?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. col-

### Oral Questions

league for her question. The fact of the matter is that the government has already invested over \$100 billion in this country's clean economy.

In the budget tabled this week, we committed to increasing the country's clean electricity capacity. We are going to harness hydrogen as another source of clean energy.

We are here to build the economy of the future with Canadian workers, and we will continue to use—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

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### TELECOMMUNICATIONS

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, with prices skyrocketing, Canadians expect this government to work to make their life more affordable, but the Liberals have let families down time and time again.

This time, they gave Rogers and Shaw the green light to continue gouging Canadians on their Internet and cellphone bills. We are already paying some of the highest prices in the world for these services. The Liberals are letting business leaders get rich at the expense of Canadian families.

Why did the minister and the government let Canadians down?

• (1130)

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. However, I think he missed this morning's press conference. This morning, we said that Canadians asked us for one thing: to lower the price of telecommunications services in Canada.

The best way to do that is to have competition, and we need a fourth national player to do that. Not only will we have a fourth national player, but we also imposed 21 conditions in an unprecedented contract with Canadians. We will be there to ensure that this contract is respected to lower prices in Canada.

[*English*]

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I know the minister has said he is going to watch this Frankenstein deal like a hawk, but he has left Canadian consumers to the buzzards. In fact, the minister has given the green light to Rogers and at the same time given the red light to his own industry committee and the Competition Bureau, which has been opposed to this.

*Oral Questions*

For decades, Liberal and Conservative governments have allowed these massive telco companies to make huge profits off the backs of hard-working Canadians. This is a disaster that will end with less competition, massive layoffs and higher prices. Why have the Liberals thrown in the towel, sided with the telco CEOs and stuck Canadian families with higher prices and the bill?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I have enormous respect for my colleague, but when we gave the red light, we did not approve the transfer of licence from Shaw to Rogers. That was very clear. Instead, we listened to Canadians, something that everyone in this House should do. Canadians have told us one thing: Bring prices down and have more competition. The way to do that in Canada is to have a fourth national player. That is why we imposed conditions. We want lower prices for Canadians, and we will be watching them like a hawk.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa.

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer:** Madam Speaker, as farmers look to begin seeding, input costs—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I advised members that I was going to take out the next question from the Conservatives and I am taking it out. As members know, it is the prerogative of the Chair to determine who the next speaker is, and my prerogative is to choose the hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa.

\* \* \*

**CARBON PRICING**

**Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the Liberals are tripling their carbon tax, and tonight at midnight they will carry out their plan by raising the carbon tax again. Gas is going up, home heating is going up and groceries are going up.

Gladys emailed me the other day saying that she cannot afford this tax hike. She said, “We cannot afford more useless taxes.”

Will the Liberals stand up for Canadians like Gladys and cancel their plan to increase the carbon tax tonight at midnight?

**Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member is from my home province of Manitoba and will know that Manitobans will receive \$1,000 in climate rebate cheques over the next year. They will receive those cheques quarterly.

The hon. member will also know that there is a cost to climate change. We in Manitoba have had two one-in-300-year floods, costing \$1 billion each. Agriculture has been dramatically impacted. We have had 1,700 people driven from their homes due to floods. There is a cost to climate change and we are addressing—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands.

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Madam Speaker, as farmers look to begin seeding, input costs are top of mind. They have already been losing tons of money under

the carbon tax, but the Liberals are going to raise it again at midnight tonight.

What makes it worse is that the Minister of Agriculture voted this week against an exemption for on-farm fuels. Even the Liberal chair of the agriculture committee voted with the Conservatives. He gets it, so why does the minister keep voting against farmers but is supporting the increase in the carbon tax at midnight tonight?

• (1135)

**Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am glad to hear my colleague talk about input costs. Input costs have risen, and not because of any taxes but because of demand.

I hope the hon. member will support the budget, as we have increased interest-free advance payment programs by up to \$350,000, something the Conservative members have supported in the past. I hope they will support the budget.

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the Conservatives know that technology, not carbon taxes, will improve our environment, yet every time the Conservatives question the carbon tax or point out the costs, the Liberals stand up and point out some person who has lost their house in a recent fire, flood or hurricane as a reason to raise the carbon tax. The carbon tax will only make these people poorer.

The Liberals tell us that effective tonight, they will be raising the carbon tax again. When will they cancel this disastrous plan?

**Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as I said yesterday, something is not sinking in. The climate rebate will make eight out of 10 families better off. That is in a PBO report.

What will not leave people better off is investing in cryptocurrency. I gave the Leader of the Opposition two or three times to apologize for his very reckless advice to Canadians, but it really underlines that the opposition has no plan for the economy, no plan for the environment and certainly no plan for climate change.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC):** Madam Speaker, while the Prime Minister stays in a swanky \$6,000-a-night hotel struggling with just one butler, Sue, a senior in my riding, sees herself working three days a week. Why? It is because this costly NDP-Liberal coalition is set to raise its carbon tax again at midnight, meaning that Sue and all Canadians are going to pay more for heating, eating, driving and living. Perhaps it should focus on a real climate plan instead of punishing Canadians with a carbon tax.

Why will this costly coalition—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

**Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is really puzzling. Every single person on that side of the aisle campaigned in 2021 on putting a price on pollution. Stephen Harper was in favour of a carbon tax before he was against it. The member for Wellington—Halton Hills made it the centrepiece of his leadership campaign in 2017. The MP for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, as a member of the B.C. government, actually introduced the first carbon price in North America.

The Conservatives need to stop flip-flopping, get serious about climate change and present their own plan.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Madam Speaker, tonight, 12:01 a.m. will spell very bad news for Canadians from coast to coast to coast. The Liberal carbon tax is going up.

This is going to have a direct impact on every family in Canada, as the Parliamentary Budget Officer demonstrated yesterday, with numbers to prove it. Transportation, food, heating—they will all cost more.

Why is the government once again punishing Canadian workers and families?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as my hon. colleague knows very well, the price on pollution does not apply in Quebec. Quebec is a leader in managing the clean economy.

Every time we have cut taxes for workers, the Conservatives have voted against it, whether it was a tax rebate for workers or a tax cut for Canadians.

With this budget, we already know that they are going to vote against workers. They are the ones voting against it, and we are the ones supporting Canadians.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Madam Speaker, that clearly shows that this government is completely out of touch with reality.

In a March 15 interview with the Journal de Québec, Groupe Robert, a well-established Quebec transport company, stated that this will have a direct impact on everything that comes from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Not only do the Liberals not know what they are talking about, but everything will cost more for all Canadians, including Quebecers.

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, what we must be clear about is that climate change has a cost for Canadians.

We all remember the wildfires in Fort McMurray. We all remember the floods in Calgary. We all remember the flooding that happened across the country.

We must fight climate change. Economists have said that the best mechanism in our system is a price on pollution to combat climate change. That is what we are implementing. We will fight climate change.

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● (1140)

**GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS**

**Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Madam Speaker, if there is one role that must be free from any and all appearance of conflict of interest, it is the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner.

The Liberals are proving their total lack of judgment once again by appointing a minister's sister-in-law as interim commissioner. We are not questioning her competence or integrity. Cabinet is the one at fault for choosing to appoint a family member of one of their own.

The appearance of conflict of interest is obvious. Even though they do not seem to know what a conflict of interest is, we are asking the Liberals to reconsider this appointment.

Will they reconsider this appointment?

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would emphasize that the interim Ethics Commissioner is a career public servant who has served in a senior role in the Ethics Commissioner's office for more than 10 years. That is beginning when the Harper government was actually in office.

[Translation]

**Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Madam Speaker, this is just another in a long list of Liberal ethical lapses.

They appointed one of the Prime Minister's neighbours from the cottage as special rapporteur on Chinese interference. They appointed a Liberal staffer to head the commission on Ottawa's protest convoy. Today, they appointed a minister's sister-in-law as Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner.

No one is questioning her qualifications. That said, there are 39 million Canadians out there, so why does every Liberal appointment always go to someone with Liberal Party connections?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, once again, I would like to put an emphasis on the importance of recognizing the fine work that our civil servants do. I would just say that the interim Ethics Commissioner who is being referenced is a career public servant. She has served in a senior role in the Ethics Commissioner's office for more than 10 years, beginning when the Harper government was in office. We owe a great deal to our professional civil servants.

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**TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

**Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC):** Madam Speaker, Canadians pay the highest cellphone prices in the world. In fact, Rogers telecommunications is the most expensive telecommunications carrier in the world. How expensive is it? It is three times as expensive as Australia and twice as expensive as the U.S. and Europe. The Rogers-Shaw deal will only make the priciest and the biggest company only bigger. We need more competition in Canada, which means not just a fourth carrier, but 40 carriers to supply more choice to Canadians, and lower prices. When will the minister get serious about competition instead of pandering to just one monopoly?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased with the question from my colleague. Perhaps he did not fully listen to the press conference this morning. If he looks at the contract the prices that we see in Quebec, which are on average 20% lower than in the rest of Canada, now will have to be offered in Ontario, Manitoba, British Columbia and Alberta. In addition to that, we got commitments to have a headquarters in Calgary, Alberta and 3,000 new jobs in western Canada. Canadians know that we have their backs and western Canadians understand that.

**Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC):** Madam Speaker, in fact, Videotron's prices are higher than Freedom Mobile's prices, so if Liberals really believed in competition they would have let a competitive bidding process happen for Freedom. The Liberals are in the back pocket of Rogers. They allowed Rogers to ignore three higher bidders from Freedom. These Liberals and the PMO were lobbied more than 60 times by Videotron and Rogers during the sales process, but did not meet once with any other bidder. Why did Rogers get privileged access to the Liberals that other bidders did not?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I have enormous respect for my colleague and my critic. One thing he would know is that, as the regulator, they do not meet with the parties. That is a basic principle in due process. What Canadians, particularly western Canadians, understood this morning is that we have their backs because what they want is lower prices. The way to do that is to have competition and the way to do that is for a fourth national player. Members on the other side who may not have had a chance can read the contract with Canadians. That is the way that we bring lower prices in Canada.

• (1145)

**Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the minister only needs to check the lobbyist registry to see more than 65 meetings with his department and the PMO. In December, this Liberal minister said he would not rule on the sale until the legal challenges were over. There is a legal challenge before the CRTC currently on this deal where Rogers is providing preferential rates to Videotron for access to its network that no other cellphone provider can get. Why has this minister flip-flopped on his commitment to wait for the legal challenges to be over? Is it because Rogers set today as the deadline?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am so happy that my colleagues ask questions. I look forward to more questions because one thing that people at home understand is that we are fighting every step of the way to bring prices lower in Canada. What we have achieved today is a new chapter in telecom in Canada. For the first time in Canada's history, more than 150 years, we have binding legal commitments by telecom in a contract with Canada to bring prices lower in Canada. It is this government that did that. Canadians know we have their backs. We will fight for them every step of the way.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Madam Speaker, today the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry announced the merger of Rogers and Shaw, communications companies, which forces Videotron, another company involved in the transaction, to lower its prices in Quebec. However, the other companies involved in this transaction were not forced to lower their wireless prices.

Why?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. It is fairly straightforward. We are the regulator and there are two parties involved, which is why we were able to get commitments from both Videotron and Rogers.

There is one thing Canadians understand, and it is very simple. If Videotron adds pricing pressure in western Canadian markets, it will cause the other telecoms to lower their prices as well. Boosting competition brings prices down. That is exactly what we did today for Canadians.

[English]

### NATURAL RESOURCES

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I have been speaking with energy workers, miners, auto workers and innovators who are more than ready to make Canada a world leader in clean energy, but to get cheap and renewable energy to market requires massive investments in the national energy grid.

Now, New Democrats worked with this government and we have pushed this government to get serious about sustainable jobs that are tied to obligations for good union wages and apprenticeships. What kind of funding will the government put in place to build the electricity grid that Canadians need for a sustainable 21st century?

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am very happy that the member opposite asked that question, because this budget that we tabled this week shows exactly our commitment to a strong, sustainable electrical grid. We know that union workers and good-paying jobs are part of that work that we need to get done.

We are supporting strong, sustainable jobs right across this country, and we know that our union workers are the backbone of the work we need to do.

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** Madam Speaker, Canadians want to see their government take leadership on tackling the climate crisis and creating good union jobs. New Democrats forced the Liberals to do just that in this year's budget, but more needs to be done.

For eight years, the Liberals have missed the mark by handing out billions to rich oil and gas CEOs who are jacking up prices for people and polluting our planet. Will the Liberals finally stand up to big oil, eliminate fossil fuel subsidies and create a green industrial strategy?

**Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Labour, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I think the budget speaks for itself.

I would say "forced" is a little harsh. Some of us have been on this for quite some time, making sure that workers are at the centre of this energy transition that is occurring, which involves not only building up renewables but also lowering emissions in the oil and gas sector itself.

It is Canada's largest industry. It is something that we cannot ignore. The only ones who know how to lower emissions, and the only ones who know how to build up renewables, are the workers in those industries. Not only do we support them, but we will insist that they lead this transition everywhere across this country.

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### GENDER EQUALITY

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, on International Transgender Day of Visibility, let us stand up for the protection and promotion of the human rights of people in Canada who are transgender, queer, non-binary and two-spirit.

### Oral Questions

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth share what our government is doing to lift up transgender voices and be allies to the transgender community?

• (1150)

**Ms. Jenna Sudds (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, on this day, I am thinking of Emma Wakelin, a trans woman who shared that "It feels like every day we awake to a new law being proposed to strip us of our human rights, or more violence that extinguishes yet another trans life."

As the trans community members face attacks against their identity, dignity and existence, we, as a government, will continue to stand with them today and every day.

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### GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Madam Speaker, Liberals chose a top minister's family member as the interim Ethics Commissioner. Of course, they gave millions of tax dollars in contracts to close friends and staff's relatives. This Prime Minister is the only one ever to break ethics laws twice and his MPs have too, four more times, for vacations and perks for their pals.

After eight years, Canadians have never struggled so much, but Liberals have never had it so good. Is that why the Liberals thought that Canadians would not see their ethics pick as anything other than trying to cover their own butts in the future?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, there is actually a very simple answer for the member opposite. The interim Ethics Commissioner is a career public servant who has served in a senior role in the Ethics Commissioner's office for more than 10 years, and that began when the Harper government was in office.

**Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Madam Speaker, we should all remember clam scam, when the then fisheries minister was found guilty of an ethics breach for awarding a \$24-million licence to a company to be ran by his wife's cousin. Now the Liberals have appointed the same cabinet minister's sister-in-law as the Ethics Commissioner. Really?

Can they only find family and insiders willing to work for them, or is this another attempt to censor disclosure of their ongoing ethics issues? Which is it?

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs recused himself from all deliberations and decisions related to the appointment of the interim Ethics Commissioner.

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**FISHERIES AND OCEANS**

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Madam Speaker, members of this House have worked for years on funding and governance for the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. As a result, the budget last year promised \$44.9 million to DFO for the commission. However, every step of the way it seems like DFO is obstructing the will of Parliament. Last year, it dragged its heels in transferring that money to the commission.

When will the President of the Treasury Board crack the whip and ensure DFO complies with the will of Parliament and best practices on governance?

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is interesting that the Conservatives raised this question, because it was in fact Conservative members who underfunded and did not increase funding to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission.

There is good news. In this budget, we corrected the previous mistakes of the Conservatives—

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

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell:** Madam Speaker, they can continue to heckle me because they do not like the facts. The fact is that we are actually investing in our Great Lakes. We are going to continue to protect them, while the Conservatives allowed them to be underfunded and did not take the protection of our Great Lakes seriously.

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**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Madam Speaker, in the year before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Canada was spending 1.28% of GDP on defence. According to NATO last week, in the year since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Canada has spent 1.29% of GDP. I read the budget document, but I could not find any information about defence expenditure as a per cent of GDP over the next five years.

Will the government commit to providing this very important information to the House as soon as possible?

**Mr. Bryan May (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the Canadian Armed Forces plays an essential role in defending Canadians and supporting global security. We have been consistent in supporting its work, starting with our 2017 defence policy, which increased spending by over 70%.

In the past year, we have made new investments in Canadian national defence totalling more than \$55 million. We are also undertaking a review of our defence policy in the face of a changing

global environment. Rest assured that we will keep making necessary smart investments in our forces.

\* \* \*

● (1155)

[Translation]

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the budget proves that Ottawa has not learned from its mistakes. If there is one lesson to be learned from the pandemic, it is that EI is failing most people who lose their jobs. In spite of that, the government is abandoning the reform it has been promising since 2015. Even today, 60% of people who lose their jobs will be left with nothing, particularly seasonal workers, the self-employed and those in non-standard jobs.

Why does the government still refuse to help people who lose their jobs?

[English]

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, budget 2023 invests in seasonal workers so they have five additional weeks of coverage for a total of 45 weeks. Also, in budget 2023, we propose establishing a new independent tripartite board of appeal to hear cases regarding employment insurance claims.

We know Canada's EI system is complex, and that is why we are focused on improving it. In the past two years, the minister has led more than 35 virtual, national and regional round tables with workers, employers and academics. EI reform is a priority of this government. We are on it and we will get it done.

[Translation]

**Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the only thing Ottawa took away from the pandemic is debt. The budget passes that debt on to workers.

Ottawa expects to collect an extra \$24 billion in workers' EI premiums. However, the government is not putting that money towards EI reform. It is taking workers' money and using it to pay off \$24 billion in pandemic debt.

Why not use workers' money to protect them rather than paying off pandemic debt at their expense?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we have a great deal of respect for the workers in this country. We supported them during the pandemic. We take the entire EI system very seriously. The minister has been focusing on the modernization of the EI system.

We will continue this work and we will have a solid plan to respond to workers' needs.

\* \* \*

[English]

### TAXATION

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the budget still allows the automatic tax increase to take place tonight on beer, wine and spirits. Under this Liberal government, simple pleasures like enjoying beer with friends after work or a bottle of wine over dinner with a loved one have become unaffordable luxuries for working Canadians.

Will the government commit today to support my bill, Bill C-266, and cancel the automatic annual tax increase on beer, wine and spirits?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I have said it in the House already this week, and I will say it again. We listened to Canadians, we worked with the industry, we worked with our Liberal caucus, which leaned in on this issue, and we are going to pause the escalator tax on beer, wine and spirits for one year at 2%. It was going to be less than a cent for a can of beer, and now it is going to be even less for a can of beer.

We are with the tourism industry. We are with this sector. We are going to support them. We have heard from Canadians. We made the right move.

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Madam Speaker, we are in the middle of an affordability crisis. Any tax increase is too much. The tax was too high to begin with. There is no room for any more tax. The budget adds \$4,200 in new costs for every Canadian family, more spending, more taxes, more debt. That means more inflation.

Canadians cannot even afford basic necessities like food, housing and transportation, and tonight the tax on beer, wine and spirits is going up, just as it does every year automatically under the current government.

Why will the Liberal government not commit today that it will cancel the automatic annual tax increase on beer, wine and spirits?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the Conservative opposition has a golden opportunity to support Canadians at a time of high inflation by supporting our budget. Conservatives have no record to stand on when it comes to taxes. When we lowered, not once, not twice but three times, taxes on middle-class Canadians, how did the Conservatives vote? They voted against. When we reduced taxes on workers, how did the Conservatives vote? They voted against. When we lowered taxes across the board, once again they voted against.

### Oral Questions

They have a phobia of us supporting Canadians. Thank goodness, we have got Canadians' backs.

\* \* \*

● (1200)

### IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the immigration minister's program to admit the families of language and cultural advisers who assisted our troops in Afghanistan has such rigid criteria that it will freeze out almost everybody it should be helping.

For example, only those who were still in Afghanistan after July 22, 2021 are eligible, so this rules out the Afghans who were in the most dangerous parts of the country and who therefore had to flee their homes before the Taliban overran their regions. These family members are now trapped in third countries and are in danger of being transported back to Afghanistan, where they will be killed.

Will the minister change these restrictive criteria to fix the mess he has created?

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his advocacy. I have said it in the House, and I will say it again today: If it were a matter of will, there would be 40,000 Afghan refugees here already, but we know that in reality, with everything that has been happening, there have been challenges and obstacles. We are working very hard in addressing those, for instance through Bill C-41. There are a number of factors that we do not fully control, including safe passage.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

**Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, Canada's innovation and economic priorities are evolving. We will continue to prioritize clean growth, good jobs and investments for the future.

Budget 2023 announced many innovative new measures that will enable Canada to play a leadership role on the international stage. Can the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry tell us about these important measures?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent question, which gives me an opportunity to talk about the budget measures.

*Oral Questions*

My colleague is right. We have taken action to achieve our ambitious goals by introducing initiatives like a tax credit for clean technology manufacturing, a tax credit for clean hydrogen and a tax credit for electricity.

The people I want to thank today are Canadian workers. It is thanks to their expertise, know-how and excellence that we are able to attract record investments to our country, like the recent investments by Volkswagen.

\* \* \*

[English]

**DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the cover-up continues. It has been a month since the Prime Minister's national security adviser and the director of CSIS committed to providing the dates on which the Prime Minister was briefed about Beijing's election interference. One month later, there is still no response. All the Prime Minister needs to do is check his calendar.

When will the Prime Minister stop the obstruction, stop the cover-up and give us the dates?

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, on the contrary, the PROC committee has been working diligently on this issue, continuing to hold more meetings to bring in more witnesses as opposition members have requested, and we support that. We will continue to work with the committee to find the most appropriate time, because the committee has other business as well, but this is a top priority to ensure that we are dealing with the issues of foreign interference, and we will continue to work hard on that.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS**

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Madam Speaker, ethics violations do not seem to be a problem for the Liberals, as long as they stay in the family.

If there is any position where independence must not merely be presumed but be a certainty, it is that of Ethics Commissioner. Someone at the Office of the Prime Minister, however, thought that it would be a good idea to temporarily appoint a Liberal minister's sister-in-law to rule on the ethics of ministers in the Liberal government.

When will the Prime Minister put a stop to his hypocrisy and revoke the interim appointment of the sister-in-law of his best friend, the minister?

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will emphasize once again that the interim Ethics Commissioner is a career public servant who has served in a senior role in the Ethics Commissioner's office for more than 10 years, beginning when the Harper government was in office.

• (1205)

**CHILD CARE**

**Mr. Heath MacDonald (Malpeque, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, families in my riding of Malpeque are benefitting from important, significant savings thanks to our government's early learning and child care program, but they are concerned that in the future another government, like the one that campaigned against their child care program, would cut the program.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development highlight to this House how it is supporting families across P.E.I. and also how we are progressing in enacting this important social program into legislation?

**Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am so glad to report that Prince Edward Island, as well as provinces and territories across the country, is taking important steps to make child care affordable for Canadian families. In fact, P.E.I. announced that it cut fees by 50% last December. Day care fees are coming down, and new spaces are being created. Wages are increasing for early childhood educators, and we know how critical this is, because the childhood educator workforce is the foundation of our system. We need to make sure that the people who take care of our children are respected and well compensated.

\* \* \*

**GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

**Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the Mass Casualty Commission released a scathing report yesterday. It made clear that gender-based violence is not treated with the urgency and seriousness it deserves. To save lives, police must change the way they respond to reports of gender-based violence. We cannot remain idle. Lives are at risk. The government has an obligation to act with meaningful police reform, including addressing the culture of systemic racism within the RCMP.

Will the Liberals implement these recommendations without delay?

**Ms. Jenna Sudds (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, of course the tragic events in Nova Scotia nearly three years ago devastated the nation. Our government is working hard to ensure that every woman has the support she needs and a place to sleep each and every night. We continue to make investments to ensure that this is the case, including in the budget just announced the other day, with \$160 million, starting this year, for women's programs to ensure we are supporting shelters and women fleeing violence.



[Translation]

### FINANCE

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.):** Madam Speaker, we have learned that the Governor General spent \$700,000 on a four-day trip to Germany. This included more than \$75,000 for four nights in the region's most luxurious hotels. This is on top of the \$80,000 spent during another trip to the Middle East, just for in-flight meals for the Governor General and her 29 guests. This works out to \$2,600 per person for food during the flight alone.

That is obscene. Can the Prime Minister tell us whether he approves of that kind of spending? If not, has he taken the necessary steps to put an end to such wastefulness, once and for all?

**Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is very important to remember that the expenses related to this trip by the Governor General were similar to other trips made by previous governors general. We must always recognize that when the Governor General represents our country, she brings a delegation to represent the best of Canada on many issues.

We are aware of this, as is the Governor General herself. She will continue to monitor her spending.

\* \* \*

[English]

### POINTS OF ORDER

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Today, during question period, the member for Pickering—Uxbridge said, “I am very concerned about the health of your baby” to me. It was an absolutely inappropriate and unparliamentary term.

Quite frankly, I am proud to be here, 32 weeks pregnant, fighting for my constituents. I demand an apology.

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am absolutely disgusted that the member opposite would outright lie, and yes, I am saying “outright lie”. I absolutely said—

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

• (1210)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** We do not use that language in the House, as the hon. member well knows. The same thing could be said in different ways.

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell:** Madam Speaker, the exchange that happened was that the member opposite said to me, “You know, you don't have to be so mean all the time”, and I responded, “Like I care about your opinion of me.”

For the member to actually use such a disgusting lie to try to defame—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member will be invited to rethink her choice of words.

### Points of Order

The hon. member will be invited to exercise judgment in the use of words, and please consider that it is not a parliamentary acceptable word.

I would invite her to apologize and retract that word from the record.

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell:** Madam Speaker, I will withdraw the word but the sentiment remains, that it absolutely did not—

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

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Withdraw the words—

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

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Order, order. This will be looked at in Hansard, to answer the hon. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake. We will get back to the hon. member on what happened.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable on a point of order.

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Madam Speaker, during question period, you decided to take out a question from the official opposition. Without calling your decision into question, I would like to ask the Table for clarification about the application of the decision.

As you know, you have a list in your hands to help you announce the members who will be speaking. I do not believe that there is any standing order of the House that permits you to decide to take out a specific question based on a list provided to you. The list is there as a guide to make the House run smoothly.

I would like the Table to tell us exactly how to proceed if such a situation were to arise again. I think we need to know. As you noted, it made the opposition members uneasy. We want to follow the rules of the House, as does the Leader of the Opposition. We need some clarification about how such decisions will be applied in future.

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

[English]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I am sorry, I did not hear what was said.

**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:** Madam Speaker, I think this is absolutely shameful. The comments that were just made by the member for Pickering—Uxbridge, yet again, denigrate women. We need to be supporting women in politics and not doing things like that.

I asked for an apology. She has called me a liar in this chamber four times now today. This is absolutely inappropriate, and I demand an apology.

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

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Order. As I told the hon. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, we will listen. I did not hear it right now. I was discussing—

*Routine Proceedings*

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

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I do not dispute it. I am just saying that we will look at Hansard, and we will get back to the hon. member on what is found. I cannot rule on this right now. I have to wait until we look at what Hansard and the tapes will tell us.

• (1215)

**Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC):** Madam Speaker, justice does not only have to be done but also be seen to have been done in order to uphold the dignity of the House.

When a member, four times, says something so patently offensive as calling another hon. member a liar, it must be dealt with. Our member said it once and was removed from the House. Justice has to be seen to be done in the House.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the member for Haldimand—Norfolk said it very well, and I do appreciate that. I just want to second what she said.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, prior to the interaction that took place, you were making a ruling on another point of order. I think it is best that you conclude the first point of order.

I know there are one or two members who might want to address the second point of order raised, but maybe we can put to rest the first point of order and then go on to the second one.

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Indeed, I will continue on the point of order raised by the member for Mégantic—L'Érable regarding the list used during oral question period. The lists provided by the parties are only used as a guide. The Chair has no obligation to follow them.

After I decided to take out the question, I discussed the matter with the clerks. An exchange took place with the individuals working with the official opposition whip in order to reach an agreement. It is really at the Chair's discretion as to whether to follow the order on the list when taking out a question.

The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Madam Speaker, I understand, but I wanted to know one thing specifically. One of our members rose to speak when none of our other members were rising. However, you gave the floor to the next member on the list. That is why I think it is important to get clarification.

The member we chose to ask the question was entitled, in my opinion, to ask it, because he was the only member rising to be recognized and able to ask the question.

For your information, there should be no list, so you could not have asked the next member to rise in place of another, since this list normally does not exist, according to the rules.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The member is absolutely right. It is true that, technically, there is no list. There is just an agreement among the parties. That is why we consulted the whip's office to sort this out. Thank you.

[*English*]

On the other point of order, the hon. member for Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine.

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** Madam Speaker, I just wanted to clarify something on the original point of order. I was literally sitting in front of the member and heard the exchange. I can attest that what the member for Pickering—Uxbridge said was not what was said by the member opposite. I can attest that the member, in no way, ever referenced that, but I understand—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** We are not going to debate what the initial point of order was, which is what happened during Oral Questions. It was more on the use of the words “liar” or “lies” afterward, which is truly the unparliamentary part of the issue.

On the exchange that happened during question period, I did not hear what was said. We will have to go back to the recordings and Hansard. I am talking about the initial comments. I am not talking about the word “lies”. Everybody heard that, and that is certainly not parliamentary language.

• (1220)

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Pontiac on the same point of order.

**Mrs. Sophie Chatel:** Madam Speaker, I want to say that I was here too. Like my colleague, I clearly heard the words that were said. I am the mother of twins. I have been pregnant too. I do not understand how someone can exploit that for political purposes. Frankly, it is disappointing.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** We are not debating the issue that gave rise to the point of order, but rather what followed. That is what needs to be addressed.

[*English*]

We will continue, and I will come back to the hon. member with a resolution.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam 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.

*Routine Proceedings***COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## STATUS OF WOMEN

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to present the sixth report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, entitled “A Step-by-Step Approach to Supporting the Mental Health of Young Women and Girls in Canada”.

This was one of the most difficult studies the committee has done in my years in the House of Commons. It was done with incredible collaboration from the staff, including Alexie, Dominique, Clare and our new clerk Danielle, the incredible staff of members of Parliament who worked on this and everybody in the room. However, most of all, it was the 11 members of Parliament who sat around the table to make sure that we were presenting a study that was good for women and girls. We worked to make sure the recommendations are things that should be listened to.

I thank my incredible colleagues for putting forward this unanimous report and putting the welfare of women and girls first.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**PETITIONS**

## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am honoured to present a petition signed by citizens of Châteauguay—Lacolle that has collected over 180 signatures and focuses on Canadian-based companies that contribute to human rights abuses and environmental damage around the world. Unfortunately, people who protest these abuses and stand up for their rights are often harassed, attacked or killed.

The petition calls on the House of Commons to pass human rights and environmental due diligence legislation that would require companies to prevent negative impacts throughout their global operations and their supply chains and require companies to exercise and report on due diligence.

I would like to thank Linda Bergeron, Micheline St-Arnaud and Josianne Leblanc for their long-standing work on this important issue.

[*English*]

## SPORT

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I have two petitions to table.

The first involves a sports inquiry. Over 700 petitioners have called for children and youth to have the right to participate in sports in Canada without maltreatment, abuse and harm. The athletes are asking the House of Commons to have judicial inquiry into the sports system.

I would like to thank Victoria Paraschak, a retired professor in Windsor, for doing this across Canada.

• (1225)

## TAXATION

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the second petition is with regard to taxation for those who work in the United States. Over 500 petitioners are affected by the tax rules of the Canada Revenue Agency and have almost double the tax.

They are calling upon the Government of Canada to extend the commuters a full grant of foreign tax credits for the withholdings, to make sure the CRA's 2020 temporary international income tax relief from section VII become permanent and to enact measures that the U.S. companies employing Canadian commuters are not required to hold a separate Canadian payroll for their taxation as it affects our economy.

## FIREARMS

**Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to present 12 petitions signed by residents of my constituency and surrounding communities.

The first seven petitions, signed by 1,287 residents, call upon the Parliament of Canada to stop the Liberal government's ban on hunting rifles.

## MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

**Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the next four petitions, signed by 115 residents, call upon the Government of Canada to delay its expansion of medical assistance in dying.

## GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

**Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the final petition, signed by 173 residents, calls upon the Parliament of Canada to remove the Prime Minister and his government from office.

## FIREARMS

**Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC):** Madam Speaker, today I am pleased to table three petitions on behalf of constituents in Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon.

The first petition calls upon the government to repeal Bill C-21. Hunting has a long-standing history in Canada for both indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians, and needlessly revoking citizens' firearms erases and discounts our history and traditions.

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING

**Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the second petition calls upon the government to do more to combat human trafficking.

Petitioners are particularly displeased about the egregious action the Government of Canada took in Bill C-5, which reduced sentencing and allows for house arrest for the crime of human trafficking. They want to see that aspect of Bill C-5 repealed.

*Routine Proceedings*

## AIR TRANSPORTATION

**Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the third petition I am presenting today is calling upon the government to actually fulfill its commitment to allow for direct flights to Amritsar international through changes to the Canada-India Air Transport Agreement. We know the Government of Canada recently made amendments to the ATA with India, but it did not take that initial step of including Amritsar specifically in the agreement.

## OPIOIDS

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to table these petitions.

I speak on behalf of Canadians who are calling for action on the opioid crisis. It is no secret to Canadians that the opioid crisis is one of the most deadly crises we are facing in Canada. During the period between January 2016 and March 2020, over 30,000 Canadians died to the opioid epidemic.

These petitioners are calling for an end to the overdose crisis, ensuring that we have legal regulation of drugs, and ensuring the decriminalization of personal to end the stigma and save lives because we cannot, in fact, treat those who are dead.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition I am standing on behalf of is calling, on behalf of Canadians, for just transition legislation in the face of the climate emergency. It is no secret that the climate emergency is a serious issue here in Canada and across the world, and these petitioners are calling for action.

## CHARITABLE DONATIONS

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

It is a tremendous honour to rise today and present petition e-4155 on behalf of the people from Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo. This is a petition that advocates for a change to the Income Tax Act that would reflect community land trusts and beneficial tax interests for people who are donating land for the betterment of the community as a whole. This would be a game changer, when it comes to donations and building, to the benefit of all people in Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo and throughout Canada.

I want to thank the person who has been behind this drive with the Kamloops and District Chamber of Commerce and Colin O'Leary. I also want to thank Acacia Pangilinan and Brian Jones with the Kamloops and District Chamber of Commerce for their service. It is an honour to table this petition.

Given that Kamloops was the birthplace of the tax-free savings account, I hope we can have something as significant as that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice):** I will remind members that they are meant to stick to the words on the petitions in front of them.

The hon. member for Spadina—Fort York.

## HARBOURFRONT CENTRE

**Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition from many concerned citizens of Toronto who are extremely upset by Harbourfront Centre's lack of public consultation in undertaking repairs to a cultural landmark. When Heritage Canada provided Harbourfront Centre with \$20 million in repair and upgrade funding, it included the replacement of a much beloved and popular skating rink. Harbourfront, behind closed doors and without public consultation, decided to rip up this landmark's community skating rink.

The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to review its financial commitment to Harbourfront and its obligations. They also want the government to advise the centre that it has deviated from its initial goals and request the centre consult area residents on its new priorities, including maintaining the skating facility.

I thank the petitioners, especially Carol McCause, for their hard work on this important issue. Harbourfront Centre should throw open its doors and listen to the voices of our community and the taxpayers who provided this \$20 million.

• (1230)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice):** I will again remind members they are meant to stick to the words written on the petition from petitioners.

The next petition is from the member for Kanata—Carleton

## CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Ms. Jenna Sudds (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present two petitions from constituents in my riding.

The first petition was signed by 25 constituents in my riding of Kanata—Carleton. They would like to see the federal government do more to protect consumers, and as a result, want to see consumers reflected in important policy, regulatory and legislated decisions. To that end, the petitioners are calling on the government to establish an independent Canadian consumer advocate who would be answerable to government.

## VOTING AGE

**Ms. Jenna Sudds (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition I would like to present today is signed by 644 of my constituents, on Canada's democratic process. The petitioners are a group of passionate high school students from Earl of March Secondary School and these young people believe that youth possess the knowledge and experience to take part in the most important responsibility in a democracy and that is voting in elections.

In this petition, they call on the government to lower the minimum voting age to 16.

## PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to table a petition calling on the Government of Canada to urgently end the legislative poverty that 1.5 million disabled Canadians live with every day and to establish a Canada disability benefit that upholds human rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Two Vancouver East constituents, Harris Taylor and Jan Nathanson spoke with their neighbours to gather signatures and show the deep support in our community for lifting all disabled people out of poverty immediately.

I hope the government will heed their call and that all parties will work collaboratively together to swiftly establish an adequate benefit.

## FIREARMS

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have three petitions.

The first is to ensure that Bill C-21 does not get passed. It was the RCMP incompetence that led to punishing farmers and hunters.

## VACCINE MANDATES

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we have a request to condemn the unscientific mandates that kicked heroic members of the Canadian Armed Forces out after years of service because they were unable to take the shots.

## NUCLEAR ENERGY

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have an e-petition with over 1,000 signatures in support of the near surface disposal facility at the Chalk River Laboratories.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Andy Fillmore (Halifax, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to present a petition signed by over 800 Canadians from all 10 provinces and three territories, initiated by the African Nova Scotian Decade for People of African Descent Coalition.

The petitioners call upon the House of Commons to pass a resolution for the Government of Canada to apologize for Canada's role in the enslavement of African people and their descendants, create legislation recognizing Black Canadians as unique groups and renew Canada's commitment to addressing the generational effects of enslavement, segregation and systemic anti-Black racism.

The petitioners note that the UN has called for nations to acknowledge and apologize for the suffering and evils of the enslavement of African people and, as such, they urge the government to take action.

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the first petition I have to present today is from Canadians from across the country who are celebrating the release of the Michaels from China. However, they want to raise the fact that there are still 115 Canadians being detained in China, including Huseyin Celil, who has been detained for over 5,000 days. The Chinese government is refusing to recognize Mr. Celil's Canadian citizenship

*Routine Proceedings*

and is denying access to family, lawyers and Canadian officials.

The petitioners are calling on the government to demand that the Chinese government recognize Mr. Celil's Canadian citizenship, provide him with consular service and legal services in accordance with international law, formally state the release of Mr. Celil from Chinese detention and his return to Canada as a priority, and appoint a special envoy to work on Mr. Celil's release and to seek the assistance of the Americans and other allies around the world in obtaining Mr. Celil's release.

• (1235)

## MILITARY CHAPLAINCY

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the next petition I have is from folks from across Canada who are concerned about the defence advisory panel's report on systemic racism and discrimination in early 2022. This report calls for clergy from religious organizations who have a different view than the government on gender and sexuality to be banned as chaplains in the Canadian Armed Forces.

This report slanders mainstream Canadian religions as discriminatory, misogynist and sexist. All Canadians, including members of the armed forces, are entitled to charter right guarantees of freedom of religion.

Therefore, the undersigned of this petition call for a rejection of these recommendations and an affirmation that all Canadians, including members of the armed forces, have the right to freedom of religion.

## CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the final petition I present today is from petitioners from across Canada who are concerned about the Liberal Party's platform in 2021 denying the charitable status to organizations that have convictions about abortion which the Liberal Party disagrees with. This could jeopardize the charitable status of many hospitals, houses of worship, schools, homeless shelters and other charitable organizations that do not agree with the Liberal Party on this matter for reasons of conscience.

Therefore, the petitioners are calling on the government to protect and preserve the application of charitable status on a politically and ideologically neutral basis, without discrimination on the basis of political and religious views nor the imposition of another values test, and to affirm the right of Canadians to freedom of expression.

## HUMAN RIGHTS IN BANGLADESH

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have had these concerns expressed to me personally as people are genuinely and legitimately concerned about what is happening in Bangladesh today.

*Routine Proceedings*

The concerns and allegations, which have been reported on in great detail, refer to the Bangladesh government's crackdown on opposition political parties, critical intellectuals, news media and journalists to shut their voices, take away their citizen and democratic rights, and forcibly remain in power. The government has also been accused of instituting a system of forced disappearance, extrajudicial killings, false lawsuits and all means of intimidation through its aligned forces and armed activists, dealing with issues such as corruption, rape, torture, killings, kidnapping and other undemocratic actions beyond one's imagination.

The petitioners are asking the House of Commons to review the human rights violations and undemocratic actions of what is happening in Bangladesh and take all possible measures to support democracy, human rights and justice.

\* \* \*

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 1246 to 1252.

[Text]

Question No. 1246—**Mr. Michael Kram:**

With regard to the government's rejection of Sunwing Airlines' application to hire 63 pilots, as testified by Sunwing Airlines' president, Len Corrado, at the meeting of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, on January 12, 2023: (a) what are the details of all discussions or meetings that took place regarding this application; (b) what departments, agencies, offices and individuals were involved in the review and rejection of this application; and (c) what supporting documents exist regarding this application, including, but not limited to, emails, texts, briefing notes, memos and reports, and what are the details of such documents?

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, due to privacy considerations, Employment and Social Development Canada, or ESDC, does not disclose information regarding specific cases to anyone other than the employer and its authorized third parties.

Every quarter, the temporary foreign worker program publishes the list of employers that were issued a positive or negative labour market impact assessment, or LMIA, decision through Open Government. Lists of employers are currently available from 2014 to Q3 of 2022, up to the end of September, at the following links: <https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/90fed587-1364-4f33-a9ee-208181dc0b97> and <https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/f82f66f2-a22b-4511-bccf-e1d74db39ae5>.

New quarterly data is typically published within three months following the completion of the final month of the quarter. Q4 of 2022, from October to December, is tentatively scheduled to be published by the end of March 2023.

Question No. 1247—**Mr. Michael Kram:**

With regard to the government's rejection of Sunwing Airlines' application to hire pilots, as testified by Sunwing Airlines' president, Len Corrado, at the meeting of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, on January 12, 2023: why did the government reject the application?

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability**

**Inclusion, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, due to privacy considerations, Employment and Social Development Canada, or ESDC, does not disclose information regarding specific cases to anyone other than the employer and its authorized third parties.

Every quarter, the temporary foreign worker program publishes the list of employers that were issued a positive or negative labour market impact assessment, or LMIA, decision through Open Government. Lists of employers are currently available from 2014 to Q3 of 2022, up to the end of September, at the following links: <https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/90fed587-1364-4f33-a9ee-208181dc0b97> and <https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/f82f66f2-a22b-4511-bccf-e1d74db39ae5>.

New quarterly data is typically published within three months following the completion of the final month of the quarter. Q4 of 2022, from October to December, is tentatively scheduled to be published by the end of March 2023.

Question No. 1248—**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:**

With regard to the government's response to the harms caused by tobacco and since November 4, 2015: has the government joined or participated in legal action against any tobacco companies in relation to the harm caused by tobacco usage, and, if so, what are the details of each case, including the outcome?

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada has not joined or participated in any legal action against any tobacco company in relation to the harm caused by tobacco usage since November 4, 2015.

Question No. 1249—**Mrs. Laila Goodridge:**

With regard to the government's response to the opioid crisis and since November 4, 2015: has the government joined or participated in any legal action against (i) Purdue Pharma, (ii) McKinsey & Company, (iii) any other pharmaceutical companies, in relation to how their activities may have contributed to the opioid crisis, and, if so, what are the details of each case, including the outcome?

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, provincial and territorial governments, along with the Government of Canada, are part of the proposed class action commenced by British Columbia against 50 opioid manufacturers and distributors that allegedly acted inappropriately in the marketing and distribution of opioids. The defendant companies are listed in the attached addendum. One of those defendants was the Canadian entity of Purdue Pharma. In June 2022, British Columbia announced that it had reached a settlement with Purdue Pharma wherein Purdue agreed to pay \$150 million for the Canadian governments' claims. In December 2022, the B.C. court approved this Purdue settlement, as well as another out-of-court settlement negotiated by B.C. with the Roxane group of defendants. This legal action by British Columbia is ongoing as it relates to the remaining defendants, with multiple court hearings currently scheduled. British Columbia's application to certify this proposed class action lawsuit in the B.C. Supreme Court is scheduled to be heard in the fall of 2023.

*Routine Proceedings*

Provincial and territorial governments, along with the Government of Canada, are also part of the proposed class action commenced by British Columbia against McKinsey & Company, which allegedly acted inappropriately in the course of providing consulting services to opioid manufacturers and distributors. British Columbia commenced this proposed class action on behalf of all Canadian governments in December 2021. This legal action by British Columbia is still at a very early stage and is ongoing.

The list of defendants in British Columbia's proposed class action is as follows: Sanis Health Inc., Shoppers Drug Mart Inc., McKesson Canada Corporation, Mylan Pharmaceuticals ULC, Sandoz Canada Inc., Apotex Inc., Apotex Pharmaceutical Holdings, Inc., Bristol-Myers Squibb Canada, Bristol Myers Squibb Company, Paladin Labs Inc., Endo Pharmaceuticals Inc., Endo International PLC, Endo ventures Ltd., Ethypharm Inc., Janssen Inc., Johnson & Johnson, Pharmascience Inc., Joddes Limited, Pro Doc Limitee, Le Groupe Jean Coutu (PJC) Inc., Purdue Pharma Inc., Purdue Pharma L.P., The Purdue Frederick Company Inc., Purdue Frederick Inc., Ranbaxy Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc., Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd., Hikma Labs Ink., Hikma Pharmaceuticals PLC, Roxane Laboratories Inc., Boehringer Ingelheim Canada Ltd. or Boehringer Ingelheim Canada Ltee., West-Ward Columbus Inc., Teva Canada Innovation G.P.- S.E.N.C., Teva Canada Limited, Teva Pharmaceuticals USA, Inc., Teva Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd., Actavis Pharma Company, Valeant Canada LP or Valeant Canada S.E.C., Bausch Health Companies Inc., Imperial Distributors Canada Inc., Amerisourcebergen Canada Corporation, Kohl & Frisch Limited, Kohl & Frisch Distribution Inc., McKesson Corporation, Nu-Quest Distribution Inc., United Pharmacists Manitoba Inc., Procurity Inc., Procurity Pharmacy Services, Unipharm Wholesale Drugs, LPG Inventory Solutions and Normaco Inc.

**Question No. 1250—Ms. Michelle Ferreri:**

With regard to the tender put out by the government on or around June 30, 2022, for chairs for passport offices: what are the details of the resulting contract, including the (i) vendor, (ii) value, (iii) number of chairs purchased, and the price per unit, broken down by type of chair, (iv) date the chairs were delivered, including the passport or government offices they were delivered to, (v) number of bids received?

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Employment and Social Development Canada, or ESDC, put out a tender around June 30, 2022, for chairs for passport offices. The details of the contract are as follows. With regard to part (i), the vendor is Ameublement Bureau Intérieur. With regard to part (ii), the contract value is \$87,740. With regard to part (iii), a total of 801 chairs were purchased, of which 535 are without armrests and 266 are with armrests. With regard to part (iv), a total of 511 chairs were delivered to our ESDC warehouse in Montreal on July 15, 2022. A total of 290 chairs were delivered to the Passport Canada office in Ville Saint-Laurent on July 14, 2022. With regard to part (v), a total of two tenders were received.

**Question No. 1251—Mr. Adam Chambers:**

With regard to the government's response to Order Paper question Q-908 and the statement that approximately \$320 million had been spent on integrity activities associated with various COVID-19 relief programs, as of March 31, 2022, and that approximately \$556 million is estimated to be spent from fiscal year 2022-23 through 2025-26 on integrity activities associated with various COVID-19 relief programs: what is the return on investment, including the costs of the integrity activities, compared to the revenue collected as a result of such integrity activities,

broken down by the each of the initiatives and costs listed in part (c) of the government's response to Order Paper question Q-908?

**Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with respect to the above-noted question, what follows is the response from the Canada Revenue Agency, or CRA, as of February 13, 2023, the date of the question.

Regarding anticipated revenue collections, the CRA uses accrual accounting to report on administered activities. The CRA departmental financial accounting system for administered activities, the revenue ledger, collects information on amounts of benefits paid. Such amounts may be subject to redetermination due to integrity activities such as compliance reviews, adjustments and cancellations. Receipts and refund information are recorded in processing systems and cannot be traced back to specific integrity activities related to COVID-19 relief programs in the CRA revenue ledger.

At this time, the CRA is unable to report on the recoveries in relation to the emergency benefits administered by the CRA, as it is developing its new reporting solution.

For these reasons, the CRA is unable to respond in the manner requested with respect to return on investment.

**Question No. 1252—Mr. Dan Albas:**

With regard to the government's reaction to reports that U.S. customs and border officials are transporting migrants from Plattsburg, in New York State, to the Canadian border at Roxham Road: (a) when did the Canada Border Services Agency first become aware of these reports; (b) how long does the government estimate that this has been happening; (c) has the government taken any action to stop this from happening, and, if so, what are the details of the action, including (i) the date, (ii) who took the action, (iii) what specific action was taken; (d) since January 1, 2021, broken down by month, how many people crossed the border into Canada at Roxham Road; and (e) does the government have any estimates on the percentage of migrants who have crossed at Roxham Road, after receiving a ride to the border from a U.S. customs or border official?

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the Canada Border Services Agency, or CBSA, first became aware of bus tickets being distributed to asylum seekers on February 6, 2023, when they were reported in the media. The CBSA became aware of reports from the media about U.S. customs and border officials transporting migrants from Plattsburg to Roxham Road on February 7, 2023, when media asked the CBSA to comment on it.

With regard to part (b), the CBSA is unable to provide an estimate regarding how long this has been happening.

With regard to part (c), out of respect for the law and for the personal safety of individuals, we encourage anyone entering Canada to do so at an official port of entry. We continue to work closely with Canadian and U.S. partners to ensure the lawful, safe and humane treatment of asylum seekers while maintaining the security of our borders. U.S. Customs and Border Protection, or CPB, confirmed that it has opened an investigation into the potential involvement of U.S. officials in the movement of individuals to Roxham Road.

*Private Members' Business*

With regard to part (d), CBSA systems do not extract data by specific locations. However, in the province of Quebec, the vast majority of people enter Quebec through Roxham Road.

With regard to part (e), the CBSA does not have this information. CBP confirmed that it has opened an investigation into the potential involvement of U.S. officials in the movement of individuals to Roxham Road.

\* \* \*

[English]

**QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the government's response to Questions Nos. 1245 and 1253 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1245—**Ms. Michelle Rempel Garner:**

With regard to Public Services and Procurement Canada and the Integrity Regime, since November 4, 2015: (a) what are the details of any memorandums, briefing notes, or other similar type of documents which discussed the status of McKinsey & Company's acceptability to receive contracts under the Integrity Regime, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipient, (iv) type of document, (v) title, (vi) file number; (b) does the government consider McKinsey & Company to have met the Integrity Regime's definition of an ethical supplier; (c) has any government official ever raised the issue of McKinsey's eligibility under the Integrity Regime, and, if so, what are the details of each instance, including (i) the date, (ii) who raised the issue, (iii) who the issue was raised with, (iv) the concerns raised, (v) the reason the concerns were dismissed; and (d) has the registrar received notification from McKinsey & Company per the Ineligibility and Suspension Policy of any criminal charges or convictions or other relevant circumstances with respect to any of their work abroad, and, if so, on what dates?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1253—**Mr. Clifford Small:**

With regard to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans: (a) what is the amount of northern cod that was caught and reported as bycatch, broken down by year for each of the last three years; (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by each country that is a member of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization; and (c) why were the northern cod and northern shrimp trawl surveys cancelled for 2023, and who made that decision?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[Translation]

**NATIONAL SECURITY REVIEW OF INVESTMENTS MODERNIZATION ACT**

The House resumed from February 17 consideration of the motion that Bill C-34, An Act to amend the Investment Canada Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice):** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice):** The question is on the motion.

[English]

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

● (1240)

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** Mr. Speaker, we request a recorded division.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice):** Pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, 2022, the recorded division stands deferred until Monday, April 17, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[English]

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** Mr. Speaker, I am sure that if you canvass the House, you will find unanimous consent to see the clock at the start of Private Members' Business hour.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[English]

**PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT**

**Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.)** moved that Bill S-202, An Act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act (Parliamentary Visual Artist Laureate), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour to rise today in the House to speak to Bill S-202, an act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act to create a parliamentary visual artist laureate. This bill was first introduced and passed through the Senate by my good friend Senator Patricia Bovey. I would like to thank my friend and colleague, the MP for Bow River, for allowing me to take the lead at second reading of this bill.



*Private Members' Business*

To provide some historical context, Bill S-202 was first introduced during the 42nd Parliament as Bill S-234 by Senator Wilfred Moore in 2016. It was adopted at all stages in the Senate before dying on the House of Commons Order Paper. It was subsequently reintroduced by Senator Bovey in the 43rd Parliament as Bill S-210 and then again after prorogation as Bill S-205.

When this previous rendition was introduced, former MP Lenore Zann acknowledged artist Peter Gough of Nova Scotia, who was the originator of this wonderful idea. Sadly, Peter passed away before he could see his idea become reality. I should mention that the House heard several wonderful speeches here when MPs debated Bill S-205. It was clear that the House supported the bill, and it was very interesting to hear the importance of the arts from MPs of different parties.

This bill has reached the House of Commons three times previously and at various points has received unanimous support. The most recent time this bill was before the House was in the 43rd Parliament. On the day this bill was to be voted on for the third time, Parliament was dissolved, and now I am able to bring this bill back again, hopefully for its final time, to see it through to its successful conclusion.

Bill S-202 seeks to create the position of a parliamentary visual artist laureate. The artist laureate would be an officer of the Library of Parliament, similar to that of the parliamentary poet laureate position. The position of parliamentary poet laureate was created in 2001 through Bill S-10, which included similar amendments to the Parliament of Canada Act. Bill S-10 gathered broad support from senators, and in the House of Commons, Bill S-10 was supported by a majority of MPs.

The selection process would consist of the Speaker of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Commons acting together to select a parliamentary visual artist laureate from a list of three names reflective of Canada's diversity, including indigenous representation. These names would then be submitted by a committee chaired by the Parliamentary Librarian and composed of the director of the National Gallery of Canada, the Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada, the chairperson of the Canada Council for the Arts and the president of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, or their designates. As for the tenure of office, the parliamentary visual artist laureate would hold office “for a term not exceeding two years, at the pleasure of the Speaker of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Commons acting together.”

The mandate for this laureate position is to “promote the arts in Canada, through Parliament, including by fostering knowledge, enjoyment, awareness and development of the arts.” In carrying out their mandate, the laureate may “produce or cause to be produced artistic creations, at the request of either Speaker, especially for use in Parliament on occasions of state.” They may also sponsor artistic events such as art competitions or exhibitions. The laureate could also “give advice to the Parliamentary Librarian regarding the collection of the Library and acquisitions to enrich the Library’s cultural holdings”.

In this bill, arts are defined as “drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, design, crafts, photography, videography and filmmaking.”

• (1245)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice):** On a point of order, I recognize the member for Edmonton West.

**Mr. Kelly McCauley:** Mr. Speaker, this being such an important private member's bill, we should have quorum here.

*And the count having been taken:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice):** It is clear we have quorum in the House.

**Mr. Heath MacDonald:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, someone in the official opposition referred to us as rats. I think that is pretty unparliamentary.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Mike Morrice):** I did not hear that term. We will have to check Hansard for the use of that term. I will give a general reminder to be respectful, particularly as we close out this week of Parliament.

I will return the floor to the member for Cloverdale—Langley City.

**Mr. John Aldag:** Mr. Speaker, going back to where I was, I would like to reference that arts are defined in this bill as “drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, design, crafts, photography, videography and filmmaking”.

The contributions Canadians artists make to our society and our national identity cannot be overstated. Art comes in all forms, and this legislation's definition of art broadly encompasses what the artist laureate would be focused on.

These last two years have been a trying time for Canadians. As we struggled through COVID, many of us turned to the arts to cope with the loneliness, fear and anxiety that came with the pandemic. The arts provided a respite during this time and continue to do so. We should keep in mind that Canada's arts community suffered these same symptoms and continued to produce works for us to enjoy.

We should also keep in mind that the economic downturn affected our cultural community in quite a drastic manner. According to Hill Strategies Research Inc., between 2019 and 2020, over half of the businesses and organizations in the arts, entertainment and recreation sector saw a 50% loss in revenue. Performing arts and festivals lost over half of their revenues and some 35% of total jobs during that period. However, the arts are resurging and have been recovering slowly but surely. Canada's government has been there for the sector and will continue to do so. Canada needs a strong and vibrant arts sector.

*Private Members' Business*

Part of the power of the arts is their way of breaking down barriers between people. Canada is a multicultural country, and art provides a creative outlet to help us understand each other. Artistic expression can be understood without the use of words, and this gives us the ability to learn and understand stories and perspectives across linguistic barriers. As Senator Bovey put it, "Artists have always depicted or discussed contemporary issues in their work and drawn attention to critical concerns. It is clear, for instance, that understanding each other will play a key role in reconciliation, for which cultural understanding is essential."

Allow me to take a moment now to explain why art is so important to me and to my constituents. There is a rich arts scene in my riding of Cloverdale—Langley City, sure to be excited about this amendment to the Parliament Act. I want to bring attention to Lucy Fournier's mural work titled "The Sunshine Circle" for bringing community together. I also want to recognize Councillor Rosemary Wallace for creating an entirely free event called "Arts Alive", which proves to be a very impactful experience for artists coming together to share, inspire, and connect each year in Langley City.

In addition to the specific Cloverdale and Langley City art examples just mentioned, Surrey overall has a history of being a community that supports its artists. In 1964, the Surrey Art Society advocated for a centre for the arts in Surrey. The proposal was to build a space that would not only showcase the artistic talent in Surrey but also give space for artists to learn and hone their talents. The Surrey Art Gallery was built and is an important art space in Surrey. Additionally, the Arts Council of Surrey operates every day out of a repurposed fire hall, which further reinforces the history that the arts council has with the Surrey community.

Is this not the power of art and creativity? The Arts Council of Surrey took an old building and gave it new life as a safe place for artists to express themselves in their own community. It has had markets for artisans and indigenous artists to sell their arts and crafts. This is just one example of how the arts are an integral part of Surrey and how it demonstrates how legislation like the one before us today, now more than ever, is so important.

This past year, I had the pleasure of meeting Sandy Dimond. She had her first exhibition at the Surrey Art Gallery. Sandy only recently started painting after she retired from training horses professionally. It was something she had always played around with, but after she had some time on her hands, she finally picked up the brush full time. Sandy paints beautifully and her art ranges from trains making their way through the Canadian landscape, to horses she used to train, and to amazing landscapes. I personally love her painting of trees. The gallery showing was fantastic.

When Sandy reached out to my office, she did not know if I would come. I had not met her before, but the arts are important to her and she wanted that shared with everyone. What she did not know was how important the arts are to me and my family. There were many who showed up to her gallery exhibition, including me, but also the mayor of Langley City, a member of the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society and local media. This shows again how important the arts are to Cloverdale—Langley City.

The creation of a parliamentary artist laureate would build on the government's support for the arts since 2015. The parliamentary vi-

sual artist laureate would complement these commitments by creating an opportunity to celebrate Canadian visual arts and artists, and projecting a—

● (1250)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** That is very disturbing for the interpreters. Please have no phones on.

**Mr. John Aldag:** Madam Speaker, the parliamentary artist laureate would complement these commitments by creating an opportunity to celebrate Canadian visual arts and artists, and by projecting a global image of open-mindedness, creativity and innovation.

Canadian artists from across the country, whether they be life-long Canadians, immigrants or indigenous peoples, would benefit from having a parliamentary artist laureate here in Ottawa. The appreciation of the arts unites us, and in a multicultural country such as Canada, we should be promoting our many different forms of art at every given opportunity.

In summary, supporting Bill S-202 recognizes the importance of visual arts to the Canadian creative economy, supports diverse artistic expression by Canadian artists, raises the profile of Canadian visual arts in Canada and abroad, and demonstrates that the government values the contributions made by contemporary Canadian visual artists.

I look forward to the discussion we will have here today, and I am hopeful Bill S-202 will receive support from all the parties represented here in the House of Commons. I hope all members will join me in celebrating the arts in our country.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech, which was very interesting. During his speech, he reminded the House that similar bills have been debated in this place, but they never made it through the legislative process and never passed, because an election was called and a new Parliament began.

Can the hon. member tell us if his government intends to call an election before this bill receives royal assent?

*Private Members' Business*

[English]

**Mr. John Aldag:** Madam Speaker, this is another great opportunity to talk about the importance of the arts in our country and the support our government gives to the artistic community. We have seen many investments made, particularly during the pandemic and through pandemic recovery, and I am sure we are going to see, through the support of the House, this legislation finally implemented. Therefore, we can then have a visual artist laureate who will help further celebrate the arts within Canada.

• (1255)

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, I wonder, given that Canada is founded on indigenous peoples' lands, if this bill does pass, whether maybe the first laureate should be indigenous. Does my colleague agree?

**Mr. John Aldag:** Madam Speaker, I have the opportunity of working with my colleague on the indigenous affairs committee. Although I am new to it, it has been wonderful getting to know her and her passion for indigenous communities and the indigenous peoples in our country.

As I noted in my speech, it would be important to have the diversity of our country represented. That includes indigenous artists. The selection committee would be drawing from a diversity of artists within the country. Although I would not be part of that selection committee myself, I strongly hope there would be an indigenous visual artist laureate. Perhaps that could be the first one.

That is a wonderful suggestion and something for the eventual selection committee to consider.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his work on this bill, especially since we already tried to pass it at least twice. Could he talk a little about the influence that this person will have? How can this person help youth with their careers or their artistic aspirations?

[English]

**Mr. John Aldag:** Madam Speaker, the member and I have spoken previously about this legislation. She has a family member who is a visual artist, so I appreciate all her support for this.

I think the intent of the position would be to create and curate art exhibitions, and bring forward the diversity within our country. I think the engagement with young people across the realm of cultures, including, as we heard previously, indigenous artists, would be so important in order to highlight the amazing diversity we have in this country and really engage young, aspiring artists.

It can be a tough world. I spoke in my comments about some of the challenges artists have had during the pandemic and the recovery. It has always been a bit of a challenging world; I hear that from artists all the time. The importance of this position is to help bring attention every day to visual artists and not only the struggles but also the successes they have. I hope that would involve young Canadians as well.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I say good day to everyone. It is a pleasure to rise in the

House this afternoon to talk about Bill S-202, an act that would amend the Parliament of Canada Act and that is better known as the parliamentary visual artist laureate.

This Senate bill proposes to establish a new officer of the Library of Parliament called the parliamentary visual artist laureate and to give that position a term of up to two years. This new officer would be tasked with creating works of art for Parliament and engaging with visual arts communities from coast to coast.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer assumes that the overall cost of a visual artist laureate would be in the neighbourhood of \$100,000. This is based on the cost of the established parliamentary poet laureate position we already have.

My Conservative colleagues and I support the arts in this country, as well as the culture and diverse heritage of Canada. Through my work over the past eight years on the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, I have had many opportunities to learn from Canadians and demonstrate that support. My colleagues on this side of the House and I, on the heritage committee, have heard many witnesses testify from the arts community who are struggling financially. We have made common sense suggestions to the government for legislation to support these artists in our country.

Unfortunately, I have been disappointed by the lack of support by the Liberal government for online content creators; let us make no mistake, they are really artists themselves. Bill C-11 threatens some of these artists, and no amount of testimony or discussion has caused the government to even give this issue a second look. This is an avoidable mistake.

Many artists came to committee to talk about the online streaming bill that gave them the opportunity to connect not only in their community and this country of Canada but worldwide. These are the same artists and creators who have made a name for themselves but are now being censored, and last night, the government moved closure on Bill C-11.

The Senate looked over Bill C-11 for months and recommended 26 amendments. Even the Senate agreed that this was a huge issue in the red chamber. However, the government refused eight amendments that dealt with censorship. These are artists who may never have a chance to make \$100,000 a year, but like this Senate bill, it is all about freedom of expression.

It is interesting that Bill S-202 does not refer to it, because when another creative bill was being studied, it was all about limiting the freedom of expression. With regard to this legislation, Bill S-202, I will remain optimistic and open-minded. I will listen to members, who will no doubt deliver thoughtful remarks, and I will listen to all Canadians. However, I will remind everyone that it is Canadians who will bear the brunt of the cost of this bill, and I will listen closely to hear their thoughtful views.

*Private Members' Business*

I regularly send information into my riding requesting feedback. I am never disappointed by the range of opinions and carefully considered comments we get back. I learn something every time we send out a mailer and interact with constituents. Canadians, as we all know, are very smart, and I trust them to make good decisions about how we spend their money here in Parliament.

We will get the opportunity to hear from Canadians when this bill goes to committee. We will hear from witnesses and gather more information. For example, was there a demand for the creation of this position in the first place? What work is expected to be produced by the individual in this position? How would this individual be selected? Would the work produced reflect Canadian values we can be proud of? Are there any limitations on their work?

• (1300)

Some of the questions we are talking about here today are about what we need to find out in committee. These are just a few important considerations. As we all know, Canada is rich in talent in every artistic field.

I have been privileged to travel to every coast of this country, and I can say that Canadians are creating art every day in every way across this great country. My office in Saskatoon, in fact, is decorated with meaningful art pieces by talented Canadians, including my own wife, Ann.

The late Bob Pitzel from Humboldt made a number of paintings that I have in Saskatoon and here in my Ottawa office, and I cherish them. Ann and I have supported artists for years by buying their treasures and helping non-profit organizations like Artists Against Hunger, which raises money for local charities in our city of Saskatoon.

There is no shortage of creativity and talent in Canada. In fact, I had an opportunity to visit Stornoway just before Christmas. That is the residence of the Leader of the Opposition. On the wall, I was pleased to see a painting by the late Allen Sapp, an artist from Saskatchewan. It was a painting from his catalogue that I had tried to purchase for myself, but it was not available; then I saw it on the wall at Stornoway. I guess I cannot take that picture back home with me.

Allen Sapp, who unfortunately passed away in 2015, was an indigenous artist; he really set the table in our province for art. In fact, in the city of North Battleford, there is a museum that all Canadians should go to. Allen Sapp was one of the finest painters that this country has ever seen.

Could a collection of artists who are already creating art contribute their work in order to fulfill the goal of Bill S-202? I just throw that question out there. These are options that we might consider before creating a new exclusive post.

This bill proposes mandating a visual artist laureate to promote arts here in Canada. Canadians have been doing this since the birth of this nation, some 150-plus years, without a mandate. Art is an amazing thing. Creativity does not need to be mandated.

COVID was particularly difficult for artists in this country. It was difficult for everyone, but certainly in the area of the arts. Artists could not show their work, and it was very tough on them. We

heard from them at heritage committee. This is a sector that I would like to hear from on the idea of a visual arts laureate. They would provide a level of understanding that should be heard.

With the reckless spending and the runaway debt under the current government, it makes sense to hear from Canadians what they want. Do they feel this is value for money, or do they have other priorities for arts funding in this country? Is this the best way to support artists in Canada, and is it the best time to create new expenses?

I would like to thank my hon. colleague from the other place, the senator from Manitoba, for this bill. I think we can all agree that members in the House support the arts, culture and diversity. There are many ways to support that priority in Canada.

I would like to thank some of the artists from my city. There is the late Hugo Alvarado. Cam Forrester has a group in our city called Men Who Paint. It has several exhibitions. It is a fabulous group of artists in Saskatoon. It does tremendous work, and its members volunteer their time for workshops, which helps younger artists get involved.

We have Cheryl Tuck Tallon. Ernie Scoles is indigenous, and he does so much in our city, like volunteering items for promotion at fundraising events. We also have Lorna Lamothe, Laurel Schenstead-Smith, Marian Phaneuf and I could go on.

I thank members for their time on Bill S-202.

• (1305)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise this last Friday before the break to speak to Bill S-202, which would create the position of visual artist laureate for the House. I want to draw some parallels to something similar that we are already familiar with and that my colleagues mentioned, the position of poet laureate. I will even refer to some speeches that were made at the time. We will go back to 2001 when that position was created, and I will speak about certain differences and also certain similarities between the two positions.

When the position of poet laureate was first created, the Bloc Québécois was concerned about the language issue. Indeed, a poem in its original language is never the same as its translation. We used to joke that in this chamber there are always two official languages, English and simultaneous translation.

Other than the fact that we do not anticipate any linguistic issues with the visual arts, one of those differences is that the role being created does not have the same scope. Back when there was a poet, that person was asked to try to poetically express the rhythm of Parliament, which is in itself an enormous task, consisting of bringing our work to life artistically. However, the poet also faced a challenge to create works destined to be read in the House or during official events.

In this case, the artist will have a somewhat different role. The artist will be able to produce works themselves, but they will also be able to cause work to be produced, sponsor artistic events, give advice to the Parliamentary Librarian, in particular, regarding acquisitions. They will also be able to perform such other related duties as are requested by the Senate or the House of Commons. The role of the future visual artist is, then, slightly different from that of the poet.

The nature of the art will also be different. Poetry is a bit more limited in terms of scope, whereas, here, the visual arts can include drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, design, crafts, photography, videography and filmmaking. The choice of medium that the artist can use is much broader than words, which is what the parliamentary poet laureate uses.

Our Conservative colleague mentioned the matter of cost. We are not really bothered by that because, for \$100,000 a year, we expect the parliamentary visual artist to be much more cost-effective in terms of productivity than the Governor General, for example. The Bloc Québécois therefore does not feel the cost to taxpayers is an issue here, and we are hoping that the works that are produced will be a great source of inspiration for everyone.

There are perhaps some things, however, that might bother me about the position. Art can be an extremely effective political weapon, so I hope that the position of visual artist will not be politicized. We do not want there to be a mandate to politicize the art, and we hope that the artist will have as much freedom as possible in their work.

I am indulging in some wishful thinking about the artist's work. If their art is meant to reflect the diversity of Canada, I would hope that the diversity will include the fact that there is a francophone minority outside of Quebec and that Quebec itself is a francophone minority within Canada. That should not be forgotten; it is part of Canadian diversity. We dare to hope that this will be reflected in the artist's work.

I was talking about politicizing art and here is an example. As recently as last December, we were in the midst of a pre-holiday discussion, if not storm, in the House about the role that the National Gallery had taken on in decolonizing art. There, in the middle of Riopelle's centennial year, members ruled out the idea of having an exhibition dedicated to this artist. When I talk about politicizing art, that is exactly what I am hoping will not happen with the role of the visual artist.

● (1310)

I was also talking about the freedom that an artist has if we avoid giving mandates. I will take the liberty of quoting from a speech by Madeleine d'Alfond-Guiral, who spoke about creating the position

### *Private Members' Business*

of poet at the time. I understand that this speech earned her the biggest laugh from the current member for Montarville in the House. I have promised myself that I will look up the video excerpt of that speech someday. I would like to read a more serious portion of it.

The second question concerns me most. Is freedom the poet's most precious asset?

I know that it is for me, and there is no end to the number of people who have chosen to die for freedom.

What about poets? Some of the greatest have mouldered in prison in the defence of freedom. As prisoners, they were no less free. Who can name a single poet who agreed to trade freedom for money or power? Honestly, I cannot think of one.

It is true that Bill S-10 would give the poet laureate the great responsibility of writing poems to be read in parliament at official ceremonies.

Could we conclude that the poet laureate is non partisan? Probably. And yet, it is hard not to imagine that finding oneself promoted to the position of poet laureate of parliament for two years would not of necessity create obstacles that, insidiously, would limit later speech and give it serious bias.

How to be free when the choice of poet laureate would be made by a few persons, some of whom had received political appointments? As the saying goes, "Don't bite the hand that feeds you". "Elementary, my dear Watson".

I hope that a mandate that would undermine their freedom would not explicitly or implicitly be imposed on the artist.

Still, good things will result from creating this position. In the context of a pandemic that made life difficult for artists, it is a good thing to promote the work of artists. I will give a few examples. We know that, during the pandemic, many cultural events were cancelled and exhibit spaces were limited or even closed to the public. There were problems with funding for artists. Even artists experienced psychological distress because they were unable to work and earn a living with dignity.

We know that the income of artists is often much lower than that of the rest of the population. Many live below the poverty line. There is still a power imbalance between broadcasters and artists. Their precarious financial situation worsened even before the pandemic. We may have lost our sense of philanthropy and desire to fund the arts.

As to the precarious situation of artists, I think the beauty of the bill is that it sends a message to artists. I only hope that it will not be the only one and that arts funding will never be a partisan issue in the House, although that might just be wishful thinking. In this context, creating this position is a beautiful thing. I wonder what impact creating this position will have on the House of Commons.

I want to quote two people who lived in very different eras. The first, Hippocrates, said, "Life is short, and art is long". A more contemporary take on this comes from Bob Dylan, who said, "The purpose of art is to stop time".

*Private Members' Business*

We have an incredible ability in the House to play with time. We could say right now that it is June 23 at 2:00 p.m. and that we are all going home to celebrate our national holiday. We have a lot of latitude in the House when it comes to time, but we do not have the power to stop it entirely. Who knows, perhaps, with the arrival of the new visual artist in the House, we will have given ourselves one more way to play with time.

• (1315)

[English]

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, I am happy to rise today representing Nunavummiut on the importance of Bill S-202, an act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act, sponsored by the member of Parliament for Bow River in Alberta. The bill proposes to create a position called the parliamentary visual artist laureate. The person holding this position would then be an officer of the Library of Parliament, promoting the arts in Canada.

Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge that today is National Indigenous Languages Day. I thank Her Excellency the Governor General for raising awareness on this day. Today on her website, she educated us about the word “*ajuinnata*”. Translated into English from her Nunavik dialect, *ajuinnata* “means to never give up, no matter how difficult the task ahead might be.”

One word I will remind the House of is the word I start with every day in my speeches in the chambers. I say “*Uqaqtittiji*” all the time, and people still ask me what that means. *Uqaqtittiji* means the one who gives space to speak. The term has no gender attached to it, so when I say it, I do not need to worry if it is the member for Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, the member for West Nova or the member for Brossard—Saint-Lambert sitting in the chair.

To get back to Bill S-202, visual arts are an important expression of identity, both individually and collectively. Individual artists are lucky enough to have the talent and skills to express any and all of the emotions those of us who are less talented wish we could express. Indeed, I share gratitude for their talents.

The collective identity comes from different backgrounds. Predictably, I will speak to the Inuit and indigenous contributions to Canada’s national identity. The contributions by Inuit and indigenous visual artists to Canada’s collective identity are vast and expansive. I have only to mention Qinnuajuaq, or as non-Inuit say her name, Kenojuak Ashevak, for members to imagine her beautiful owl prints, which are so commonly sold in museums today. Qinnuajuaq was said to have been born on October 3, 1927. She died on January 8, 2013.

Qinnuajuaq was born in an igloo at a camp called Ikirasaq at the southern coast of Baffin Island. In the 1950s, Qinnuajuaq was sent to a hospital in Quebec City against her will after having tested positive for tuberculosis. Because of the adversity and strength she had, Qinnuajuaq became an icon for sharing her talents.

When I mention Germaine Arnaktauyok, members can imagine the design on the iconic two-dollar coin that was issued by the Royal Canadian Mint in 1999. Germaine showcases the beauty of Inuit in her artwork. Germaine is an Inuk, and she has illustrated several books. I am inspired by her, as she always expresses the strength of Inuit in her works.

I love the artwork of Tanya Tagaq. She is more well known for her modern throat singing, which is just as powerful as her visual art. The last time I watched Tanya perform, I had goosebumps. When I read her book, *Split Tooth*, I felt surrounded by her enthralling expressions. I look up to her for her courage and for being an Inuk warrior.

Blake Angeconeb is a talented Anishinabe artist who was commissioned by Google, and worked with Danielle Morrison, to commemorate the great works of Norval Morrisseau. Thinking of Norval always reminds me of discovering the use of his works in the iconic movie *The Shining*.

Blake, by the way, has a great collection of works available on his website, including a description of *Moving Forward, Together*, which was commissioned by Bimbo Canada as part of a five-year commitment with the Gord Downie and Chanie Wenjack Fund. It is within “a Legacy Space to build cultural understanding, connections and a path to reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.”

• (1320)

Another great visual artist is Christi Belcourt, a Métis visual artist who is best known for her acrylic paintings. Christi is an amazing activist. Through her works, she leads us to do better for our environment. I love particularly that she worked in solidarity with Inuit hunters from Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay and created “Respect Inuit or Leave”. This work was particularly important as it helped contribute to the protection of Inuit rights and values to protect the environment and wildlife surrounding Baffinland Iron Mines’ proposal to expand its Mary River iron ore project, which is having a targeted impact on five communities in the Qikiqtani region.

COVID-19 left such a huge impact on Canada and the world. Many artists were particularly impacted. According to research from Hill Strategies Research in October 2021, there was a 25% decrease in employment levels, including self-employment, in the arts, entertainment and recreation, higher than any other industry in 2020. Yet COVID-19 showed us just how important visual art is. As we all turned to Zoom, Teams and other software to join in meetings, we all became purposive in what we would show as our background. At one point, I remember specifically wanting to showcase the beautiful artwork of Madeleine Qumuatq as she uses her surroundings to express her works, including the beautiful tundra she is surrounded by in Pangnirtung.

If Bill S-202 passes, we must ensure that when the House of Commons Speaker and the Speaker of the Senate, acting together, select Parliamentary visual artist laureates, they are indigenous. Canada enjoys its diversity because of indigenous peoples. Canada enjoys its diversity on indigenous people’s lands. Canada must express its commitment to ongoing reconciliation by ensuring that among its first Parliamentary visual artist laureates will be Inuit, Métis and first nations.

*Private Members' Business*

• (1325)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, before I begin my speech, I want to assure the member for Joliette that we are not planning to call an election this year.

I am rising today to express my support for Bill S-202, an act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act with regard to a parliamentary visual artist laureate. This bill recognizes that we do our best work as legislators when we are informed by many types of knowledge and that visual arts are included in the essential foundation of thinking and understanding that the Library of Parliament represents.

As the official representative of the Library of Parliament, the visual artist laureate would create works of art, organize events and enrich the Library of Parliament's holdings in order to promote the arts in Canada. Like our poet laureate, who condenses big revelations into small constellations of carefully chosen words, a visual artist laureate would, through their creations, not only give us something new to see but also give us new ways of seeing things. We could certainly use that right now.

[*English*]

I have had the privilege of serving Canadians in Parliament over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the experience has allowed me to confirm, on a large scale, many of the ideas I have long held about the people living across this country: their resilience, their stamina, their care for one another and their incredible hard work. I have also seen some breathtaking reminders of Canadians' imagination and creativity, extraordinary artwork that has revitalized our hopes, enlivened our thinking and allowed us to remain connected to our common humanity despite the distance between us.

[*Translation*]

While it is definitely not my goal to minimize the painful feelings of separation and isolation that so many Canadians experienced during the early days of the pandemic, I have had the pleasure of meeting many people who are making deep connections with each other that are not solely based on being in the same place at the same time.

We bear witness to one other when we communicate what we really care about, and today we have many ways to convey those thoughts and feelings. Some choose new technologies, which have reached heights we never thought possible before the pandemic, but many people choose to do things differently. For example, the information communicated through a letter is very different from a live dialogue between two people.

Similarly, the arts represent a beautiful language for expressing ourselves and showing others what gives meaning to our lives. Art is also a powerful means of expressing the important issues that are at the heart of our experiences. It is an extremely effective tool for understanding and resisting the tumultuous times we are living in and for imagining a better world.

• (1330)

[*English*]

These new visions that Canadian artists could offer are not bound by the constraints of literal eyesight. Take Bruce Horak, for example, a Calgary-born visual and performing artist. He had a cancer in childhood that took most of his eyesight. Since then, he has been legally blind.

Speaking of his journey to painting in one of a series of interviews with artists from the Disability Arts Movement, presented by Tangled Art + Disability and the Art Gallery of Ontario, Mr. Horak said, "People would ask me how I see, how I am able to do what I do with 9% vision, so I started painting portraits to try to capture the way I see the world. That includes auras and halos and floaters and a lot of distortions...I painted a portrait a day for a full year and really enjoyed the connection that happened between myself and my subject."

Since beginning this project in 2011, he has painted over 600 individual portraits from live and virtual sessions, giving his subjects the opportunity to see themselves in a new way. Similarly, the visual artist laureate could facilitate more of these perceptual transformations, changing how Canadians see themselves and demonstrating the inherent richness that every different way of seeing brings to our collective.

That richness has so often been squandered, whenever different ways of seeing have been shut out, cut down or marginalized. We lawmakers must take action to see our country's problems from other perspectives. Our vision captures only a pinhole of the bigger picture. For us to make just laws, we must work harder at seeing everyone and everything as they truly are.

In an inspiring artwork from 2019, Montreal artist Michaëlle Sergile used Maya Angelou's voice reciting *The Mask*, which is a mash-up of *We Wear the Mask* by Paul Laurence Dunbar, a 19th century Black poet, and Angelou's own poem *For Old Black Men*, to translate sound into something visible, tactile and entirely new.

The sound waves of Angelou's masterful and devastating performance of this piece, which speaks to the pain and injustice Black people have had to mask with laughter, is mapped with a spectrograph into a visual pattern. It is then transformed again into something new and richly layered by weaving that pattern into a black and white mix of cotton, alpaca and acrylic, with these broad, shawl-like ribbons of Maya Angelou's voice in fabric, cascading down the gallery wall. How would it change us if we could literally wrap the sound of those words around our shoulders?

[*Translation*]

A visual artist laureate could open up a gateway to transformative experiences such as these, not just for legislators, but for all Canadians.

*Private Members' Business*

When Gabrielle Roy, one of the most celebrated authors of 20th century French-Canadian literature, asks, "Could we ever know each other in the slightest without the arts?", she reminds us that certain parts of ourselves can only be reached by taking detours, through metaphors and representations, through poetry and art.

No matter how many people we share our time and space with, we live most of our lives inside our own heads. I would never call this a small space, though. Our inner world is like an ocean, full of mysterious, undiscovered spaces.

Even though most of us know the path that runs along the shore, we are not comfortable spending time on the other side of the sandbar, beyond where our feet can touch the bottom, all alone, deep underwater, under pressure, in the unfathomable valleys of our being.

Still, it is in these strange and isolated places that artists create most of their work. Their creations allow us to escape the confines of our consciousness, if only for a brief moment, and see life through the eyes of another person, in order to connect the submerged continents that separate our many ways of being.

We must take every opportunity to enjoy the discoveries we make on these introspective journeys and recognize the courage of artists who resist the pressure to explore the deepest parts of their souls. We must examine, with courage and curiosity, both the treasures and the ruins they bring to the surface, in order to better understand who we are and where we come from. We need to pass Bill S-202 and create the position of parliamentary visual artist laureate.

• (1335)

[English]

**Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this today. I want to thank my colleagues. There were a lot of really heartfelt speeches. I have asked the member before about when she opens her remarks. It was hilarious. It was a great story about the general neutrality of it, so I want to say thanks and to thank my colleagues today for some really great speeches. I hope that we could actually see that in our speeches, not just my own, going forward.

I have limited time today, so I want to talk about some of the great events going on in my own city around art. However, before I do, I wish to point out that when we look at the Treasury Board contributions page for grants to the arts and culture, per capita, Alberta and Edmonton are receiving far less than other provinces are. I hope that the government will take a serious look at that and provide equal funding to the arts on a per capita basis.

One of the programs we support is the Edmonton Opera. It does phenomenal work and provides a lot of jobs in the arts and culture industry, but we see a struggle for Alberta organizations to receive federal funding. I hope that the government will address that.

I know that my time is very short, but I just want to talk about some of the things going on in Edmonton right now.

People like to make fun of Edmonton. They call it "Deadmonton". We actually have a coffee called Deadmonton coffee. They

think it is kind of a backwater for arts and culture, but I think that people would be surprised by what goes on in our city.

We are called the "Festival City" for a reason, with all the events going on in the summer. I just want to point out events for this week alone, and I am going to read out some of the things going on in Edmonton to do with visual arts.

We have a paint night with Red Pepper Painting Parties, and that is at the Anvil Coffee House in the Ottewell area. We have a "Sip & Paint Night" with Viniology Art, which should be great because my wife is in the wine business, and being in politics, I am in the wine-drinking business. That is at the Stanhope Eatery just off of White-mud.

We have "Weekend with the Model" going on at Harcourt House. Again, this is all in just one weekend in Edmonton.

We have a paint night with the Pub N Paint at Western Barcode. I want to bring out this specific location because it is in my riding. For people in Edmonton looking for something to do, it is at 20130 Lessard Road, so that is a free plug for Western Barcode in my riding.

There is "Paint Night in the Secret Garden" going on at the Brew+Bloom Café.

There is a great one at Pure Casino, and I love this one: "Art Battle Edmonton". It is described as 12 artists, three rounds and one champion. That sounds like some artist *Lord of the Flies*-type event. I look forward to going to that.

As well, actually going on tonight is "Gallery '23" at the Dinwoodie Lounge near the University of Alberta; it is a music, art and research event with formal dress. I can go if Air Canada actually obliges me, which I doubt. It has delayed me twice, and it looks like I am missing my connecting flight tonight.

We see that this is, again, one small capsule of time in Edmonton. This is just in painting. Edmonton has a flourishing visual arts district and community as well, whether it is in video games or YouTube production.

There are lots of events, and I am glad that the bill brought up this opportunity to perhaps celebrate and grow the arts industry. Again, I hope that we can approach arts and culture funding in Alberta, and I am sure, probably in the other western provinces, with a more fair and equitable funding process. That way, arts and culture in Alberta and especially in Edmonton West, where it is more important than the other areas, is treated fairly and equally as if they were perhaps in downtown Toronto or Vancouver.



*Private Members' Business*

The jobs that they create in Edmonton and in Alberta are just as important as the jobs created in the rest of the country and just as important to the people of Edmonton.

• (1340)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

[*Translation*]

It being 1:41 p.m. the House stands adjourned until Monday, April 17, at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Orders 28(2) and 24(1).

I wish everyone a happy Easter.

(The House adjourned at 1:41 p.m.)

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