



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

House of Commons Debates

Official Report
(Hansard)

Volume 151 No. 183
Monday, April 24, 2023

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, April 24, 2023

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[*English*]

DECLARATION ON THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF ARTISTS AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION IN CANADA ACT

(Bill S-208: On the Order: Private Members' Business:)

October 19, 2022—Second reading and reference to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage of Bill S-208, An Act respecting the Declaration on the Essential Role of Artists and Creative Expression in Canada.

The Speaker: At this time, the House has not yet designated a sponsor for Bill S-208, an act respecting the declaration on the essential role of artists and creative expression in Canada.

[*Translation*]

Accordingly, pursuant to the statement made by the Chair on Friday, February 10, the bill will be dropped from the Order Paper, pursuant to Standing Order 94(2)(c).

(Order discharged and item dropped from Order Paper)

[*English*]

SITTING SUSPENDED

The Speaker: Accordingly, the sitting will be suspended until noon.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:05 a.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 12 p.m.)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1200)

[*English*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023, NO. 1

The House resumed from April 21 consideration of the motion that Bill C-47, An Act to implement certain provisions of the bud-

get tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what a pleasure it is to rise today and speak about the budget implementation bill.

Today is a very special day in Parliament. Parliament is actually celebrating Vaisakhi on the Hill, so I would like to wish everyone a very happy Vaisakhi.

Vaisakhi is a very important part of the month of April, and here in Canada we celebrate Sikh heritage in the month of April. It does not matter where one goes in Canada; it is important to take a look at the importance of Canada's diversity and Sikh heritage and the contributions they have made to our communities over the years.

Last summer, I had the opportunity to travel to Abbotsford, where we have the first gurdwara, which is still standing. It is a Canadian heritage site. Whether it is in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal or out on the east coast, Sikh Heritage Month is a very important month of the year for people of Sikh faith and others who get engaged in recognizing and celebrating Sikh Heritage Month.

Earlier this month, the city hall of Winnipeg recognized Sikh heritage. Just last week, the Manitoba legislature had Turban Day inside the Manitoba legislature, and today here on Parliament Hill, as I indicated, we are celebrating Sikh Heritage Month and requesting people to put on a turban. It is with great pleasure that I put on a turban today.

I think of the importance of the khalsa and the minister providing the service. He posed a question: "What is Vaisakhi to you?". Vaisakhi to me is very meaningful. It is about equality. It is about the khalsa. Back in 1999, I had the honour and privilege to introduce into the Manitoba legislature a recognition of the khalsa to recognize the importance of it, and just in February, I had the opportunity to travel to India. It is a beautiful country. I went to a few places, like Anandpur Sahib, where the khalsa was born, and the Golden Temple in Amritsar. I must say that at 1:30 in the morning, it is very surreal. When I was there, I could feel a spiritual presence.

The point is that, for me personally, it is all about faith and it is all about equality. It speaks volumes about Canada's diversity. When I think of Canada's diversity, I would suggest it is our diversity that is one of the greatest assets we have in society.

Government Orders

When we talk about the budget and think in terms of where the growth is within our budgetary measures, I believe we will find that Canada, as a trading nation, is very much dependent on world trade. When I think of world trade, I cannot help but think of some of our partners from the past and today, such as the United States, and the amount of trade that goes between our borders. I also think of the number of trade agreements we have been able to accomplish over the last seven years. I believe that as a government, we have signed off on more trade agreements with other countries than any government before us.

India is a vast, beautiful country. Many, including me, would argue it will be an economic superpower in the future. The greatest asset we have here in Canada is indeed our diversity and people, in this case of Indian heritage, being able to look at ways we can enhance trade opportunities. That applies to many other communities. When we talk about diversity, today is Sikh Heritage Month, but we have Portuguese Heritage Month and Filipino Heritage Month, which is coming up in June.

• (1205)

We recognize Canada's diversity, and that diversity shines through in many different ways. It is more than just heritage clothing, if I can put it that way, or traditional wares. It is very much about opportunities, and Canada is laden with opportunities, going into the future, based on trade.

Now here we are with the budget implementation bill, and one would think I would be talking a lot about the grocery rebate. I know the grocery rebate is very important. It is actually incorporated into this legislation. It is one of the ways the Government of Canada is going to be assisting Canadians through a very difficult time.

We talk about inflation, and I have made the comparison in that past when we have talked about inflation in Canada that we are doing relatively well compared to other countries in the world, whether it is the U.S.A., many of the European Union countries or those in the G20. We are actually doing quite well. However, the government recognizes that we could do better to assist the population. One of the ways we would be able to accomplish that is the grocery rebate. That would put money in pockets. The budget implementation bill is there to ensure that we are able to administer the grocery rebate.

The good news is that, as we did not know how long it would take to get through the budget debate, we were able to build a consensus to pass Bill C-46, which would ultimately put in place the grocery rebate. Canadians can look forward to seeing not only that particular piece of legislation pass but the money being sent out.

On Friday, when I talked about one of the more recent announcements, the VW announcement, I talked about a difference, a contrast, between what the Conservatives in opposition believe and what the Government of Canada believes. Over the last number of years, we have put a great deal of effort into building the Canadian economy and supporting Canada's middle class. We have done that in a number of different monetary measures, through budgets, and legislative measures.

Let me give a good example of this that I started to talk about just last Friday. We had the announcement of what will be Canada's single largest factory, where we will be producing and manufacturing electric batteries. It is very much a thing of the future that will provide literally thousands and thousands of jobs. It will provide the opportunity for Canada to become a significant player in the manufacturing of electric batteries for automobiles.

When we look at how the Conservatives here in Ottawa are responding, we see it has not been very positive, even though Premier Doug Ford has also contributed to the plant, not only from a financial point of view but also by building part of the infrastructure that will be necessary. This factory, land-wise, will be hundreds of times the size of a football field. It is going to be gigantic in terms of its footprint in St. Thomas, Ontario. All of us will benefit from it.

The leader of the Conservative Party tweeted not that long ago and said that we do not have lithium mines and do not have batteries being developed. That seems to be the attitude of the Conservative Party, and it does not have to be the reality. The reality is changing because we have a government that has recognized the potential of the industry and the important role that the Province of Ontario in particular has played in the automobile industry. That was no doubt a huge attraction for Volkswagen. We will now see more lithium mining taking place in Canada. We now have an industry that will be able to grow, expand and provide both direct and indirect jobs in the future.

• (1210)

On the other hand, the contrast is that we do nothing. Had we done nothing, we would never have been able to land the Volkswagen deal, and that industry would continue to be dominated by countries like the U.S.A. and China. However, as a result of the Government of Canada recognizing that we can and should be a player, we are now going to see and reap the benefits.

Sure, there is a cost to this. However, that cost will be paid back tenfold in the next 10 years. It is worth the cost. This is an industry that will do exceptionally well, much like the aerospace industry, which we talked about last week. As I made reference to last Friday, all of us, like those in Quebec and my home province of Manitoba, benefit when a province is able to do well.

I am excited about the future because this budget implementation bill is there to support workers, to support our environment and to support consumers. It is there in a very real and tangible way. I would encourage all members to rethink their positioning and look at it as a way forward for Canada that will create middle-class jobs, the good jobs we want in our economy, and that will create opportunities and entrepreneurs well into the future.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, as usual, my colleague's delight over his government's budget is patently obvious.

However, on one topic he was silent, and I know why. Of the budget's 250 pages, only one page addresses the housing crisis. That in itself is completely unacceptable.

Government Orders

In the week after the budget was tabled, the National Housing Council, the body created by the federal government to oversee its grand national housing strategy, brought up a very interesting point. Between 2011 and 2021, Canada lost 550,000 affordable housing units. Not only has the government failed to create new housing, but we lost 550,000 units in the span of 10 years.

The National Housing Council has suggested a highly practical solution, which is to create an acquisition fund to enable non-profit housing organizations to purchase private housing stock, take it off the private market and make it permanently affordable. It is a solution that everyone is talking about. Does my colleague think it is a good solution?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I think we need to put housing in the proper perspective. If we take a look at the early nineties, what we will find is that every political party inside this chamber, whether it was the Bloc, the Conservatives, the NDP or even the Liberals at the time, believed there was no role for Ottawa in national housing.

When we take a look at the nineties and see where we are today, this particular Prime Minister has made a commitment to housing second to no other in the last 60 or 70 years here in Canada, with a national housing strategy and literally hundreds of millions going into billions of dollars supporting a number of new housing start-ups, supporting groups like Habitat for Humanity and supporting and encouraging the development of housing co-ops. The national government has demonstrated very clearly that it does have a role to play in housing. It is exercising that role and is looking for stakeholders to come onsite and support where they can to enhance and complement our housing stock and increase the size of it. I believe the federal government will continue to work in those efforts.

• (1215)

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my friend from Winnipeg on his sartorial selections today. They look very good on him.

I have a question about the budget itself. The budget projects that this year, over \$40 billion will go to interest on the debt, to wealthy bankers and bondholders. That is almost as much as the \$50 billion being spent on the Canada health transfer.

How does the member justify the Liberals giving almost exactly the same amount to wealthy banks and bondholders as they are to Canadians for health care?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, there are times when the government does need to be able to borrow. The best example of that was during the worldwide pandemic, when the government made the decision to be there to save jobs by providing things such as the wage subsidy program and loans for small businesses. It was there for Canadians in terms of CERB payments. When Canadians were not able to work because of the pandemic, the government stepped up and provided literally billions and billions of dollars of support. Yes, there was a cost to that, but the cost would have been far greater had the government chosen to do nothing.

With regard to the opening comments, I always appreciate the opportunity to showcase a turban because, for me, it is all about the equality of people. It is all about strength of faith. In many ways, since 1988, I have had the opportunity to get a better understanding of the importance of Sikhism.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, the federal Liberals created the investing in Canada infrastructure program. My concern is around the allocation for British Columbia. It was not even close to enough. In fact, that money has been allocated already and it needs a new cost-sharing agreement.

This makes me think about the recreation facilities in my riding. Echo pool in Port Alberni was built in 1967, like many facilities across Canada. That facility needs to be replaced. In Parksville, there are aspirations to build a facility. On the west coast, the five central region nations and Tofino and Ucluelet are looking at building a facility.

We know how important recreation facilities are, not just for physical health but also for mental health and bringing communities together. I go to Echo pool and I often see a lot of people who have been injured at their workplace. They use it for rehabilitation. Seniors use it to maintain their health and stay active.

Will my colleague commit to replenishing that fund and advancing recreation facilities here in Canada?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, no government in the history of Canada has invested more money in infrastructure than this government has. The member raises a valid point in terms of community services that we do need to support wherever we can. That is one of the reasons we have seen members of Parliament within the Liberal caucus advocate for and be very successful at ensuring that we continue to invest in infrastructure, not just directly but also indirectly. Whether through the Canada Infrastructure Bank or the direct support where Ottawa has a stakeholder, partner, province or municipality in order to expand upon infrastructure, we recognize the importance of it.

From a personal point of view, I think the city of Winnipeg needs a first-class basketball facility, and I support the basketball association and people like Manny Aranez who are trying to make that happen.

• (1220)

Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I also would like to compliment my friend on his sartorial splendour today. I take particular notice of his mention of his recent visit to India. I understand there are unique challenges with trade with India and particular states within India. Can the hon. member comment on how we can address those challenges and how that will affect our economy going forward?

Government Orders

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I chair the Canada-India Parliamentary Friendship Group, and we have representatives from the Conservatives, Liberals, the Bloc and the New Democratic Party. We need to build the relationship between India and Canada, and enhance it. The Government of Canada has had ministerial visits. I think the Minister of International Trade was there in 2022.

There are so many opportunities between Canada and India. India is, as I pointed out, a superpower economically today and going into the future. Canada, unlike other countries around the world, is in a great position because of its diversity. Let us take hold, be proud and use our diversity to our strategic advantage. One of the ways the future of Canada can be bright is if we are able to enhance that relationship between Canada and India.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I would like to follow up on the question from our hon. colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert. It is no surprise that housing is barely mentioned in Bill C-47. It was barely mentioned in the budget also. In fact, it was the opposite. The federal housing advocate said, “The newly unveiled Federal Budget is a sorry disappointment. It completely misses the mark on addressing the most pressing housing crisis this country has ever seen.”

In this bill, the federal government could have gotten serious about, for example, addressing the loophole for real estate investment trusts. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has now estimated we could direct \$285 million over the next five years to build the affordable housing we need if we were simply to eliminate the tax breaks for REITs.

Can the member for Winnipeg North speak about whether he is going to put pressure on the government to bring about this change?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, there is a series of actions that the government has taken over the last number of years, from implementing the first-ever national housing strategy, to the issue of expanding housing co-ops, and everything in between. No government in recent history has given as much attention to the issue of housing as this government has.

However, the issue of resolving the housing crisis in Canada today goes far beyond Ottawa demonstrating leadership; it incorporates the importance of municipalities, provinces and the different stakeholders. They, too, have to step up to the plate. It can be done through zoning and the cost of doing paperwork. There are all sorts of issues.

What Canadians need to know and understand is that Ottawa is here. It is ready, it is investing and it understands the importance of housing. We are prepared to work the best way we can with the different partners in order to ensure that we can enhance the numbers and the quality of our housing stock.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise to speak today. I will start with a quote from former president Ronald Reagan, who said, “Government's first duty is to protect the people, not run their lives.”

Budget 2023 was a direct attack on Canadians, their hard work and the paycheques they try to bring home. What budget 2023

would do is not only tell Canadians how to live their lives, which this government is known for, but also, in some cases, ruin a lot of livelihoods as well.

This was a budget that was supposed to have fiscal restraint. The Liberals blew right through that, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who said that they added an extra \$69.7 billion in new gross expenditures. Those new expenditures are going to cost each and every struggling household an extra \$4,200. This is a government that said it wanted to make sure it did not cross the line of debt-to-GDP ratio. Well, it blew right through that line, so far past it that the government cannot even see that line anymore.

This is a government that said it would be responsible and that it understood the pain of Canadians. Then, it turned around and jacked up its job-killing carbon tax to pile-drive Canadians with even more taxes, five to be exact, just this year. This is the government that said it is here to help people. I think this is as ridiculous as thinking that the NDP is still an opposition party.

● (1225)

Before I move on, Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with a great man, who we call the great boss from the great riding of Beauce.

When my family moved to Canada, there used to be a pretty good deal between Canada and its citizens. Today, after eight years of the Prime Minister and the Liberal-NDP government, that deal feels broken and so does Canada. One in five newcomers to our great country want to pack up and leave.

The number one reason for that is the high cost of living that has been caused by the Liberal-NDP government. It borrowed and spent more money than every single government before it combined. It made interest rates go up and that made the cost of living crisis even worse. The government is the architect of this inflationary fire, and the budget has thrown a \$69.7-billion jerry can on top of the inflationary fire, which has made things even worse for Canadians.

My family moved here when I was young because we wanted to live the “Canadian dream”. My parents wanted us to have a safer future and a better education. They wanted us to be raised in a country where we could feel safe and where we could raise kids to feel the same way. However, after eight years of the Liberal-NDP government, that Canadian dream is nothing but a nightmare and a broken dream today.

Newcomers should want to flock to Canada, but Canada is not seen as a country where people can survive. It is not seen as a country that is even open for business. When we look at the budget, productivity is not going to grow because the government has done nothing to help support businesses and create an environment that would have more investment coming to it.

In fact, the number one complaint that we hear is that the regulatory burdens and the economic uncertainty that the government has created does not let good investment and good jobs come to Canada. The government would rather stand under its make-believe ideology on things like the job-killing carbon tax, which is driving people away. It is driving costs up. It is making everything more expensive, and Canadians are suffering for that.

Canada is one of the last destinations people want to come to today. That is clear when we hear that one out of five newcomers want to pack up and leave.

We can look at some of the disastrous policies that have caused so much pain on Canadians today.

Let us look at housing. When we moved to Canada, it was reasonable to find a house. Someone could get a job and put in the hard work. That was the deal Canada used to have. If people worked hard, they would see the fruits of their labour. That deal is broken today. Nine out of 10 young people say that affording a home is just a pipe dream now because of the rising cost of living.

Who can save for a down payment? Down payments have doubled. People have to spend double just to for a down payment on a house now. Rents and mortgages have doubled under the Prime Minister, after eight years of failed housing policies. It is impossible for young people to move out of their parents' basements today because of eight years of failed housing policies.

How does a government spend \$89 billion on housing and the outcome is that rents and mortgages have doubled, and nine out of 10 young people say they will never be able to afford a home? How does a government spend so much to accomplish so little? It is on par for that government. It shows its incompetence every day. It does not stand with the common person. It does not want to make the lives of people easier. If it did, it would not have jacked up the cost of the failed carbon tax. It has accomplished so little on that as well.

We finally have an environment minister who admitted that the government misled Canadians all along about the failed carbon tax scam. For years, the government said that it was going to make the lives of people better. For years, it said that Canadians would get more back from this carbon tax scam in so-called carbon pricing rebates than what they would pay into it. We now have the Liberal environment minister admitting that this was misleading all along.

• (1230)

We requested a report from the PBO report and that report confirmed that more Canadians would pay more out of pocket in this scam than what they would get back in these phoney rebates. It is time for the Liberal-NDP government to stop causing Canadians, farmers and producers pain. It needs to scrap this scam, axe the carbon tax and let Canadians survive.

If we look at the price of groceries today, we see how the carbon tax has impacted how expensive they are getting. The government has done nothing to help with the inflation it has caused. It not only has caused this inflation, but it keeps adding more fuel to the fire, and the carbon tax is a clear example of that when we look at the price of groceries.

Government Orders

When me and my family, and many other newcomers, came to this country, we could not have imagined that in a single month 1.5 million Canadians would be visiting a food bank, a third of whom are children. One-in-five Canadians are skipping meals. One-in-five Canadians are saying that they are completely out of money. This is not the Canada that me and my family envisioned when we moved here.

However, hope is on the horizon. We have a new Conservative leader who will turn this hurt that the Liberal-NDP government caused Canadians into hope. We are going to do many things, the first of which is to get rid of the Liberal-NDP government. We are going to ensure that we bring home powerful Canadian paycheques. We are going to bring home lower prices for Canadians. We are going to get rid of this job-killing, failed carbon tax scam. Most important, we are going to bring in more homes that our young people and many others can afford. We are going to get the gatekeepers out of the way. We are going to ensure that Canadians keep more of their hard-earned paycheques in their pockets so they can make their own decisions and bring back the freedom our country so much deserves.

The Conservatives will restore safety to our streets, so people do not feel they are going to be attacked randomly. We keep seeing violent crime on the increase after eight years of the government. We need to bring home common-sense solutions for the common people. We need to return Canada to a place where we have elected officials who work for the people, who understand their pain and do not cause more pain. That is exactly what the Conservatives will do when our new Conservative leader, the member for Carleton, becomes the Prime Minister of Canada. We will return Canada to being the freest nation in the world.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague spoke a lot about the carbon tax. I did some research in my riding in my home province of New Brunswick to see where this money went. We know that 90% is given back to those who pay into the carbon tax. We have 10% that will be reinvested into community projects and first nations communities. I think about the \$300,000 that were given to a first nation in my province to do energy retrofits and ensure it did what it could to reach its environmental goals as well. I wonder if the member would not support projects like that.

When can we expect to see an environmental plan from the Conservative Party?

Government Orders

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Speaker, first, we are still looking for an environmental plan from that side of the House. All we received was a tax plan that made gas, groceries and home heating more expensive. The Liberals sold this carbon tax scam to Canadians, saying that they would get more in their pockets than these phoney rebates. The Parliamentary Budget Officer proved that wrong.

Therefore, if I were that member, I would update the talking points to say that a majority of Canadians will pay more into this scam than what they will get back. The Liberals sold this scam saying they would meet the targets they set for themselves, and they failed to do that. Emissions went up.

Therefore, I would ask the member this. Let us see a plan from the Liberals first instead of this tax scam they have created to take more from Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Madam Speaker, I wonder if my colleague could talk about the callousness of this budget.

This budget contains little or nothing for housing, at a time when Quebec and Canada are in crisis, when there is virtually nothing for seniors and when health transfers are meagre. Meanwhile, it does contain a provision to modernize or amend the Royal Style and Titles Act to confirm that the King of England is indeed the Canadian sovereign.

I find that somewhat surprising. In my view, it is even a bit insensitive, and it is offensive to many of my constituents. I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

• (1235)

[*English*]

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Speaker, I agree with the member when he says that this offended many people. This budget definitely offended a lot of people. The government, which said it would be fiscally restrained and would try to be fiscally responsible, blew right through that and added \$4,200 of cost on each and every Canadian household. This is a slap in the face to Canadians, who work so hard but are falling behind because of increased taxes put on by the Liberal-NDP government, which does not respect Canadians anymore. This budget is a slap in the face to them and a direct attack on their paycheques.

Conservatives would bring back common sense for the common people and make sure more Canadians can keep more in their pocket.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, the hon. member speaks about common sense, but he has not shared any today. In fact, what he has done is list all the economic violence of capitalism and the impacts it has on everyday Canadians.

When the member talks about the housing market, he never talks about the insatiable greed of the real estate investment trusts, of the speculators, of the big corporate gatekeepers who are crushing our housing market. In fact, housing prices will not come down until

the government acts to curtail inflationary investor activity in the residential market.

Just like the leader of the Conservative Party, this budget refuses to take on greedy private sector gatekeepers who are driving up the price of housing for their own corporate greed. Why are the Conservatives focusing only on municipal permitting when there are so many greedy, capitalist, private sector gatekeepers responsible for the current housing crisis?

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Speaker, the problem is with the party that keeps supporting this inept, corrupt government and always props it up and makes things more expensive.

As the member likes to talk about socialism all the time, I would like to read him a quote from Margaret Thatcher, who said, "either you believe in capitalism, or you believe in socialism. Capitalism, as we know, creates wealth. Socialism, as we also know, creates poverty." The clear example is today in Canada, when one in five Canadians is skipping meals and 1.5 million Canadians are visiting a food bank because of failed NDP-Liberal policies. When the two parties get together, they are doing nothing but causing more and more pain to Canadians and sending more of them to food banks.

We are going to turn these failed policies around when our leader becomes the Prime Minister of Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-47, which is part of the government's 2023 budget implementation. I am honoured today to follow my colleague, the member for Calgary Forest Lawn, who is our party's official finance critic.

After much anticipation and hope that the expensive coalition would exercise some fiscal prudence, Canadians were once again presented with a budget that will spend more and deliver less.

My colleague went over numerous statistics in his speech about this legislation, but I think the most alarming one is the fact that this expensive coalition will tack on nearly \$4,200 in additional costs to every household across Canada with its lackluster budget.

Canadians are tired of being bought by this Liberal government with one-time cheques and slogans every time a budget is presented. This is the case with the grocery rebate, for example.

Let us be honest with Canadians: This one-time cheque will do nothing to reduce the price of groceries for families. It is simply a doubling of the GST credit, presented as something it is not. We need to tackle the real source of the problem.

Take, for example, the way the government is increasing grocery prices with policies like the carbon tax, the tariff on fertilizer and other harmful policies. These policies are driving up the cost of food production and transportation across the country.

Bill C-47 also includes the health care transfers to the provinces, which are well below what the provinces and territories requested to provide the care that our fellow citizens and their families need.

Government Orders

My Liberal and NDP colleagues will say that I am not helping my constituents get dental care because I will not support this budget. However, that could not be further from the truth. I would like to remind my colleagues opposite that Quebec has not only had a day care program for many years, but it also already has a dental care program for our young children. It seems as though the current government is always lagging behind on these programs. It has been clear from the start that this government does not trust the provincial and territorial governments to implement the programs themselves and that the “Ottawa knows best” approach is the only way to manage these projects. If only the government had more faith in the provinces and, especially, more respect for their jurisdictions, it might be surprised to see what can be done without Ottawa getting involved.

I will now take a moment to talk about what I would have liked to see in this budget. First, there is nothing in the budget to help SMEs attract labour. The word “labour” is hardly used at all in this budget, which is hundreds of pages long.

In my riding of Beauce, the unemployment rate is currently below 1.9%. Our businesses are struggling to attract and retain workers. It is one of the biggest issues in my riding. A vast majority of businesses in my riding rely heavily on temporary foreign workers to fill gaps in their workforce. However, there was nothing in the budget to improve the program. The government must reduce the paperwork and red tape associated with all these programs.

What is worse, the government has allowed more than 150,000 public servants to go on strike, which means that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada will have an even larger backlog and businesses will continue to close their doors because of the Prime Minister's inaction. It is as though this government does not understand just how time sensitive these jobs are. Many farmers and landscape companies in my riding, for example, will not have workers at the most important time of the year.

These businesses spend thousands of dollars recruiting foreign workers months before they are to arrive, but the government does not care. It has done nothing to reduce immigration delays.

That leads me to my next point. Where is the funding for Canadian agriculture in this budget?

● (1240)

After I took a close look at the budget with my staff, I discovered that our agriculture and agri-food sector was getting approximately 0.1% of the funds allocated in the budget. What a sad situation in which our country finds itself, when our government forgets where the food feeding our families and others around the whole world comes from.

The Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food was pleased to speak in the House to tell us that she had increased the limit for loans available to farmers. Does she not understand that farmers are already in debt up to their necks? They need programs that reflect the current reality so they can remain solvent and competitive on the international market.

Two weeks ago, in my riding, we heard the sad news that Olymel will permanently close its Vallée-Jonction pork processing plant in

December. In a municipality of approximately 2,000 people, Olymel employs 1,000 workers. This is devastating, and the entire region will be hit hard. The closure is the result of, among other things, a labour shortage that began several years ago. It will have a serious impact on the pork industry in Ontario and Quebec, as well as on a number of other industries.

A growing number of farmers and farms are struggling to survive in Canada. This government has abandoned this sector for far too long. Our country needs to take measures to support the agriculture and agri-food industry before it is too late. A Conservative government will be there for farmers and plant workers. We are prepared to make this sector the economic driver it should have been in this country a long time ago.

Finally, I would like to touch on something that was not mentioned whatsoever in the budget. The words “cellular connectivity” are not mentioned at all in this budget when we search the words. Since first being elected, I have been rising in the House to speak out about this problem. In the 40 municipalities in my riding alone, at least one sector in each town is poorly served by the cellular networks.

I would remind the government that people in the regions are not second class citizens. They pay just as many taxes as anyone else. These people who live in the regions, who contribute to the economy, are held back by the inability to get 21st century technology. How are we supposed to automate industries to make up for the labour shortage when a business owner has to go to the top of a hill to get one bar of service on his phone?

I therefore invite the government to have a look at the reporting done on this subject in March by many local journalists, including Éric Gourde at *L'Éclairer Progrès* and Philippe Grenier at *Radio-Canada*.

It is unbelievable that people come close to dying because they cannot call 911. When people do manage to get into an ambulance, sometimes the paramedics cannot connect to the nearest local hospital because there is no cell signal.

Having an adequate cellular network in the regions is not a matter of equity; it is a matter of public safety. The government needs to make investments to address this issue and force the CRTC to compel the big telecom companies to develop their cellular networks throughout the regions—unless the government is still waiting for the provincial governments to get involved.

In closing, it is time for change in Canada. It is time to put Canadians first, not only in major urban centres, but also in the rural heartlands. That is why I will continue to rise in the House and be the voice of the residents of Beauce, to convey their message. A Conservative government will put Canadians first and prioritize common sense.

Government Orders

• (1245)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is my understanding that the Conservative leader and his caucus have committed to supporting our \$2-billion investment to save our health care system.

I would like my colleague to elaborate on the Conservatives' recently announced policy on cuts to the CBC/Radio-Canada. My colleague quoted a Radio-Canada reporter in his speech, so I imagine that he has a great deal of respect for Radio-Canada. What does he think of his leader's proposal to make cuts to the CBC/Radio-Canada?

Mr. Richard Lehoux: Madam Speaker, it is a very simple concept to grasp for my colleague across the aisle.

Our leader's comments were very specific on the issue of protecting Radio-Canada. I think that Radio-Canada and the CBC are very different. Perhaps some management changes may be required.

However, I think we really need to face the facts. If we analyze my leader's thinking carefully, it is clear that preserving Radio-Canada in Quebec is not at all an issue, because it is intended to serve the francophone community throughout Canada.

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague from Beauce, who raised a lot of issues that have a direct impact on Laurentides—Labelle.

I am taking time to talk about agriculture and agri-food. After all these years and all the challenges related to maintaining supply management and keeping the industry as it is, one in 10 farmers are being forced to shut down. That is happening in my colleague's riding of Beauce just as it is in Laurentides—Labelle.

My question is this. Are my colleague and his party willing to support, in both the House of Commons and in committee, any assistance measure to save our agriculture and agri-food industry?

• (1250)

Mr. Richard Lehoux: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her excellent question. She is obviously preaching to the choir in asking me that question, because I was a farmer for over 45 years. I was a fourth-generation farmer and, today, a fifth generation has taken over our family business.

The current government must clearly indicate that it upholds and supports our agricultural industry. It is true that many farms are finding it increasingly difficult to find people to take over, and the economic context is unique.

My colleague mentioned supply management. In my speech, I talked about the closure of a pork processing plant. The pork industry is not supply managed. Some export markets closed, and so perhaps we need to support our farmers and processors in developing and conquering new markets.

[*English*]

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague and many of his Conservative colleagues have been talking about housing. I think one thing we all agree on

in the House is that there is a crisis of unbelievable proportions related to housing in this country.

I live in Vancouver and have been there for close to four decades. The rise in house prices began in the mid-eighties, particularly after Expo, and then continued with the repatriation of Hong Kong back to China in the late 1990s and the Olympics in 2010. With each of these things, it became obvious that there was an inflow of foreign capital, from both corporate and foreign investment, that destabilized house prices in the Lower Mainland. It is at the point now where, for people who live and work there, the price of detached or even non-detached houses is completely divorced from what people actually make.

What specifically does my hon. colleague say a Conservative government would do to help provide real affordable housing for people in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia? I would like to hear specifically what policy his government would advance.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Lehoux: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I am a former municipal councillor and I think that our leader, the member for Carleton, makes an important point when he talks about cutting red tape to ensure that municipalities can issue building permits faster. I live in Beauce, and our reality may not be identical, but housing is still a major concern.

I think that there should be less red tape. I have been here for four years, and I have been saying the same thing for four years. I hope that we will see some signals in that regard over the coming months.

Mrs. Sophie Chatel (Pontiac, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Kings—Hants.

I am pleased to participate in the debate on Bill C-47, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, which will help build a clean economy.

Today, the world's largest economies are making incredible strides not only in fighting the climate crisis, but also in restructuring, seizing the opportunities that this industrial shift represents for them and building clean industries. For that reason, budget 2023 includes innovative and substantial investments in building that economy right here in Canada.

Fighting the climate crisis is clearly the main objective of all major economies. However, by building a strong and inclusive economy by seizing these opportunities and using Canada's incredible resources to achieve great success in the economy of tomorrow, we are also investing in Canadian businesses, Canadian talent and Canadian workers.

Government Orders

Our Canadian plan uses a variety of useful measures to invest in this new clean economy. We have already spoken at length about certain clear and predictable investment tax credits. We are also providing strategic financing in sectors such as critical minerals and clean energy. By investing in these sectors, Canada will truly build its economy and increase opportunities for all Canadian workers. We are also investing in some more targeted sectors and projects of national and international significance, as we saw with the wonderful announcements about Volkswagen.

By making such significant investments for Canada, we are ensuring that we are not left behind. Currently, while all the other major global economies are investing massively in these sectors, the worst thing that could happen would be for Canada not to seize these opportunities and never have the chance to re-enter the race ever again. We must invest in transforming our economy, but also in these opportunities.

Budget 2023 truly ensures that a green Canadian economy is also a source of prosperity and jobs for the middle class, but also for more dynamic communities across the country. We cannot do it alone, however. This is going to require investment at the government level and beyond. I would like to take this discussion to the Canada growth fund. We know there are trillions of dollars in private capital waiting for these opportunities, waiting to be spent on building the clean global economy. Canada does have some rivals. We are all trying to attract the best capital from the private sector.

The recent enactment of the U.S. Inflation Reduction Act posed a major challenge for our budget. To be competitive within the North American economy, we really have to invest in our industries, since they will drive the clean economy. To succeed, we had to meet two challenges. The first was to encourage companies to take risks and invest in clean technologies, advanced technologies, here in Canada. The second was to keep up with the growing list of nations that are also using public funds to attract private capital, including the United States and the European Union. As we saw, the list does not stop there. Australia was also in the race, along with many other countries.

In budget 2022, we announced the government's plans to create the Canada growth fund, a \$15-billion arm's-length public investment vehicle that will help attract private capital to build Canada's clean economy.

• (1255)

The thought behind that was to use investment instruments that absorb certain risks. This is all about attracting and encouraging private investment in some of the riskier projects, in new technologies, in companies, but also in low-carbon supply chains.

The 2022 economic statement announced more details on how the Canada growth fund would work, and this new investment vehicle was created in December.

The legislation introduced last week introduces amendments to the Public Sector Pension Investment Board Act to allow the board, also known as PSP Investments, to provide investment management services for the Canada growth fund. As a significant part of the government's plan to decarbonize the economy, the Canada growth fund requires an experienced, professional, independent in-

vestment team to make important investments. That is why we are pooling those services.

PSP Investments is already established as a federal Crown corporation, and it already has \$225 billion in assets under management. It will be able to add assets for investments in the clean economy of tomorrow. Canada growth fund assets will be managed by PSP Investments, a separate and independent corporation. We like it that way.

The Canada growth fund will make investments that will catalyze substantial private sector investment in businesses and projects in Canada to help bring about that transformation I was talking about earlier, to grow the economy and to compete in the global net-zero energy market. Canada growth fund investments will help Canada achieve its national economic and climate strategy goals.

I see that time is running out. I talked about the Canada growth fund, which will be very important and strategic for both meeting our targets and capitalizing on these opportunities. However, I also wanted to talk about a problem we have in Canada. Canadian companies are not investing enough in R and D, and not at the same level as their peers. To meet this challenge, the budget proposes a new approach and creates the Canada innovation corporation. This was announced in budget 2022, but now several sectors are being brought together and the Canada innovation corporation's mandate is being expanded.

I do not have time to talk about it in detail, but the modernization of the National Research Council is very important too. It is another tool in the tool box that will help us achieve those objectives, which are to seize those opportunities and to join the global march toward a greener economy and a healthier planet.

Clearly, we have made smart investments that are good for Canadian workers, for businesses, for the Canadian economy and for our planet. I hope that all members in the House will join me in supporting the passage of this crucial piece of legislation.

• (1300)

[English]

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Madam Speaker, prior to being elected to this chamber I served with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. I had the opportunity to work in Pontiac with that organization, and I got to know some of the excellent farmers and rural folks in the member's riding.

I am curious what reaction to the budget the member is seeing from her own agricultural constituents, as 6.8% of Canada's GDP comes from the ag sector. I noticed that she voted against Bill C-234, the carbon tax exemption for farmers, as did most, but not all, of her colleagues, which I want to acknowledge.

Government Orders

There is almost nothing in this budget for agriculture. What reaction is she getting in her riding from her agricultural constituents?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sophie Chatel: Madam Speaker, my answer is very simple: Carbon pricing does not apply to Quebec. I would also add that farmers in my riding are ahead when it comes to many green technologies. They are ahead of the government because farmers live off the land and they see climate change every day. They are concerned and they need new technologies, because the seasons are much more challenging. There are some real concerns in light of extreme climate change.

These farmers are ahead and they are not worried about federal carbon pricing, because it does not apply to them. Quebec has its own carbon pricing, which is quite good and accepted.

• (1305)

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

She spoke a lot about climate change. It is true that the government is making a lot of direct and indirect investments in the budget to help oil companies greenwash their record. The government is giving them money for carbon capture, a technology that is very controversial in the field. As we have said, there is almost nothing for housing, but the government is giving oil companies money.

Let us talk about oil companies' profits in 2022. Exxon Mobil made \$56 billion in profit, Shell made \$40 billion, TotalEnergies made \$36 billion, Chevron made \$36 billion and BP made \$27 billion. How can the government give money to these oil companies, which made a combined total of \$200 billion in 2022, while completely forgetting about the housing crisis?

Mrs. Sophie Chatel: Madam Speaker, my colleague mentioned housing. Last year's budget earmarked a huge amount of money for housing. That funding is currently being allocated to various programs. Many citizens, committed individuals and leaders in housing are looking at how those amounts can be allocated effectively to create more housing units across Canada.

Amounts were earmarked in last year's budget, and they are being allocated to various programs. It is really a matter of ensuring that those amounts benefit all Canadians.

[*English*]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I would like to thank the member for Pontiac for focusing on climate change and what the government will do to combat climate change.

I would like to ask her about the Kivalliq hydro-fibre link project, which is mentioned in the budget. Unfortunately, the budget does not say how much it will invest in that project, and I wonder if she could tell the House what kinds of investments it will make to ensure that this project does indeed go ahead so more communities can reduce their reliance on diesel.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sophie Chatel: Madam Speaker, the budget makes significant investments in clean energy. That is really the main point of my speech. Investments are needed in strategic sectors to ensure we

have a clean economy, which must also be inclusive and bring prosperity to communities across the country.

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as always, it is a huge privilege to rise in the House to debate Bill C-47 and discuss the implementation of the budget. I thank my hon. colleague from Pontiac for sharing her time with me this afternoon. I want to present the views of my constituents in Kings—Hants on the budget and speak about certain initiatives that are very important to my riding.

[*English*]

The budget essentially has three major pillars. The first is a focus on affordability. The second is a focus on health care supports for the provinces and territories to help improve health care across the country. The third is the green economy, our clean energy future, and indeed Canada's future prosperity here at home.

[*Translation*]

Affordability has become a top priority for Canadians across the country as a result of higher inflation following the pandemic. The good news is that inflation declined again this month and is now 4.3%, compared to 8.1% last summer.

[*English*]

I think it is important to recognize the context that this government is faced with. Given the fact the Bank of Canada, through its monetary policy, has been helping to try to bring down the cost of inflation, the government has to be responsible with how it is addressing the question of consumption spending.

When we look at the budget, there is a one-time doubling of the GST rebate, which is being framed by the government as a grocery rebate, and that would be eligible to 11 million Canadians. It has been means tested, which means it is based on income. I certainly support it because it is a targeted measure. It would not necessarily support all Canadians, but those who have lower incomes and could really use support right now, given some of the challenges around affordability. Therefore, it is targeted, focused, and will not necessarily drive inflation higher, given the work the Bank of Canada is doing.

Government Orders

I also want to talk about something that could be framed as a health benefit, but is also an affordability benefit, which is the Canadian dental plan. The government has introduced this, and it is going to help support uninsured Canadians who have a household income below \$90,000 with a program to help support their dental costs. We know that, if people do not have access to private insurance, sometimes the costs associated with surgery or fixing one's teeth can be quite expensive, particularly for those who are struggling to get by. This is a measure that is going to make a difference across the country. Indeed, in my riding of Kings—Hants, I have already had calls from families who are in receipt of the benefit that we put out, as a government, for those who are under 12. The government's program is to expand this to seniors next year, and indeed to all households with an income of below \$90,000 by 2025.

My riding is still disproportionately older than the rest of the country. We have a lot of good things happening in the riding, but we have a lot of seniors, so for lower-income seniors who do not have dental insurance, this would really make a difference for them.

Let me talk about health care. As a federal member of Parliament, and I would suspect it is probably the same for many of my colleagues, I get calls quite often about health care and the state of health care in this country. I remind my constituents that I do not directly control that, nor does the Government of Canada, but it is our responsibility to make sure that there are proper resources on the table. That is exactly what this budget does. Of course, we knew this was something that had been announced prior to the budget, but there is going to be \$198 billion of new spending over the next decade toward health care, above and beyond where we are right now, \$46 billion of which was announced as new spending tabled by the government in this budget.

Spending alone will not solve health care, but it was something we were hearing from the provinces and territories. I am proud of the way this government has stepped up to make sure there is consistent funding over the next decade and of the fact that we know it is in place and that the provinces can take that measure and plan accordingly.

In my home province of Nova Scotia, the provincial government has staked a lot of its credibility on “fixing health care”. It will certainly have no excuses from this government because we are making sure that those resources are there. It is now its turn to get focused on the ground at being able to deliver that. That is something I am proud of.

● (1310)

We will continue to make sure the provinces are using the funds reasonably and make sure they are going toward health care. As we have heard before, sometimes the Government of Canada will provide transfers to the provinces and they will use them for other priorities. This government is making sure the money is going to be spent exactly where it should be, which is on health care.

I also want to highlight that the budget talks about loan forgiveness for doctors and nurses. Something the government had in place previously was loan forgiveness for doctors who practise in rural areas. We know the importance of doctors, but we also know the importance of allied health professionals. This government is extending this to nurses who practise in rural Canada. Certainly in

my area of Kings—Hants in Nova Scotia, this is going to be very welcome news.

This government is addressing the clean energy economy, the third pillar. We have talked about health, we have talked about affordability and next is about matching what the United States has done. A lot of members have talked about the Inflation Reduction Act. This is a significant amount of money that the United States put on the table to help drive spending in the clean energy economy.

The Prime Minister has been very clear that this government has had a number of measures on the table for years, but the size of the American investment, nearly \$400 billion U.S., is significant. Frankly, it would have been irresponsible for this government not to have some measures to make sure we responded in a way that draws capital and investment to this country and does not allow investment to simply go south of the border.

A number of measures are important, and I want to highlight a few that I think are particularly important to Atlantic Canada. One is the 15% refundable tax credit for clean electricity. This will matter across the country, and I want to give credit to the Minister of Finance. As opposed to putting these types of incentives in government programs that entities have to apply for, we are setting the criteria, saying what people can expect. The money will flow much quicker and will allow businesses to have certainty to make investments. This will matter for entities across the country but particularly in my province, which needs to keep driving its electricity future in a renewable way.

I have talked a lot about nuclear in this House. Really important measures for nuclear are being included in these measures. This is something we have heard from all sides of the House, largely, and I want to compliment those who have raised these issues in the House, because this government, in this budget, is doing exactly that and making sure we have homegrown solutions that can make a difference.

On clean hydrogen, we have a world of opportunity in Atlantic Canada. Members should come visit us sometime. We would love to showcase the investments and that we have the ability to help fuel the world right from Atlantic Canada. It is going to be through clean hydrogen. This government is putting incentives on the table to make sure it happens in Atlantic Canada and not another part of the country.

I have talked at great length in this House over the last year about the importance of the Atlantic loop. There is again a mention of that in the budget. I know there is ongoing co-operation between the Government of Canada and various provincial entities. We need to keep driving that project forward.

Government Orders

In Kings—Hants, agriculture and forestry are predominant industries at the primary level. I was very pleased to see investments of \$368 million to the Department of Natural Resources for forestry initiatives. We need to see at least some of that go toward mass timber. There is an opportunity in Atlantic Canada, and indeed in Kings—Hants, for a mass timber facility. The Atlantic region is the only region of the country that does not yet have that. This matters, and I really hope we can see those projects move in the days ahead.

On the agriculture side, the advance payments program, with the continuation of interest-free loans, is going to make a difference for my farmers. I was pleased to see the Minister of Agriculture help ensure that foot-and-mouth disease vaccines will be available in this country. We have available stock. There is also the dairy innovation and investment fund. Given that I have the largest number of supply-managed farms east of Quebec, this is going to matter to my farmers in the days ahead.

One thing that I think this government needs to address would simply be the importance of continuing to drive a mechanism around non-cost measures. It is important that we invest. The government is doing so, but it is also important that we look at regulatory reform measures that do not cost money and that can help drive industry success. I hope to see a formal mechanism as we head into the fall.

• (1315)

I see my time has unfortunately come to a close, but I look forward to taking questions from my hon. colleagues.

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer reviewed the budget and identified close to \$800 million in what the government is calling non-announced spending. This would be in addition to the billions of dollars in non-announced spending announced last year.

I am wondering if the member could tell us what this spending would be for.

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, the hon. member would probably be best suited to ask that question of the Minister of Finance. Yes, I sit on this side of the House, but I am not a member of the King's Privy Council.

I will say that, as per normal, the government will outline expenditures in certain areas where it looks to take up programs. The budget is not a complete view of every single program the government will release over the next calendar year. Sometimes it is an outlay of money whereby the government will build a model and program that will help service Canadians in the days ahead. That might be some of what the member is talking about regarding the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

If he would like to have a conversation after our interaction, I would be happy to take on his concerns and do what I can to engage my colleagues on this side.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like my colleague across the way to tell us more about the Royal Style and Titles Act, which the budget plans to amend.

Over the weekend, a survey showed that over 60% of Canadians want to cut ties with the British monarchy. We also saw a news report informing us that the King of England is living in luxury off a tax-exempt fortune of over \$3 billion.

Meanwhile, here at home, the budget has next to nothing for seniors or housing. Health transfers are practically non-existent, or are whittled down to the bare bones.

Can my colleague tell me how to explain to our constituents why the budget is focusing so much attention on the King of England while totally ignoring our problems at home?

• (1320)

[*English*]

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, let me first address some of the questions.

There is \$46 billion in domestic spending for health care. There has been 70 billion dollars' worth of housing spending. Part of the reason why we did not see major expenditures is money is still getting out the door to help support Quebeckers and indeed those across the country.

I will address the member's question. He is framing this as about the King of England. It is about Canada's constitutional relationship with the United Kingdom, and that includes the indigenous people in this country. The treaties we have forged with indigenous people tie back to the British Crown. Our history as a country is rooted in the relationship we have with the British monarchy. It is ceremonial in nature. We certainly have the integrity to make our own decisions in this country.

I support the relationship we have, because the question becomes how we create a different system in the days ahead. That comes with its own Pandora's box of issues. The member opposite is a sovereigntist, and he would like to see Quebec removed from the federation. I want to see Canada united. I think there is a pathway where we can recognize everyone's distinct differences across the country while recognizing that Canada's shared history ties back to the British Crown.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member spoke about specific aspects of the budget that tie back into helping rural and remote communities attract doctors and nurses by extending an offer to lessen debt for nurses. I appreciate that.

I come from a riding with communities like Port Hardy, which, an article just came out saying, is again going to have to shut down the emergency room during the day. Right now, the emergency room is open only during the day, not during the evening or the night. People have to leave their community and drive far away to get emergency services. It is the same on Cormorant Island.

Government Orders

Does the member think it would be important for the government to step up and make sure there are ties to small, rural communities struggling in this country in terms of health care, to get them a bit extra to get through this time? I know that, in B.C., the provincial government has stepped up, but it needs more resources to address this huge crisis.

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the nature of the question. However, as it relates to whether a hospital emergency room is going to be open or not, it largely ties back to the decision of health authorities at a provincial level.

I appreciate that the member opposite said that requires more resources. I think it requires both more resources and an allocation of said resources in the province. We are doing our part, on the federal side, to make sure there is stable funding provided to the provinces. In fact, Premier Eby has recognized and endorsed the health deal the Government of Canada has put on the table.

As it relates to the member's rural communities, which I sympathize with, I hope she will take up with the provincial government what it is doing to make sure there are proper resources to service rural communities, because it is an important question.

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise today and speak to the implementation of the budget. It is an incredible honour for me, as well, to be splitting my time with the great member for Edmonton Manning, who is a very valuable colleague. I am really looking forward to hearing what he has to say later. However, before that, members have to endure 10 minutes of my speaking.

It might not come as any surprise, based on the debate we have had over the last couple of weeks, but Conservatives have not supported and will not be supporting the implementation of this budget, mainly for three reasons. We laid out key priorities that we wanted to see in this budget ahead of time and they really were not met.

This budget would add billions of dollars in debt, with no plan to get back to balance. The Prime Minister has already added more debt than all previous prime ministers combined in this country and there is no plan to get to balance. That is the part that really worries me. Not only would this spending add fuel to the inflationary fire and increase the cost of living, but it would also threaten the sustainability of our public services for future generations. Each dollar we have to spend servicing debt is a dollar we cannot be spending on other services. That is something we all have to keep in mind, moving forward, and the government should keep in mind that, when it racks up billions of dollars in debt, it is threatening our social services for future generations. This budget would also raise taxes. As I just alluded to, we know there is a cost of living crisis with inflation. The government has chosen, once again, to raise taxes for Canadians further and there is truly no plan to build homes and get affordable units built.

For those three main reasons, Conservatives voted against the budget, and I have every expectation that, moving forward, we will be voting against the implementation of this budget.

I want to take a step back and talk about another major issues that I feel is neglected in this budget. That is about community

safety. We have seen concerns with community safety around the region in northwestern Ontario in communities like Kenora, Dryden and Sioux Lookout. Policing calls for services have been up, as have, of course, the costs that go with this, to the point where municipalities are struggling and trying to figure out how they are going to be able to deal with those costs. We have seen assaults, slashed tires, vehicle break-ins and things like needles being found around the community, all happening with greater frequency around the area.

As I mentioned, we are seeing this right across northwestern Ontario, but there has been a certain amount of media coverage specifically around the city of Kenora. It is the largest community in the riding, so a lot of the notes I will refer to will mention Kenora specifically, but I would like members to keep in mind that it is something that is not unique to the city of Kenora but is right across northwestern Ontario.

We have seen articles with headlines such as “Kenora assault leaves one with life threatening injuries”, from March. The Kenora OPP has recently released figures showing that property crime has actually increased 10% year over year. It is now at the point where local professionals and business owners are scared to go to work. When I go door knocking and talk to people around the community, many residents tell me they are afraid to go downtown and certainly would not go downtown in the evening or at night. That is incredibly sad on a number of levels. Kenora is one of the smallest cities in Ontario. It has 15,000 people. We did not even lock our doors when we were growing up. It is really one of those tight-knit, small-town communities and people are now scared to go downtown. Many businesses have been locking their doors during operating hours; people have to ring the doorbell in order to gain access.

It brings up the question of what is driving all of this. Why are we seeing this increase in crime, and why are people feeling less safe? There is certainly no single answer and there is no single solution, but one of the issues we are seeing in Kenora and in the other communities of our riding is that, unfortunately, there are many homeless residents. Many of these individuals are struggling with their mental health and with addiction challenges, and they do not have proper supports around them. There is great work being done by people like Dr. Jonny Grek, who has been going around providing treatment to homeless residents on the street. I had the opportunity very recently to join him for a walk to see what he does.

• (1325)

There are other organizations, like Ne-Chee Friendship Centre; the Makwa Patrol, also known as the Bear Clan Patrol in other areas of the country; and the Morningstar Detoxification Centre. These are all incredible organizations with great people doing great work to help those who are vulnerable and those who are struggling. However, it is an indisputable fact that the current systems just cannot deal with the magnitude of the issue before us right now. This is truly a crisis.

Government Orders

Coupled with the addiction concern, there has been an increase in HIV. In 2022, there were more HIV cases in Kenora than in the previous eight years combined. Overdose deaths have increased 82%, year over year, and northwestern Ontario now has the highest per capita overdose mortality rate in the province of Ontario.

On housing, and I mentioned that this issue is coupled with housing, the KDSB, the Kenora District Services Board, for those who do not know, estimates that there are 100 homeless residents in the small community of Kenora. There are more than 1,300 households on an affordable housing wait-list; that is an increase of nearly 1,000 households from just nine years ago, to paint the picture of the broader housing issue we are seeing across the region.

This budget does mention housing a bit. It does mention treatment and recovery, but on treatment and recovery specifically, it is light on details. Given the fact that this issue has been spiralling for the last eight years and that there have not been proper supports put in place, I know that a lot of people in the Kenora district and northwestern Ontario, myself included, really do not feel the government will step up to meet this challenge.

On the other hand, Conservatives support policies that get people into recovery instead of spending a night in a cell, only to be released and continue that cycle over and over again. I have seen that far too often. I have done a few ride-alongs and have been able to go around the community, not just in Kenora but also in Pickle Lake, Dryden and others. I have seen people who have asked to be arrested so that they have somewhere to stay. I have heard of people who have chosen to commit a crime so that, if they do not have proper supports around them, they know they will have a few nights of somewhere to stay where they will have a bed and a meal.

Conservatives support treatment and recovery options. That includes giving Correctional Services power to designate all or part of a penitentiary as a treatment facility. We also support greater consequences for repeat violent offenders and for the drug dealers who are preying on these vulnerable people with addictions. We want to see greater consequences for those individuals, but, unfortunately, violent crime was not mentioned even once in this budget. Overall, those solutions, addictions treatment and recovery, are what I feel is missing from this budget and it is what Conservatives will certainly be focusing on over the next number of months and into the term in which we form government.

As I mentioned, there is no silver-bullet solution to this, but it would certainly help to address the crisis that we are seeing on the streets of Kenora, of Dryden and of Sioux Lookout, to help ensure that everyone in our community is safe, from the vulnerable residents, the homeless population, to the business owners and professionals and the visitors. Kenora sits on the beautiful Lake of the Woods in northwestern Ontario and it is an incredibly popular tourist spot each summer. We want to make sure that everyone in our community is safe.

This budget does not get it done, but Conservatives will.

• (1330)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have heard the hon. member repeat what I have

heard a number of Conservatives repeat, which is, apparently, that they had three demands of things to be seen in the budget before they would agree to vote in favour of the budget. This member mentioned it. A number of Conservative members prior have mentioned it.

The only problem with that is that, the day before the budget was introduced, the deputy leader of the Conservative Party, the member for Thornhill, during question period, said that Conservatives would not be supporting the budget. Nobody knew what was in the budget at that point. As a matter of fact, it is against the rules of the House for anybody to have known that, yet, somehow, the member for Thornhill, the deputy leader of the Conservative Party, knew enough to know that those three items would not be in the budget.

This just leads me to assume that, really, Conservatives are just playing games with words here. They never intended to support the budget, regardless of their demands. I am wondering if the member can provide some insight into that.

Mr. Eric Melillo: Madam Speaker, I have not heard from my colleague in a while in this chamber, so I appreciate his intervention.

The question gives me the opportunity to highlight the fact that the three demands we had were not met. We asked for a cap on government spending to help rein in inflation, and the government is adding billions of dollars in debt. We asked for taxes to be lowered on Canadians, and the government is raising taxes. We asked for a plan to get homes built by speeding up building permits and looking at ways to free up land and federal buildings for development, and that is not in this budget. That is why we are not supporting it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague talked a little bit about housing, and I thank him for that, because it is a pretty important topic.

Unfortunately, when we listen to the Conservatives, it is not really clear what their solutions are and what they are going to do about it.

The Liberals are terrible, and they are getting nowhere. My colleague bragged earlier about \$70 billion in investments over the last five years. In the last five years, 35,000 new social housing units have been built in Canada through this strategy. I have no idea where the billions of dollars went. According to studies by CIBC and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, or CMHC, Canada needs to build 3.5 million units in the next 10 years if we are going to address the twin issues of affordability and accessibility.

If we want to help those most in need in this country, the government needs to intervene and be more effective. What are the Conservative Party's solutions?

Government Orders

• (1335)

[English]

Mr. Eric Melillo: Madam Speaker, the question gives me a chance to reiterate what I just said to the member for Kingston and the Islands around housing. What Conservatives are calling for, and what we will do when we form government, is to implement a plan to speed up building permits. We need to make sure it is possible to build things in this country again. We need to create those incentives so developers will be able to and will want to build the housing units we so desperately need. We also want to lean on the resources the federal government has, the land and the buildings that are being underutilized, so we can turn that into affordable housing units.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague spoke in his speech about the overdose drug crisis in this country. In 2010, I was part of the public safety committee that toured this country and studied the provision of mental health and addiction services in Canada's federal prison system. At that time, we came out with a number of recommendations to the Harper government, which included a number of positive things, none of which were brought in by the Harper government. Instead, the Harper government closed the Kingston farms, closed industrial training programs for prisoners and did not implement a single harm reduction measure in Canada's federal prison system.

It appears the modern Conservative Party has had a conversion on the road to Damascus and is now talking about progressive policy. Does the member agree with the NDP that it is time we gave access to timely treatment for anybody who wants treatment for substance abuse or addiction through Canada's public health care system? Does he agree that addiction is a health issue and it warrants access to treatment through our public health care system, like every other disease and affliction?

Mr. Eric Melillo: Madam Speaker, I am always amazed by the NDP's focus on a prime minister who has not been in office in eight years. The Harper government was elected and lost power from office before I was even able to vote, so it is incredible that the NDP is so focused on the past instead of holding the current government to account.

To the specific question, which is an important one, I do not have time to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Edmonton Manning.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, economists are telling us that Canada is on the brink of a recession, and the response of the Liberal government is to offer us a grim budget. Not only is it grim in the dictionary sense of being depressing or worrying to consider, but it is also Grimm as if it were written by the Grimm brothers. In other words, the finance minister has offered us a complete fairy tale.

The minister thinks she is playing the role of Snow White, with her cabinet colleagues as the seven dwarfs. Of course, that would leave the Prime Minister the role of Prince Charming. However, the Disney version is not the original story. In the Grimm original version of "Snow White", the one Canadians will experience with this budget, the Minister of Finance would be the evil queen, and her

budget the poisoned apple. Only by removing the apple from Show White's throat can she be saved, and only by defeating this budget can Canada's economy be saved from this Liberal disaster.

Perhaps the finance minister has a starring role in another of the Grimm brothers' fairy tales: "Cinderella". After all, she just bought some new glass slippers before presenting her budget. The minister wants Canadians to believe that she is the fairy godmother, handing out cheques from the government. Who could argue with the idea of free money, even if it causes more inflation? However, the money is not really free. Cinderella may spend, spend and spend, never worrying that the clock is about to strike midnight, but midnight is coming and she will have to face the reality. Her beautiful horses are really mice, and when the clock strikes 12, we will discover just how big a pumpkin she has stuck the Canadian people with.

This type of fairy tale is not a new thing for this government. After eight years, we should be used to the fantasies spun by the Liberal storytellers, by the Prime Minister and his cabinet. From the beginning, they have shown their inability to understand basic mathematics.

In 2015, the Liberal leader promised Canadians that if he formed government, he would balance the budget by 2019. Does anyone on the other side remember that promise? After eight years, he has not even come close to balancing the budget. Instead, he just piles on more and more debt with government spending that drives up the price of groceries and everything else. He thinks people should be grateful to him for breaking his promises, because his government, as he says, will always have Canadians' backs, which is easy for him to say since we have already had to give him the shirts off our backs to pay for his high prices and high taxes.

The Minister of Finance has learned from the Prime Minister. She has not promised us a balanced budget. Given the Liberal track record, I am not sure she knows what a balanced budget is. It may be because there was one thing missing from this budget, one small spending item that would have made a big difference if purchased and used: a dictionary. If the Liberals owned a dictionary, the finance minister might discover that the definition of "fiscal restraint" is not "spend the country into recession". Fiscal restraint is not telling Canadians in the fall of 2022 that the government expects to run a \$30-billion deficit, and then adding an addition \$10 billion a few months later. Can the minister be so unaware of the true numbers, or was she intentionally misleading Canadians?

After eight years of this government, the deficits get higher, the national debt grows and our grandchildren will still be stuck with paying for Liberal extravagance. Rather than handing out cheques to Canadians struggling to feed their families due to high grocery prices, why does this government not actually do something about inflation, rather than making things worse? Is it because it does not have a clue how the economy works?

The government can be counted on to always say the right thing, but its actions speak louder than words. Simply put, it does not walk the talk.

Government Orders

● (1340)

A government that broke its promises about balancing the budget and that has steadily increased the deficit and national debt and fuelled record inflation should not be entrusted with the finances of the nation. Then again, the Liberals spent \$6,000 a night on a hotel room for the Prime Minister, complete with butler service. Perhaps the Liberals do understand the financial challenges faced by ordinary Canadians and instead just do not care.

I am not the only one who has noticed that the budget presented to us by the finance minister is a fairy tale. According to *The Globe and Mail*, this budget “is all a fiscal fantasy: the Liberal budget is built on a cloud of sleight-of-hand projections and the hope that Canadians are suffering from collective amnesia.” If finance minister Cindarella really wants to help Canadians, and I believe she does, she needs to abandon this reckless spending program that she described as “fiscal restraint”. She needs to recognize that people are suffering and she can act to make things better.

First, she needs to lower taxes and scrap the carbon tax so that hard work will pay off again. The grocery tax rebate she is offering does not make up for the increases in payroll taxes and the carbon tax. Her policies are fuelling inflation and making people poorer, which is why one in five Canadians is skipping meals and food banks are seeing record demand. Second, she needs to get government spending under control. The Prime Minister has added more to our national debt than all prime ministers in our history.

The finance minister says that she will balance the budget in 2028, but she has no plan. Continued inflationary deficits are driving up the cost of the goods we buy and the interest we pay. The finance minister's plan to balance the budget is probably the same one her predecessor used: keep on spending with even greater deficits and pretend that the budget will somehow magically balance itself in a few years. After all, we are living in a Liberal fairy tale where such things can happen, except they do not happen. As the government has never managed to meet a self-imposed climate change target, so too has it continuously failed to show any signs of fiscal restraint or fiscal responsibility. It is as if the minister knows the government is doomed so she does not have to worry about it or about balancing the budget. Instead, eliminating the national debt will be someone else's problem.

When the Prime Minister was staying in that \$6,000-a-night hotel suite, he went down to the hotel lobby one evening for a sing-along. Perhaps the Minister of Finance should take note of the words of the song he sang:

Is this the real life?
Is this just fantasy?
Caught in a landslide
No escape from reality

For the Canadian people, this is indeed real life, caught in a landslide of a fantasy budget. For them, there is indeed no escape from reality. I urge the Minister of Finance to learn from the fairy tales and drop her starring role in them. The fiscal clock is about to strike midnight, and it is time for Cinderella to face reality.

● (1345)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, speaking of fairy tales, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech. The real fairy tale, however, is that it has been more than two weeks since we tabled our fine budget, which is a responsible budget for the economy, the future and our children.

I would ask my colleague what fairy tale he is referring to, since he has not asked a single question about the budget in two weeks. He is asking personal questions about the Prime Minister, but he has nothing to say about the budget.

If his party has concerns about the budget, would it not be appropriate to ask questions about it in question period?

[*English*]

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, I was still on the definition issue with the government, and there is nothing in the budget to ask for. The budget is more spending, more inflation, no responsibility and no going back to balanced. What is there to ask for in the budget other than more bad news for Canadians? The government is looking for more and higher taxes, more spending and a more uncertain future.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have been touring Quebec recently, travelling all over the place to talk about the housing crisis, because I think it is a very serious issue. I have heard from a lot of people.

In Joliette, for example, an adult living with an intellectual disability found himself on the street, homeless, in other words, and he ended up committing suicide. There was nothing in the budget to help someone like him. I heard about a woman in Trois-Rivières who is a victim of domestic violence and is now living in her car with her two children. There was nothing in the budget to help her. I heard about a family of 17 people in Longueuil living in a three-bedroom apartment. There was nothing in the budget to help those folks.

Does my colleague have any solutions for the issues I just raised and the people I just talked about?

[*English*]

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, of course, the housing crisis is a devastating situation, and it is heartbreaking to see a lot of Canadians who cannot find houses. Furthermore, our young generations do not even dream of owning or buying a house in the future. The proposed budget would not address any of that. The government is dominated by the idea of spending so much and achieving so little, and that is the problem we are facing right now.

Government Orders

• (1350)

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rather enjoy the hon. member for Edmonton Manning. I appreciate his wisdom. He often comes with some really insightful information for the House. He spoke today about a fantasyland. I feel like I am in a fantasyland because it seems that the Conservatives' only solution to housing is to supersede provincial jurisdiction and have the federal government, if I am getting this correctly, intervene in local planning decision-making.

In this new fantasyland from the party of Wexit, Alberta sovereignty and the Buffalo declaration, where does the federal government take over municipal decision-making and start eliminating the gatekeepers at local planning meetings?

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, there is another fantasy world. It is the planet the NDP is living on right now. That is the bottom line. We are trying to remove gatekeepers and streamline the system. We are trying to help provinces by offering real help, not just a bunch of spending that would achieve nothing. That is the plan. It is a logical plan that makes sense.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the budget contains much inflationary pressure. There is \$15 billion for an infrastructure bank that never built a project and another \$15 billion for a slush fund in the Canada growth fund with no details on what that is about. Although there is such a crisis in affordable housing, as there is in my riding, the budget has \$5.5 billion dollars to build only 4,500 spaces and remove barriers to building maybe another 100,000. That is a huge gap, and it is another inflationary pressure.

Could the member comment on that?

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, that goes back to the same idea we noticed here. The government spends too much and achieves too little. If this continues to be the case, there is no hope that we will see any actual results.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Kingston and the Islands.

I am pleased to rise today to talk about our budget. As the member for Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Development, I am pleased to talk about its impact on rural Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

This budget is based on our plan to grow our economy, fight climate change and continue to make life more affordable for Canadians in every community. The previous Conservative government cut the rural secretariat; by contrast, our Liberal government appointed the first federal minister of rural economic development to ensure that federal programs are adapted to the unique realities and needs of rural communities and allow those communities to finally have a dedicated voice at the cabinet table.

Our government recognizes that rural communities are the cornerstone of our economy. When rural Canada succeeds, the rest of Canada is stronger for it. The Minister of Rural Economic Development and I have travelled across the country to remote and indige-

nous rural communities and they shared their priorities with us directly. They also talked about how we can work together to ensure that every community has what it needs to prosper.

From what we heard, the top priority of rural communities is to close the connectivity gap to ensure that every Canadian has access to reliable, affordable high-speed Internet no matter where they live. We are making this happen.

Since 2015, our government has made \$7.6 billion available for expanding access to this essential service. The universal broadband fund, with its budget of more than \$3.2 billion, is the largest federal investment in broadband in Canada's history. That is 10 times the investments of all the previous governments combined. We have consistently increased funding for the fund to ensure that we are on the right track to exceed our objective of connecting 98% of Canadians by 2026 and 100% of Canadians by 2030.

Last fall, we added \$485 million to the fund to continue our work. I want to point out that the Conservative Party voted against those essential investments every chance it got. Those significant investments helped compensate for the previous Conservative government's 10 years of inaction. In 2014, only 79% of Canadians had access to high-speed Internet, while today 93.5% of them do. That is real progress.

Since the fund was launched, over \$2.2 billion in funding has been announced for 260 projects and six federal-provincial funding arrangements. The money announced will make it possible for over 950,000 households, including over 29,000 indigenous households, to get affordable and reliable high-speed Internet access. The universal broadband fund has already helped provide high-speed Internet access to over 200,000 underserved households across the country, and 80,000 additional households should have improved access by the end of the year.

In Quebec, almost 100% of households are covered by projects that will get them connected to high-speed Internet. That would not have been possible without the investments that we made and our partnership with the provincial government. The fund makes it possible to offer access to reliable high-speed Internet at an affordable price. Affordability is an issue that is of concern to many Canadians living in rural areas.

Statements by Members

Despite the progress made on connectivity and rebuilding our economy following the pandemic, global inflation means that many Canadians are still finding it hard to put food on the table. That is why the 2023 budget includes new targeted supports for the most vulnerable Canadians to help them with the cost of living while working to build the economy of tomorrow, an economy that benefits all Canadians and gives them the means to prosper.

• (1355)

I would like to focus on one of these affordability measures, the new grocery rebate. We know that staples are more expensive today, especially in rural areas where the cost of living is higher. These higher prices are a source of great stress for families. That is why we are proposing \$2.5 billion to lessen the effects of inflation in a targeted manner for 11 million low-income families. On average, a couple with two children will qualify for up to \$467 more, single Canadians without children will receive up to \$234 and seniors will receive up to \$225 more. We have shown that, as a government, we are there for Canadians when they need us, as is the case with the Canada child benefit. This measure will put more money in the pockets of Canadian families and seniors who need it most.

Investments in budget 2023 will strengthen Canada's health care system, allocating \$198.3 billion for reducing backlogs, expanding access to family health services and ensuring that the provinces and territories can provide the top-quality health care that Canadians deserve. The budget also introduces a new Canadian dental care program that will benefit up to nine million Canadians. This program will guarantee that no Canadian family will have to choose between dental care and paying bills at the end of the month. These investments will bring real changes to the daily lives of Canadians in rural regions. Parents should not have to worry about the cost of their child's dental checkup. Seniors should be able to consult a doctor without having to worry about travelling too far because there are no doctors in their community.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

PIZZA NOVA

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today, I rise to celebrate a family-operated Canadian business of which I am very proud. I want to congratulate the Primucci family on the 60th anniversary of their delicious Pizza Nova brand. For many years, the Primucci family has been sharing the rich taste of Italy with Canadians.

Pizza Nova is more than just great food; it is a labour of love since 1963. Pizza Nova stands for passion, for family, friends and delicious pizza. I am happy to share this moment of celebration with it today. People can say thanks and congratulations by taking their families for an authentic Italian pizza in one of the 150 locations in southern Ontario to celebrate its 60th anniversary.

On behalf of my husband Sam and I, and our community, we offer our most sincere congratulations to Sam and Gemma Primucci,

founders of Pizza Nova chain, and to their terrific family members who have grown it into a very successful franchise operation.

* * *

FISHING LEGEND

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Madam Speaker, I recently had the pleasure of joining in the recognition of fishing legend, Bob Izumi, who hails from Chatham-Kent in southwestern Ontario.

Bob recently received a rare honorary membership to the all-party parliamentary outdoor caucus in recognition of his outstanding work in promoting fishing, family activities and environmental stewardship. Bob is known across North America for hosting Canada's longest-running syndicated television series, Bob Izumi's *Real Fishing Show*, which ran for 38 years.

It is also great to see Bob pay tribute to his father Joe, who, in addition to raising Bob, his sisters Lynn and Georgina, and brother Wayne, while working two or more jobs, also made time to teach community bowling, baseball and organize Canada's first-ever bass fishing tournament right here in Kent county.

I thank Bob for representing his community and country with so much dignity and his ever-present smile.

* * *

TOURISM

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with majestic landscapes, stunning wildlife, rich and diverse culture, and sophisticated cities, Canada has so much to offer.

The millions of Canadians employed in the tourism sector are proud to show visitors our national treasures like the old-growth forests, beaches and coastal indigenous art on the Pacific coast, Banff National Park in the Rockies, stunning Niagara Falls in Ontario, *la richesse historique et culturelle de la ville de Québec*, and the quaint, historic village of St. Andrews.

The truth is that Canada's economy, from coast to coast to coast, is powered by tourism. Tourism is pivotal for social cohesion, and our cultural ambassadors who work in this space are instrumental in showing the world our cultures and values.

Statements by Members

With the coming launch of our new tourism growth strategy, Canada is committed to helping this sector reach its full potential by attracting more people to choose careers in tourism, attracting and supporting events big and small right across the country, and investing in the people and the infrastructure that will set tourism up for success now and into the future.

As co-chair of the all-party parliamentary tourism caucus, I want to wish everyone a happy Tourism Week. I encourage members to highlight the wonders of their ridings, and the workers and businesses that help share them with the world.

* * *

[*Translation*]**TOURISM WEEK**

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today marks the start of Tourism Week, so I want to take this opportunity to invite everyone to come and experience Quebec's wonders and hospitality.

Tourism is in our nature, whether in the regions or in the city. Quebec is known for its wide open spaces and majestic river, for its breathtaking landscapes where a hike quickly becomes an adventure for everyone. Everyone should come and discover urban Quebec, with its architecture that is unrivalled in North America, its cultural offerings and nightlife.

Come discover how indigenous peoples, who have been here for thousands of years, helped shape Quebec's history, geography and tourism. The friendship between Quebecers and first nations has spanned more than four centuries. Visit any of the 17 tourism regions in Quebec and meet our friendly people, who are always happy to welcome tourists and help them explore the numerous events and festivals that take place throughout summer and winter.

Welcome to Quebec, a country larger than life.

* * *

● (1405)

[*English*]**EID AL-FITR**

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Eid al-Fitr is one of the most important days in the Islamic faith. To the Muslims in Nepean, and all across Canada, I wish them, again, Eid Mubarak.

After a month of fasting and spiritual reflection, Eid al-Fitr is a joyous occasion for communities and a time of celebration. I celebrated Eid and exchanged Eid greetings with thousands of Muslim Canadians at the event hosted by the Muslim Association of Canada last Friday.

Let us find inspiration from the values of compassion, gratitude and generosity that are at the heart of Islam. This is also an opportunity to recognize the many contributions Muslim Canadians have made, and continue to make, to the socio-economic development of our country. Muslim Canadians have strengthened the rich multicultural fabric of Canada.

[*Translation*]**CAROLLE PELLETIER**

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Patro de Charlesbourg will turn an important page in its history this spring. Carolle Pelletier will step down as executive director and take her well-deserved retirement after 35 years of good and faithful service.

Ms. Pelletier started going to the community centre at the age of 12. In 1989, the board of directors named her assistant director of this venerable institution in the riding of Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles. She then became acting director and then, in December of that same year, executive director, heralding the start of major changes within the institution.

Ms. Pelletier is the living memory of the Patro de Charlesbourg, which is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. She embodies that very precious connection among the board of directors, staff, volunteers and the community. For 35 years, she has upheld the Patro de Charlesbourg's mission, which is to contribute to the well-being of people of all ages through recreation, sport and community support. Over the past few years, I had the pleasure of spending time with Ms. Pelletier and working with her on various projects. I was always impressed by the vision, passion and dedication of this great woman. On behalf of the people of Charlesbourg and myself, I thank Carolle and wish her a wonderful retirement.

* * *

[*English*]**SIKH HERITAGE MONTH**

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): [*Member spoke in Punjabi*]

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, today, I want to commemorate two extraordinary events.

Dasmesh Darbar Gurdwara hosted the world's largest Sikh *nagar kirtan* parade in Canada's fastest growing city of Surrey. There were 700,000 who people gathered from all across the country and abroad to celebrate the birth of the Khalsa. For miles, all one could see was a sea of chunnis, turbans, floats, flags and lots and lots of food.

I want to give a big thanks to all the sevadars, the volunteers and the sponsors, who made one of Canada's greatest events happen this weekend.

Then today, the Liberal Sikh caucus and the Ottawa Sikh Society hosted a three-day Akhand Path celebration of Vaisakhi, Khalsa Day and Sikh Heritage Month. This is the only such event continuously done in any Parliament in the world and something of which all Canadians should be proud.

A special thanks goes out to all the Hill staff and volunteers, and especially the Khalsa Aid volunteers who came out and made this an amazing Sikh Heritage Month.

*Statements by Members***HISPANIC AND LATIN AMERICAN LEADERS**

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my absolute honour and pleasure to be hosting over 40 Hispanic and Latin American leaders to the House of Commons today, including, for the very first time, a member of the Latinx LGBTQ2 community.

With representatives from Victoria to Nova Scotia and four provinces, they are in Ottawa to build relations with parliamentarians, to exchange knowledge and information, and to network.

There are over one million Canadians of Hispanic or Latin American descent in Canada today. It is a community that is often not very visible, but its members are top lawyers, business leaders, journalists, scientists, doctors, urban strategists, educators, heads of community organizations and so much more. Their contributions are immeasurable and they embody the words “diversity is our strength” for indeed their contributions make Canada a stronger, better country. Through their hard work and dedication, this growing community will play an important role in Canada’s future growth and prosperity.

Gracias to the leaders of the Hispanic and Latin American Canadian community. They are an inspiration not only within the community but to all Canadians.

* * *

● (1410)

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the Prime Minister was off enjoying a free luxury trip last Christmas, many Canadians were wondering if they would be able to make their mortgage payment or their rent payment. It is clear that when the Prime Minister was talking about sunny ways back in 2015, he was actually talking about his Trudeau Foundation funded trips to Jamaica.

We already know the Communist regime in Beijing donated over \$200,000 to the Trudeau Foundation. We also know the special rapporteur, who will be investigating foreign interference in the 2021 election, was a member of the Trudeau Foundation until just weeks ago.

There is only one way to get to the bottom of this never-ending story between the Prime Minister, Communist Beijing and the Trudeau Foundation: an open, independent public inquiry.

* * *

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Mr. Shafqat Ali (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on April 18, I was on hand to congratulate the Hon. Gurbax Singh Malhi as he was presented with the key to the City of Brampton in recognition of his outstanding achievements as a trailblazer for the Sikh and South Asian community. His service and dedication to strengthening diversity in Canada is truly commendable.

As the first Sikh member of Parliament, his persistence on wearing his turban resulted in a historic change in the rules with respect to wearing headgear in the House of Commons.

Mr. Malhi’s legacy of breaking barriers, fighting for equality and being a strong advocate for public service is an inspiration not only for us, but for generations to come.

I want to thank the Brampton city council for recognizing Mr. Malhi’s community service with this well-deserved honour.

* * *

PASSPORTS

Mr. Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, I spoke with constituents, who are rightfully worried that their summer travel plans and passports will be derailed again this year, this time because of the strike.

Instead of offering a solution, what was the minister responsible for passport’s advice? Just do not apply for a passport, which is incredibly tone deaf for my constituents and all Canadians.

Even worse, the minister went on to say that any primary documents submitted with a passport application, such as a birth certificate or citizenship certificate, could not be returned until after the strike. Therefore, for the many Canadians who applied for a passport in the last couple of weeks, their documents are now stuck with Service Canada until the strike ends.

It takes a special type of incompetence for the Liberals to spend 50% more on bureaucracy and still end up with the biggest public service strike in 40 years.

The Speaker: I want to remind everyone that S.O. 31s are taking place and I know we want to hear what people have to say. Hopefully it is about what is going on in their ridings and is something special to them.

The hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove.

* * *

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 150,000 public service workers are out on strike and once again Canadians are paying the price for the Prime Minister’s total incompetence. He had two years to do a deal, but he dropped the ball and failed to bring it home. Instead, he is spending \$20 billion a year more on federal bureaucracy, yet delivering poorer services. To top it all off, he has caused the biggest strike in a generation. That takes a special degree of incompetence.

After eight years of the Prime Minister’s terrible mismanagement of the economy, his inflationary spending and waste are having a devastating impact on Canadians, including public service workers.

The Conservatives will bring back common sense into the budgetary process to ensure that taxpayers get value for their money, which includes an effective, efficient and motivated public service. It is time to bring it home.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with National Volunteer Week recently behind us, I would like to take a moment to honour the many volunteers in my riding of Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine.

Over the years, I have had the privilege of meeting many of these volunteers, who give so generously of their time, talent and energy for the sake of others. They strengthen the fabric our communities and make a huge difference in the lives of the people around them. In a world that is changing by the minute, they make a vital contribution to the well-being of our communities. We all know that times are hard. People of all ages need help, and volunteers answer the call without asking for anything in return.

Their commitment benefits us all and deserves recognition and support. For that reason, I would like to express my deep gratitude to all the volunteers who contribute their skills and time for the good of their fellow citizens.

To all the volunteers, thank you.

* * *

● (1415)

[English]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the world just marked Earth Day and Canadians understand that climate change is an existential crisis. However, our actions have not met our aspirations or the urgency required. We must significantly reduce our fossil fuel usage.

A clear majority of Canadians want the oil and gas sector to do its fair share. Oil and gas accounts for just 5% of our economy, yet is responsible for 26% of Canada's emissions. That is more than any other sector.

To meet our targets, Canada must reduce emissions 60% below 2005 levels by 2030. Done right, this transition will lower household energy costs, create more sustainable jobs and allow us to reach our climate targets for the first time in history. To do so requires a hard legislated cap on oil and gas emissions in Canada.

I urge the government to hold the oil and gas sector to these necessary and urgent targets. Our planet's health and that of all species living on it depend on it.

* * *

[Translation]

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on April 21, 2004, the Bloc Québécois member for the

Statements by Members

riding of Laval Centre, Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral, moved Motion No. 380, which recognized the 1915 Armenian genocide as a crime against humanity.

Twenty years earlier, as early as 1980, the government of René Lévesque was one of the first to recognize the unspeakable tragedy of the massacre of 1.5 million people, or two-thirds of the Armenian population.

Every year, April 24 marks the day we commemorate that genocide. Men, women and children were murdered in cold blood. It was a genocide, the crime of all crimes.

Today, I stand before you to once again repeat the word “genocide”. It is a difficult word to hear, but out of a duty to remember, we must say the word for those who are still victims of genocide today, so we never forget.

* * *

[English]

PUBLIC SERVICE

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as a result of the Public Service Alliance of Canada strike vote, over 700 CAF members at CFB Petawawa are left without hot water or heat because the workers manning those utilities are not considered essential.

This is absurd. Supporting the men and women who keep us safe in an increasingly volatile world is among the most essential of jobs. The government needs to either declare these workers essential or end the strike as soon as possible and turn the heat and water back on at CFB Petawawa.

* * *

SIKH HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): [*Member spoke in Punjabi*]

[English]

Mr. Speaker, this past Saturday, in my riding of Surrey—Newton, over half a million people from all backgrounds came together to celebrate the birth of Khalsa in one of the largest Khalsa Day and Vaisakhi parades in the entire world. Championed by Gurdwara Sahib Dasmesh Darbar, this annual event showcased the strength and diversity of our great nation.

With April being Sikh Heritage Month, I also want to recognize the contributions and accomplishments that Sikh Canadians have made to our country. I urge all members to join me in thanking the organizers and countless volunteers of the Surrey Khalsa Day Vaisakhi Parade and to thank Sikh Canadians across our country, who, over the past 125 years, have helped build Canada into the country it is today.

*Oral Questions**[Member spoke in Punjabi]***ORAL QUESTIONS**

• (1420)

*[Translation]***LABOUR**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's incompetence is off the charts.

He spent an additional \$20 billion on federal bureaucracy all while causing the worst public service strike in 40 years. As a result, 700 soldiers went without heat for three days.

We have a minister who is telling Canadians not to submit a passport application, not to even try to get one here in Canada.

How much will Canadians have to pay to end the strike that the Prime Minister caused?

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, public servants from the PSAC provide important services to Canadians and the government values their work.

We are committed to reaching agreements that are fair and reasonable for Canadians, and that is what we are doing. We will continue to do so until we reach an agreement that is fair and reasonable.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it would be one thing to increase the cost of the bureaucracy by 50%, or \$20 billion a year, and it would be another to have a strike. However, to do both of those things at once takes a special, unique kind of incompetence that only the Prime Minister could pull off.

The consequences are that 700 soldiers have been without heat and warm water. Canadians are now being told that they are not even to apply for passports, let alone get one, meaning that they will miss international weddings.

Our veterans, our seniors, our small business owners and our taxpayers are all being ripped off. Now, how much will they have to pay to bring an end to the Prime Minister-caused strike?

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, public servants from PSAC provide important services to Canadians and the government values their work. We are committed to reaching agreements that are fair for employees and reasonable to Canadians.

There is a competitive deal on the table, but PSAC continues to insist on demands that are unaffordable and would severely impact our ability to deliver services to Canadians. Canadians can expect both parties to bargain in good faith and find compromise. That is what we are focusing on.

ETHICS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Prime Minister is unaffordable. Maybe if he were not spending \$21 billion on consultants every year, he would not have the biggest public service strike in modern memory.

He expects us also to believe that he has no direct or indirect involvement with the Trudeau Foundation, even though its donors pay for his vacations, he chose two of its former directors to head up investigations into foreign interference, and the Trudeau Foundation received Beijing-based donations, which his brother processed. Now we have learned that the Trudeau Foundation is holding meetings in his office. Did he not know about that either?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the meeting that took place was between public servants in a government building. It was not with the Prime Minister.

However, I could understand that the Leader of the Opposition, as usual, is looking to swing a wide stick and does not seem to care what he hits. There is a constant array of attacks and mis-characterization of information. His interest again and again is to disrupt and be partisan rather than provide productive solutions to the issues that face this country right now.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us get this straight. The Trudeau Foundation's donors paid for the Prime Minister's vacation, but he did not know about that. The Trudeau Foundation supplied the two independent investigators to look into the interference by Beijing, and he did not know about that either. The Trudeau Foundation received donations from Beijing, organized and orchestrated by his brother, but he did not know about that.

Now we know that there were meetings in the Prime Minister's office with his top officials and the Trudeau Foundation. Once again, are the Liberals really expecting Canadians to be dumb enough to believe that he did not know about that either?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, sometimes I stay up at night, and I wonder how the Leader of the Opposition got to the position of recommending to people to opt out of inflation by recommending cryptocurrency as a solution, and now I understand why. Listening—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I just want to wait until everybody is ready so we can get on with question period.

The hon. government House leader may please proceed.

• (1425)

Hon. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, we listen to the convoluted mess the Leader of the Opposition tossed out there, and it is completely nonsensical. I will just take one point.

Yes, the Prime Minister, as I have said on many occasions, took a vacation with his family over Christmas and stayed at a friend's house. By the way, that friend has been his family friend his entire life. He had been at that residence when he was one year old. The mis-characterizations continue.

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister wants Canadians to believe that the Trudeau Foundation's donors paid for his vacation, but that he did not know about it. He would have us believe that the Trudeau Foundation received donations from Beijing, organized by his brother, but that he did not know about it. Finally, he wants us to believe that the two investigators into foreign interference are from the Trudeau Foundation, but that he did not know about it.

Now there were meetings that took place in the Prime Minister's office with his top officials and the Trudeau Foundation, but he did not know about them either.

Does the Prime Minister really think Canadians are that dumb?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, clearly, the member opposite desperately wants to create a link between the Trudeau Foundation and the Prime Minister.

There is no link. There has been no direct or indirect link between the foundation and the Prime Minister for over 10 years. That is clear.

Unfortunately, the leader of the official opposition cares more about playing partisan games and sowing division than he does about the facts.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we were wondering why China was trying so hard to cozy up to the Trudeau Foundation. This morning, *La Presse* gave us the answer.

In 2016, at the same time that China was writing it a big cheque, the Trudeau Foundation was at a meeting, in the Prime Minister's own office, with not one, not two, not three, but five deputy ministers. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister keeps endlessly repeating that he has had no involvement with the foundation for 10 years.

Does he really think Quebeckers are stupid enough to believe that he does not know what goes on in his own office?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, an independent meeting took place between public servants and the foundation. The Prime Minister had no stake in the meeting and no information about it.

I totally reject the premise of that question. It is absolutely ridiculous to claim that China or any other country has influence over our government or any other member. All members of the House are loyal to Canada. That is clear.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Trudeau Foundation has unfettered access to those in power.

The vast majority of Liberal MPs across the aisle can only dream of having such privileged access to the Prime Minister's Office, with five deputy ministers as an added bonus. That is why China wanted to cozy up to the foundation, and that is why the Prime

Oral Questions

Minister cannot be trusted to shed light on China's interference in our institutions.

Every time he has had the opportunity to shed light on this issue, for transparency's sake, the Prime Minister instead tells us the opposite of the truth. When will there be an independent public inquiry?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister has repeatedly stated, there is no direct or indirect relationship with the Trudeau Foundation. That is clear. I can repeat it, again and again.

We need to rely on facts in the House. A story or a novel is something entirely different. Perhaps there is another career awaiting members on the other side; maybe they can be novelists. Facts, however, are something else altogether.

* * *

LABOUR

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today is day six of the public service strike. This government is far from reaching a good agreement at the bargaining table.

It even seems as though the President of the Treasury Board is not taking this seriously. She is giving interviews with a big smile on her face. She is showing no respect for the workers who were there for us. It is time the minister was there for them.

Will the minister stop with the public relations job, start doing her real job and find a solution?

• (1430)

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, right now, our team is working long and hard to negotiate new collective agreements that are fair, competitive and reasonable.

This round of negotiations has been very difficult. The union came to the table with 570 demands. I am proud to say that there are only a handful left on the table.

We need to find a balance between what is fair for employees and what is reasonable for Canadians. That is what we are currently doing with the offer that is on the table.

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, workers deserve to be treated with respect.

Canada's public service workers have been without a contract for two years. Now they are out in the rain fighting for their rights, and the minister is nowhere to be found. Because the government has failed to get a fair deal for the workers, Canadians across the country are feeling the impacts of the PSAC strike.

It is time for the minister to show that she is going to walk the walk on labour rights, or will the minister continue to ignore these workers' rights?

Oral Questions

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our team has been working around the clock to negotiate new collective agreements that are fair, competitive and reasonable. This round of negotiations has been a heavy lift. The union came to the table with 570 demands, and I am proud to say that only a handful remain on the table.

We need to find a balance between what is fair for employees and what is reasonable for Canadians, which is what the deal on the table at this time is.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has increased the cost of the public service by 50% in eight years. He has been unable to manage its growth.

Now Canada Revenue Agency employees are on strike in the middle of tax season. This is a difficult time for millions of Canadians. Many are waiting patiently for their tax refunds so they can pay their bills.

Does the Prime Minister realize that Canadians are fed up with his incompetence, and will he act now to ensure that refunds are not delayed?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take absolutely no lessons from the Conservatives when it comes to negotiating with unions or providing services to Canadians. Canadians will remember the decade of darkness under Harper. The Conservatives cut services, muzzled scientists and tried to crush the labour movement across the country. After all that, they want to come and give us lessons. They should save themselves the embarrassment.

Canadians have not forgotten, nor will they ever forget, that the public service under the Conservatives was all about cuts. It was “chop, chop, chop”.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when I talk about this government's incompetence, the Minister of National Revenue is the perfect example: She is talking nonsense. Under the Harper government, as she likes to say, there were no strikes. Employees worked and everything was fine.

That said, we see this government's mismanagement and the increase in the public service. Nothing is working and they are striking. All federal services everywhere are broken, such as passports and immigration, and now it is tax time.

Can the government or the Minister of National Revenue give us an intelligent answer and confirm that hard-working Canadians will not have to wait for their tax refunds?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this really feels like a bad movie. When we listen to the Conservatives, we hear them asking us to help Canadians, but then they vote against everything that we put forward to help Canadians. They criticize us for being here for Canadians and then they want to cut what we are delivering.

The Conservatives are experts at two things because they talk out of both sides of their mouths. They continue to give ridiculous ad-

vice about cryptocurrency. I want to tell my colleague that this is the best tax season we have had since 2015.

[English]

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians want to file their tax returns, but they do not know when they are going to be processed or when they are going to receive their refunds. In addition, the Prime Minister spent 50% more on the bureaucracy, but Canadians are receiving poorer services, and just outside these doors, we have the largest public service strike in Canadian history.

When will the Prime Minister take responsibility for the price that Canadian taxpayers have to pay and end this strike?

• (1435)

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for our government, it is important to make sure that we respect the right of workers to strike and we respect the collective bargaining process. We are doing just that because we believe that a good deal can be reached at the negotiating table, while we are also making sure that we are respecting Canadians and the price they are going to pay to ensure that we get a fair deal for Canadians as well as for workers.

I can assure the member opposite, and all members across the House, that for those who file their taxes online, their tax returns will not be impacted at all.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister is responsible for the passport backlogs in the first place.

The Prime Minister had two years to negotiate an agreement, and he failed. In addition, he raised the cost of the public service bureaucracy by 50%. Canadians are receiving poor services, and outside these doors, we have the largest strike in Canada in the history of the public service.

Will the Prime Minister commit to providing the most basic services for Canadians and ending this strike?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the Conservatives, we actually respect workers' rights. We are taking an approach that makes sure that we respect the right to collective bargaining and the right to strike.

We believe, and we are committed to making sure, that the best deal will be reached at the negotiating table. Those negotiations are ongoing. We are going to make sure we get a good deal for both public servants and Canadians. We know how important it is to deliver core government services. We are going to get that deal.

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is the largest public sector union strike in 40 years. Revenue Canada workers are off the job, and vital services have been halted. The tax-filing deadline is this week, and Canadians cannot even get their phone calls answered.

What will the government do to ensure continuity of service so that Canadians can get their most basic questions answered?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague stated very clearly in this House that if Canadians file their taxes online before the deadline, there will be no impact from the PSAC strike that is going on right now. Let us be really clear: We believe in a negotiated settlement. We believe in working at the table.

Let us look at the contrast between nine years of economic stagnation on the other side, when the only playbook from the Conservative austerity caucus was chop, chop, chop. This included the status of women offices and veterans offices, as well as raiding EI. Canadians know what government has their back, and that is our Liberal government.

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, how can the government expect Canadians to file their taxes by the deadline if they cannot even get their questions answered?

The government knew when the contract was up. It knows when the tax-filing deadline is. How much money will it cost taxpayers for the government to end the strike?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are two-faced.

They say they care about Canadians but they voted against the Canada child benefit. They voted against the Canada workers benefit. They voted against the dental care programs. They voted against the housing programs.

I want to reassure my colleagues by stating that this is the best tax season we have had since 2015, because 95% of Canadians are submitting their tax returns electronically and there are no delays in payments.

The Speaker: Before we go to the next question, I would like to remind members that they must wait until they are called on by name to ask a question. Also, when referring to a member, we must use their riding name or title, but not their last or first name.

The hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, three years after the PM supposedly cut ties with the Trudeau Foundation, we learn that said foundation is holding a meeting at the Prime Minister's Office, directly in the Langevin Block, with five deputy ministers.

How many charitable organizations hold meetings at the Langevin Block with deputy ministers? None. Let us recap. The Prime Minister's Office calls the foundation about the donation

from China. The Prime Minister's Office invites the foundation to the Langevin Block.

How are we to believe that the Prime Minister cut ties with the foundation 10 years ago when there are still ties between his office and the foundation?

• (1440)

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is a good conspiracy theory. It is interesting, but not factual. It has nothing to do with reality.

I am not sure how many times we have to say this, but it is absolutely clear that there have not been any ties between the foundation and the Prime Minister for more than 10 years. I understand that the Bloc Québécois really wants there to be a connection for partisan reasons, but no such connection exists.

* * *

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals think that the pursuit of truth is a conspiracy.

Obviously, this foundation, which was established in honour of the Prime Minister's father, is very influential. Given the meetings at the Prime Minister's office, the fundraising follow-up calls from the Prime Minister's employees and the ties with the Prime Minister's family and close friends, we get the distinct impression that China bet on the right horse when trying to get into the government's good graces. If one wants to get closer to the Prime Minister, one has to make a donation to his father's foundation.

We will no longer believe anything the Liberals say about this file. There is too much secrecy and never any truth. What are they waiting for? When will they set up an independent public commission of inquiry?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, David Johnston, the former governor general who was appointed by Stephen Harper, is responsible for looking into the matter at this time.

I hope that the member opposite is not calling into question Mr. Johnston's character and who he is as a person. He is responsible for the matter. It is of the utmost importance, not just for the House of Commons but also for Canadians across the country, that this investigation be independent.

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this morning the Auditor General announced that she would not be investigating the Chinese regime's donation to the Trudeau Foundation.

Oral Questions

This means that the only ongoing, supposedly neutral, investigation into Chinese interference is the one the Prime Minister personally asked David Johnston to conduct. He is a friend and a former member of the Trudeau Foundation who will report directly to the Prime Minister.

Who will shed light on Chinese interference, if not the commissioner of an independent public inquiry?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Johnston is responsible for that.

I will state clearly that I fully understand that the Bloc Québécois wants to make a connection, but there is no connection to be made. I find their efforts odd, given that the Bloc Québécois knows full well that Parliament's institutions are the best in the world. They are very accountable, and they oversee our system and the integrity of our system.

The Bloc Québécois claims there is a problem because the Auditor General is saying there is no need for an investigation.

* * *

[English]

LABOUR

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after endless passport delays over the past year and \$20 billion more spent on bureaucracy, along with the biggest public sector strike in more than a generation, the minister in charge of passports said, "My best advice to Canadians is not to make that application right now because it just simply won't be processed". How low can the bar be set for customer service?

Canadians deserve better. They deserve competence. When will the Liberals fix what they broke? Most importantly, how much is it going to cost Canadian taxpayers?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Conservatives have an issue with the truth, but I am just going to tell it. The truth of the matter is that while there is a strike going on, I recommend that Canadians do not submit an application for a passport unless it is urgent. With the strike conditions, under law, those passports cannot be processed.

Unlike the Conservatives, I actually believe in telling the truth to Canadians.

The Speaker: I might have missed something, but I just want to say to everyone on both sides that they should be careful and judicious with their words.

• (1445)

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the truth is that the Liberals had two years to fix this before it happened. The chaos out on the streets, the misservice and the lack of customer service are on their backs, with 50% more bureaucracy and the worst customer service this country has ever experienced.

I ask one more time of the people across the aisle: When will they fix what they broke and how much is it going to cost Canadian taxpayers?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know the Conservatives have a short memory, but the public service was increased by 50% because we were delivering the Canadian emergency response benefit to eight and a half million Canadians. It is a fact that, at the greatest health and economic challenge of our time, this government was there for Canadians.

My big concern is not only that the Conservatives have forgotten this but also that they would not do the same thing to help Canadians in their time of need.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, during the pandemic, Canadians had to wait hours in line to apply for passports. With the delays, it then took four or five months for Canadians to obtain those passports, and by last August, the backlog had reached 340,000 Canadians. The pandemic ended, and Canadians thought things would finally get back to normal. However, they failed to take into account the competence of the government's ministers. Despite the largest expansion of the public service in recent decades and tens of billions of dollars spent on consultants, the government has managed to oversee the largest strike in the public service in decades. What is the minister's response? She says not to apply for a passport.

What travel documents are Canadians supposed to use?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during a general strike, by law, passport services are not considered to be essential. If there are urgent or humanitarian cases, they will be processed. That information is available on the website.

However, I have grave concerns with the short-term memory loss of the Conservatives. They have forgotten that those investments that were made were there to help eight and a half million Canadians get through the biggest health and economic challenge of our time. Canadians understand that when they are in need, the government has their backs. We just do not know where the—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Windsor West.

* * *

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are paying some of the highest prices in the world for telecom services, and the Rogers-Shaw merger approved by the government will only make things worse. Now it has been reported that the former industry minister is joining Rogers as executive in charge of public policy. This was a minister who allowed Rogers to raise cell-phone prices through the roof. Former Liberal cabinet ministers landing cushy jobs in big corporations is nothing new, but this is unreal. We just cannot make this stuff up.

Oral Questions

Why do Liberals seem more interested in jumping on the gravy train than bringing down costs for everyday Canadians?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the one important issue for Canadians is to bring costs down. That is what we did in the last iteration that he is talking about. The way to bring costs down in Canada is to have more competition. The way to have more competition is to have a fourth national player. That is what we delivered for Canadians. We are always going to stand up for Canadians to make sure that prices go down in this country.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I can assure everyone that the way to bring costs down is not by appointing Liberal insiders to executive positions at Rogers. The fact that the minister does not even know what the problem is just shows how out of touch Liberals are with Canadians. They green-lit the Rogers-Shaw merger even though the Competition Bureau said that it was a bad deal for consumers. Now the former industry minister gets an executive position at Rogers.

With this Liberal-Rogers merger almost complete, Canadians have a right to know which Liberal insider had influence and was involved in the approval process and when the last time was that the Prime Minister or the industry minister—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Innovation.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me provide a bit of background for the member. Actually, we denied the transfer of licence from Shaw to Rogers. This government stood up to big telco. We put 21 conditions in place. This has never been done in Canada's history. Does anyone know why? It is because Canadians have asked us to bring prices down. That is what we did. The way to get access to competition is to have a fourth national player.

Canadians know which side we stand on: We stand on their side.

* * *

● (1450)

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, economies around the world are striving to achieve a net-zero transition and adapt to green technologies for the future. Manufacturing of electric vehicles and batteries will play a key role in reaching these objectives.

Can the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry update this House on the historic announcement that Volkswagen is setting up shop in St. Thomas, Ontario, and what this means for jobs and investments for generations to come?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a home run for Canada. We have attracted a \$7-billion investment. This is a home run for the community of St. Thomas in southwestern Ontario. This is a home run for auto workers in Canada. This is a home run for the auto sector.

Unlike the Conservatives did in 2011, we will not let the sector go down. We invest in the sector. We have attracted the first car

manufacturer in 35 years and the first European one. Let us celebrate this.

Some hon. members: Louder. Louder.

The Speaker: Order. I hear somebody shouting. Before we go to the next question, I want to remind hon. members that they each have an earpiece, and they can turn it up if they are having a hard time hearing.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

* * *

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been saying for weeks that he built a wall between himself and the Trudeau family's taxpayer-funded foundation. New revelations now show that the Prime Minister did not actually build the wall and that these claims are completely false.

The Trudeau Foundation hosted a meeting inside the Prime Minister's own office with five deputy ministers. Was there a wall down the middle of the room or something? Canadians deserve a full investigation into political involvement and foreign interference into the Prime Minister's taxpayer-funded family foundation. Will the government allow that full investigation to take place?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the meeting in question was between public servants and the foundation. It did not involve the Prime Minister. It was in a building, yes, and there are many meetings that take place all over Parliament Hill.

This is what is going on: Again and again, the Conservatives are looking for any way they can to connect this when no such connection exists. I made it clear that no such connection exists. I will repeat that, day in and day out, and they will continue to try it with us.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us listen to the words the government House leader used. He said that, yes, it was in a building. Do they know what building it was? It was in the Prime Minister's own office. That is not just any building. It is of some significance.

If there were a meeting that took place in my office, and then I claimed I had no idea that people were using my office, how would they have gotten in? Did I leave the key somewhere?

Could the government House leader provide us with a more serious explanation? If the Prime Minister did not know about this meeting, then how did the people get into his office?

Oral Questions

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure which building the member is in. Maybe he is in the Confederation Building, and now I know that he is aware of every meeting that takes place in the Confederation Building.

Come on. Let us be realistic here. The actual issue is that they are attempting to be—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. Are we ready to continue?

The hon. government House leader.

Hon. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the underlying assumption that comes again and again, let us be very clear about what the Conservatives are trying to do. They are trying to paint a picture of the government, and it is offensive to suggest that any Canadian government would allow a foreign government to interfere or help make decisions. It is absolutely ridiculous. It attacks one of the fundamental tenets of our democracy, which each of us has here, and that is to protect our institutions.

• (1455)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said, and I quote, “I made that decision 10 years ago to not engage with the [Trudeau] foundation and that is what we have all been consistent with.”

It appears that the Prime Minister has once again misled the House. We know that his cabinet was in contact with the Trudeau Foundation in 2016. We learned this morning that the Trudeau Foundation secured a meeting with the most influential deputy ministers of the new Liberal government just six months after the election. If what the Prime Minister said is true, then why was that meeting held in his office?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here is what Chantal Hébert said this morning, and I am paraphrasing: I have been to the Langevin Block three times. All three times, it was for round tables organized by the Clerk of the Privy Council with deputy ministers. I have never met the current Prime Minister. It is entirely possible that the Prime Minister did not even know that the meeting with deputy ministers had taken place. It had nothing to do with him. It was not his political staff.

Are the Conservatives saying that Chantal Hébert is also part of the conspiracy?

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no, that is not what I am saying. What I am saying is, “Pass *Go* and collect \$200,000”.

That seems to be how the Trudeau Foundation saw the 2015 election: donations from the regime in Beijing and access to the federal government's top mandarin. It was a jackpot for Liberal cronies.

As *La Presse* reported, the Prime Minister has been droning on for the past three weeks about how there is a wall between him and the Trudeau Foundation. Little did we know that he was referring to an actual wall in his own office.

I have a number of questions for the Prime Minister. Who requested the meeting? Who asked the deputy ministers to attend? Why was the meeting held in the Prime Minister's building? Last but not least, who gave the Trudeau Foundation such unprecedented access to the Prime Minister's staff?

[*English*]

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the walls that protect our institutions. Let us talk about the CBC and Radio-Canada. Let us talk about the fact that the Leader of the Opposition wants to work with large tech giants to destroy the walls that protect those foundations.

Let us talk about the Bank of Canada, which he wishes to reach into to change its direction. This is the Bank of Canada, something that has been completely independent while protecting monetary and fiscal policy.

I wonder if, like when he was giving advice about cryptocurrency, he would apply that advice to the Bank of Canada and make the Bank of Canada listen to his political direction. It would have the same disastrous effect on all Canadians as it did on those who listened to his advice on cryptocurrency.

* * *

[*Translation*]

LABOUR

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, where is the Prime Minister in the labour dispute between his government and the public service?

After a weekend without any progress and given that the situation is likely to escalate, the Prime Minister must personally intervene. That is a formal request from the union and it is also in the interest of Quebecers, who have everything to lose if the dispute drags on. Every hour that passes moves us further away from a desirable negotiated solution and leads us closer to an escalation of tensions.

Will the Prime Minister finally sit at the bargaining table?

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are currently at the table. We are negotiating with the Public Service Alliance of Canada. A great deal of progress has been made. We must remember that there were 570 demands at the outset. A few are remaining and we will get there.

We will reach a fair and reasonable agreement for Canadians.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister needs to get involved.

The union has said that, at this point, he is the only one in office that can resolve certain key issues.

If the strike drags on, some people will not receive their tax refund. Some will experience another passport crisis. Some people's employment insurance claims will not be processed. The only reason the strike is still going on right now is that the Prime Minister is refusing to take a seat at the bargaining table.

When will he step up to the plate?

Oral Questions

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been in mediation for three weeks now, and our team is working tirelessly to negotiate new collective agreements that are fair, competitive and reasonable.

This round of negotiations has been very difficult. As I said earlier, the union came to the table with 570 demands. I am proud to say that there are only a handful left on the table. Our bargaining team is working very hard, and we will come to an agreement very soon. We will continue to make an effort to come to an agreement.

* * *

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 700 soldiers at Petawawa went without heat and hot water because the Prime Minister could not reach a deal with public servants. According to leaked documents, the Prime Minister secretly told our allies that he does not feel our military is important. Now Canadians know the truth. Under the Liberals, our women and men in uniform will never be considered a priority.

The Prime Minister's residence would never go without heat and water. Why were heat and hot water not deemed to be essential services for our Canadian Armed Forces?

• (1500)

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, an agreement has been reached that allows the heating plant to resume operations and provide heat and hot water to those living at the garrison.

On our commitment to the Canadian Armed Forces, our defence spending is increasing, unlike that of the Conservatives, who let defence spending dip below 1% when they were in power. We invested \$40 billion in NORAD modernization. Our defence spending is increasing by 70% under our current defence policy. In our last budget, we are increasing defence spending by \$8 billion.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is called creative accounting.

The Prime Minister's incompetence has caused the worst public service strike in decades, and it is disproportionately hurting national defence. Our troops are not being fed, do not have heat or hot water, and are not being reimbursed for out-of-pocket meal expenses in places such as Poland.

It is said that an army marches on beans and bullets, and the incompetent Liberal government cannot even get that right. The Prime Minister does not consider the basic needs of our forces essential. He is literally leaving our troops in the cold and hungry. Why is that?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is somewhat surprising, when the Conservatives let defence spending dip below 1%, for my hon. colleague to suggest that we are not paying attention to what we are rightfully focused on, which is increasing resources for the Canadian Armed Forces, increasing defence spending, ensuring our forces have the equipment they need to fight forest fires and floods here at home, leading the enhanced forward presence battle group in Latvia, making sure we

are a leading donor to Ukraine in its time of need, contributing in the Middle East, and the list goes on. We will always be here for the armed forces.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is displaying a special kind of incompetence, and once again, Canadians are the ones who will pay the price. He increased the cost of the public service by 50% in eight years without being able to prevent 150,000 employees from going on strike, the worst strike in 40 years. We also found out that 700 soldiers are living on a base without heat or hot water because of the public servants walking off the job.

Does the Prime Minister not think that our soldiers deserve better, after everything they do for our country?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think that many Canadians would like to know where Conservative MPs from Quebec stand on their leader's proposal to make cuts at CBC/Radio-Canada. Last week, on one of the most popular radio shows in Quebec, not one Quebec MP from the Conservative Party came to defend their leader's position. Where do the Quebec Conservative MPs stand on the issue of budget cuts at CBC/Radio-Canada?

* * *

HEALTH

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week, which seeks to raise awareness of the critical need for more donors across the country. Every year, hundreds of Canadians die while waiting for an organ transplant. Statistics from the Canadian Institute of Health Information show that the deceased donor rates increased by 42% between 2009 and 2018.

Can the Minister of Health tell the House what our government is doing to improve organ donation and transplantation in Canada?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Châteauguay—Lacolle for her hard work and her important question. We all recognize the value of organ and tissue donation in protecting the health and lives of those in need of a transplant, sometimes urgently. With the co-operation of the provinces and territories, as well as multiple organizations in the field, our government initiated the organ donation and transplantation collaborative. Today and every day of the year, we encourage people to make the choice to become an organ donor to save and protect the lives of those we love.

* * *

● (1505)

[English]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians pay the highest cellphone rates in the world. In fact, Rogers customers pay the highest cellphone rates in Canada. The minister has stated that the Rogers-Shaw deal will alleviate those prices, but instead, in typical Liberal fashion, we are seeing it is only benefiting Liberal friends and donors while Canadians pay.

Days after the announcement of the Rogers-Shaw merger, the former industry minister, who had been responsible for reducing cellphone bills by 25%, was appointed to Rogers' board of directors.

Why is it that Liberal friends and insiders always benefit while Canadians have to pay?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague is somehow missing the point. It is Canadians who are winning.

I so wish, for those watching at home, that the Conservatives would listen to people. Canadians have asked us to do one thing, to bring prices down in telcos. The way to do that in Canada is through more competition with a fourth national player. We have imposed the longest series of conditions in Canada's history to make sure that the telcos will deliver for Canadians as Canadians expect in their everyday lives.

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if members believe that, I have a Rogers cellphone plan to sell them.

In 2015, the Prime Minister promised to reduce cellphone bills by 25%. In fact, last year, it was announced to the House that the Liberals had reduced cellphone bills by 25%, when the reality is that Canadians have never seen cellphone bills as high as when the Liberals have been in power.

The former industry minister told Canadians that he was going to negotiate with Rogers. Canadians did not know that he was just negotiating for a corner office at Rogers.

Why are the Liberal insiders and friends always benefiting on the backs of hard-working Canadians?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians who are watching at home know the Conservatives. They know that they are

good at bringing up all these conspiracy theories. We have heard an hour of them today.

However, one thing they know is that they can trust the government to have their back. That is exactly what we have done. They told us that they wanted more competition and prices to come down for Canadians. The way to do that is to have a fourth national player—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am sorry, but I am struggling to hear the answer.

I will ask the minister to start over so that I can hear the full response.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives. They do not even ask me about Volkswagen; however, the Conservatives are the ones who let the auto sector down in 2011. They let the good people of St. Thomas and southwestern Ontario down. They let 8,000 workers down in 2011 in St. Thomas.

One thing Canadians saw last Friday is that we invest in people, we invest in our workers and we invest in Canada. That is what confident nations are doing.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the DFO's elver science is done on the East River-Chester, the only river. Elver harvesters have been begging the DFO to monitor and enforce the law on that river, yet poaching is happening every night. I personally observed that for the last three nights.

During the open legal season and since the closure, no one from the DFO has been on that river. If members can believe it, DFO enforcement proactively called the licence-holder this morning to say that it would not be monitoring the river for either law enforcement breaches or science. Why is this the case?

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be clear about what actually happened here.

The DFO more than doubled the number of enforcement officers. We worked closely with the RCMP. We made numerous arrests, seized gear and unauthorized catches and closed down the fishery to protect public safety and conservation. This enforcement continues for the closed elver fishery.

We are working to reduce the amount of illegal fishery, and we will continue to do just that.

* * *

LABOUR

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 10 years ago today, on April 24, 2013, the Rana Plaza factory in Bangladesh collapsed, killing 1,134 people and injuring even more. That incident brought to light the inhuman conditions in which many workers around the world still work today. It reminds us that we have a responsibility as world leaders to fight for the rights of workers everywhere, regardless of borders and distance.

Can the Minister of Labour update us on the work that our government is doing to protect workers around the world on this sombre anniversary?

• (1510)

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Rana Plaza incident of 10 years ago is a painful reminder of the absolute necessity for workers around the world to have fair pay and safe working conditions.

Canada is working with the International Labour Organization and unions to champion the rights of workers. We have built labour conditions into our trade agreements. Workers make trade possible, and they should reap the benefits of it.

I went to Washington last year to launch M-POWER, a global initiative with the U.S. and other like-minded countries, to support unions and workers' rights and to eradicate forced labour in our supply chains.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have given more than \$200 million to Deloitte for contracts within a single department in the last year alone. Now, we have learned that former Liberal and Conservative cabinet ministers are currently working for Deloitte.

Public service workers have been left out in the rain asking for fair pay. Meanwhile, the Liberals have no problem giving massive multi-million dollar contracts to their friends. People are fed up with the hypocrisy. Will the minister end this reckless government outsourcing and instead get a fair deal for public service workers?

Hon. Helena Jaczek (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as was clearly established at the government operations committee earlier this year, there was absolutely no political interference in the contracts awarded, particularly to McKinsey. We are open and transparent as a government in the way that we award contracts, and we will continue to be.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, the situation in Sudan is rapidly deteriorating. Hundreds have been killed and thousands injured. Over 1,600 Canadians have registered with Global Affairs Canada; sadly, many more have not.

The fighting is intense. Food and water supplies are limited. Canada has evacuated its embassy and suspended consular services.

Government Orders

We know that Canada is trying to work out an evacuation plan with like-minded countries.

Advising people to shelter in place with no embassy, food or water is not a viable solution. Can the minister inform the House of how the plan is coming along?

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises an important question. It took a long time today to get out of the weeds and into a very life-threatening situation. The situation in Sudan is changing by the minute. The minister is in constant conversation with her counterparts around the world.

I want to take a moment to thank our diplomats, who have been courageous and working extremely hard. They have now been removed from the embassy. The embassy is closed. However, they continue to work to support Canada's efforts at both engaging in peace and helping Canadians. If anyone has a Sudanese Canadian friend, please make sure they register with ROCA so that we can help them immediately.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

DIGITAL CHARTER IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2022

The House resumed from April 20 consideration of the motion that Bill C-27, An Act to enact the Consumer Privacy Protection Act, the Personal Information and Data Protection Tribunal Act and the Artificial Intelligence and Data Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: It being 3:13 p.m., pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, 2022, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at the second reading stage of Bill C-27.

[Translation]

Call in the members.

[English]

The question is on the motion. Pursuant to Standing Order 69.1, the first question is on parts 1 and 2, including the schedule to clause 2 of the bill.

• (1525)

(The House divided on the motion on parts 1 and 2, which was agreed to on the following division:)

*Government Orders**(Division No. 300)***YEAS**

Members

Alghabra
Anand
Angus
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Baker
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bendayan
Bérubé
Blaikie
Blanchette-Joncas
Blois
Boulerice
Brière
Cannings
Chabot
Chahal
Champoux
Chen
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier
Dabrusin
Davies
Desbiens
Desjarlais
Dhillon
Dong
Dubourg
Duguid
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Fillmore
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Gaheer
Garrison
Gazan
Gill
Green
Hajdu
Hardie
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Idlout
Jaczek
Joly
Julian
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lametti
Lapointe
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lemire
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McGuinty

Ali
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Ashton
Bachrach
Bains
Barron
Battiste
Beech
Bennett
Bittle
Blair
Blaney
Boissonnault
Bradford
Brunelle-Duceppe
Casey
Chagger
Champagne
Chatel
Chiang
Collins (Victoria)
Coteau
Damoff
DeBellefeuille
Desilets
Dhaliwal
Diab
Drouin
Duclos
Dzerowicz
El-Khoury
Fergus
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Garon
Gaudreau
Gerretsen
Gould
Guilbeault
Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Ien
Johns
Jowhari
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Larouche
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maloney
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay

McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Mencicino
Michaud
Morrice
Murray
Ng
Normandin
Oliphant
Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski
Robillard
Rogers
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Sousa
St-Onge
Tassi
Thériault
Thompson
Trudel
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Villemure
Vuong
Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi— 205

McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
O'Connell
O'Regan
Plamondon
Rayes
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sajjan
Samson
Savard-Tremblay
Schiefke
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sinclair-Desgagné
Ste-Marie
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Therrien
Trudeau
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Vignola
Virani
Weiler
Yip
Zarrillo

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
Albas
Arnold
Barlow
Berthold
Block
Brassard
Calkins
Carrie
Chong
Dalton
Davidson
d'Entremont
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Ferrerri
Gallant
Genuis
Godin
Gourde
Hallan
Kelly
Kmiec
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Lantsman
Lehoux
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd
Martel
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Melillo

Aitchison
Allison
Baldinelli
Barrett
Bezan
Bragdon
Brock
Caputo
Chambers
Cooper
Dancho
Deltell
Doherty
Dreeshen
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Findlay
Généreux
Gladu
Goodridge
Gray
Jeneroux
Kitchen
Kram
Kurek
Lake
Lawrence
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lobb
Mazier
McLean
Moore

Government Orders

Morantz
 Motz
 Nater
 Patzer
 Poilievre
 Reid
 Richards
 Rood
 Scheer
 Shields
 Small
 Steinley
 Strahl
 Thomas
 Tolmie
 Van Popta
 Vien
 Vis
 Warkentin
 Webber
 Williamson— 109

Morrison
 Muys
 O'Toole
 Perkins
 Redekopp
 Rempel Garner
 Roberts
 Ruff
 Seeback
 Shipley
 Soroka
 Stewart
 Stubbs
 Tochor
 Uppal
 Vidal
 Viersen
 Wagantall
 Waugh
 Williams

Duclos
 Dzerowicz
 El-Khoury
 Fergus
 Fisher
 Fortier
 Fragiskatos
 Freeland
 Gaheer
 Garrison
 Gazan
 Gill
 Green
 Hajdu
 Hardie
 Holland
 Hughes
 Hutchings
 Idlout
 Jacek
 Joly
 Julian
 Khalid
 Koutrakis
 Kwan
 Lambropoulos
 Lamoureux
 Larouche
 Lauzon
 Leboutillier
 Lightbound
 Longfield
 MacDonald (Cardigan)
 MacGregor
 Maloney
 Masse
 May (Cambridge)
 McDonald (Avalon)
 McKay
 McLeod
 Mendès
 Miao
 Miller
 Morrissey
 Naqvi
 Noormohamed
 O'Connell
 O'Regan
 Plamondon
 Rayes
 Rodriguez
 Romanado
 Sajjan
 Samson
 Savard-Tremblay
 Schiefke
 Sgro
 Sheehan
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Sinclair-Desgagné
 Ste-Marie
 Sudds
 Taylor Roy
 Therrien
 Trudeau
 Turnbull
 Van Bynen
 Vandal
 Vignola
 Virani
 Wilkinson
 Zahid
 Zuberi— 203

Duguid
 Ehsassi
 Erskine-Smith
 Fillmore
 Fonseca
 Fortin
 Fraser
 Fry
 Garon
 Gaudreau
 Gerretsen
 Gould
 Guilbeault
 Hanley
 Hepfner
 Housefather
 Hussen
 Iacono
 Ien
 Johns
 Jowhari
 Kelloway
 Khera
 Kusmierczyk
 Lalonde
 Lametti
 Lapointe
 Lattanzio
 LeBlanc
 Lemire
 Long
 Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
 MacDonald (Malpeque)
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Martinez Ferrada
 Mathysen
 May (Saarich—Gulf Islands)
 McGuinty
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 McPherson
 Mendicino
 Michaud
 Morrice
 Murray
 Ng
 Normandin
 Oliphant
 Petipas Taylor
 Powlowski
 Robillard
 Rogers
 Sahota
 Saks
 Sarai
 Scarpaleggia
 Serré
 Shanahan
 Sidhu (Brampton East)
 Simard
 Sousa
 St-Onge
 Tassi
 Thériault
 Thompson
 Trudel
 Valdez
 van Koeverden
 Vandenbeld
 Villemure
 Weiler
 Yip
 Zarrillo

PAIRED

Members

Aldag
 Bibeau
 Perron
 Schmale

Bergeron
 Pauzé
 Qualthrough
 Sorbara— 8

The Speaker: I declare parts 1 and 2, including the schedule to clause 2, of the bill carried.

The next question is on part 3 of the bill.

• (1540)

(The House divided on the motion on part 3, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 301)

YEAS

Members

Alghabra
 Anand
 Angus
 Arya
 Atwin
 Badawey
 Barron
 Battiste
 Beech
 Bennett
 Bittle
 Blair
 Blaney
 Boissonnault
 Bradford
 Brunelle-Duceppe
 Casey
 Chagger
 Champagne
 Chatel
 Chiang
 Collins (Victoria)
 Coteau
 Damoff
 DeBellefeuille
 Desilets
 Dhaliwal
 Diab
 Drouin

Ali
 Anandasangaree
 Arseneault
 Ashton
 Bachrach
 Baker
 Barsalou-Duval
 Beaulieu
 Bendayan
 Bérubé
 Blaikie
 Blanchette-Joncas
 Blois
 Boulerice
 Brière
 Cannings
 Chabot
 Chahal
 Champoux
 Chen
 Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
 Cormier
 Dabrusin
 Davies
 Desbiens
 Desjarlais
 Dhillon
 Dong
 Dubourg

Routine Proceedings

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Berthold	Bezan
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chambers
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	Deltell
d'Entremont	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Findlay
Gallant	Généreux
Genuis	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
Martel	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
Melillo	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	O'Toole
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Perkins	Poilievre
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ruff	Scheer
Seeback	Shields
Shipley	Small
Soroka	Steinley
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vis	Vuong
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Williams	Williamson— 112

PAIRED

Members

Aldag	Bergeron
Bibeau	Paucé
Perron	Qualtrough
Schmale	Sorbara— 8

The Speaker: I declare part 3 of the bill carried.

The House has agreed to the entirety of Bill C-27, an act to enact the consumer privacy protection act, the personal information and data protection tribunal act and the artificial intelligence and data

act and to make consequential and related amendments to other acts, at the second stage reading.

[*Translation*]

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

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

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on National Defence, entitled "A Secure and Sovereign Arctic". Prior to asking that the government respond, I want to compliment the committee on how well committee members worked together to arrive at this report.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 13th report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development in relation to Bill C-281, an act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act, the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act (Sergei Magnitsky Law), the Broadcasting Act and the Prohibiting Cluster Munitions Act. The committee has studied the bill and pursuant to Standing Order 97.1(1) requests a 30-day extension to consider it.

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 97.1(3)(a), a motion to concur in the report is deemed moved, the question deemed put and a recorded division deemed demanded and deferred. Pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, 2022, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, April 26, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, we celebrate Vaisakhi on the Hill. We had the final prayer of the Akhand Path that commenced on Saturday. This is the continuous recitation of the Guru Granth Sahib Ji. To all who celebrate, I want to wish them a happy Vaisakhi.

Routine Proceedings

With that, I would be honoured to present, in both official languages, the following reports of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs: the 34th, 35th, 36th and 37th reports of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

The committee is requesting an extension for the consideration of objections to the reports of the federal electoral boundaries commissions from Quebec, Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario. The committee is requesting that the deadline be extended to June 9.

Mr. Speaker, you have responded to confirm that, if the House is not sitting when the reports come back, you will ensure that members receive those reports. That will help with the due diligence that was needed to have concurrence.

• (1545)

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 38th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs regarding the membership of the committees of the House.

To speed things up, I will do them all at once.

[English]

If the House gives its consent, I move that the 34th, 35th, 36th, 37th and 38th reports of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be concurred in.

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

It is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP) moved that the 15th report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration presented on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, be concurred in.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to this important motion before the House, the concurrence motion.

What we are dealing with is essentially seeking authority from the House to expand the scope of Bill S-245. Bill S-245 is a Senate bill that is before the House to address the situation of those who are commonly known as "lost Canadians". Bill S-245 would amend the Citizenship Act to allow Canadians who previously lost their citizenship due to the age 28 rule to regain their citizenship. The age 28 rule means that second-generation Canadians born abroad were subject to the laws of citizenship under the former section 8 of the Citizenship Act, which required them to apply to certify their citizenship before they turned 28 years old.

In 2009 the Conservatives repealed this section through Bill C-37. However, the legislation did not restore citizenship to those who lost their citizenship prior to 2009. This oversight created major problems for many Canadians, as they somehow could lose their citizenship status as they turned 28. Many of them actually did not

even know that was the situation they were faced with. It was only when applying for their passport, for example, that they realized they had lost their citizenship.

Bill S-245 seeks to fix the age 28 rule. However, the rule does not address other situations where Canadians have lost their citizenship. The archaic provisions of the Citizenship Act have resulted in many other lost Canadians, and New Democrats seek to actually fix this problem.

Mr. Speaker, 14 years ago, Bill C-37 passed in this House and came into force, and as a result of that, many people lost their citizenship rights. In fact, it created a scenario where Canada's Citizenship Act, for this group of lost Canadians, in many ways was not charter-compliant. For decades some Canadians have found themselves even to be stateless due to a number of these archaic immigration laws.

In 2007, the UN's Refugees magazine listed Canada as one of the top offending countries for making its own people stateless. In 2009, as I mentioned, the Conservatives said that they were going to fix the lost Canadian issue with Bill C-37. Sadly, this did not happen. Worse still, the Conservatives created a brand new group of lost Canadians, and today we have an opportunity before us to fix that.

Bill S-245, the bill that was introduced by Senator Martin, is now before the committee for citizenship and immigration, and the bill aims to address this group of lost Canadians, lost due to the age 28 rule. I want to be very clear that the NDP wholeheartedly supports ensuring those who one day woke up and found themselves without Canadian status are made whole. This absolutely needs to be done. However, it is the NDP's strongest view that the scope of Bill S-245 is too narrow. The NDP wants to seize this opportunity to fix the lost Canadian issue once and for all.

Currently, there is a large group of Canadians who are deemed to be second-class citizens, due to the Conservatives' first-generation cut-off rule brought on by the Harper administration in 2009. Bill C-37 ended the extension of citizenship to second-generations born abroad. By stripping their right to pass on citizenship to their children if they were born outside of Canada, the Canadian government has caused undue hardship to many families. For some, it means separating children from parents. Some even find themselves stateless.

• (1550)

I spoke with Patrick Chandler. He is a Canadian who, while born abroad, spent most of his life in Canada. As an adult, he worked abroad, married someone from another country and had children. He was later offered a job in British Columbia. When he moved back to Canada, he had to leave his wife and children behind because he could not pass on his citizenship to his children. He had to go through an arduous process to finally reunite with them a year later.

There are many families being impacted in this way, and it is wrong. We should not put Canadians in those kinds of situations, yet here we are and that is what they have to suffer through. There are many families being impacted.

Routine Proceedings

Another family faced with this situation is the family of Emma Kenyon. In fact, Emma lived here in Canada, as did her husband. However, they worked abroad and they met abroad. They had a child abroad. That child is stateless because neither Emma nor her husband has status in that country. They are now in a situation where they have a stateless child born to a Canadian. This is so wrong, and we need to fix this problem. Immigration officials said to them at the time that, before their child was born, they had a choice. They could actually travel back to Canada and have their child be born in Canada.

This, of course, did not make any sense. It was during the COVID period, when, basically, it was unsafe for her to travel. If Emma did travel back to Canada, she would be without a family doctor or a gynecologist to care for her pregnancy. None of that made any sense, but that is what she was told to do. Of course, she did not risk the birth of her child in that situation. She did not risk her own health either. As a result, her child was born abroad and is now in a stateless situation. It should never have been this way.

Families are so frustrated with these archaic immigration laws, especially with the stripping of the rights of immigrants having children born abroad. Those rights were stripped because of the Conservatives' Bill C-37. Families are now taking the government to court to address this inequity. The Conservatives deemed first-generation Canadians born abroad to be less worthy and less Canadian, even though many had grown up in Canada. The implications are so serious that people are taking the government to court.

At the citizenship and immigration committee, when the opportunity arises, I will be moving amendments to ensure that this does not happen to anyone else. The NDP amendments would ensure that first-generation, born-abroad Canadians would have the right to pass on their citizenship rights to their children based on a connections test. They would also retroactively restore citizenship to persons who have not been recognized as citizens since the second-generation cut-off rule was enacted in 2009.

The same principles would apply to adoptees as well. We need to make sure that individuals and families that adopt children are not going to be caught in this bad situation. For those who do not wish to have citizenship conferred upon them, upon notification to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, these changes would not apply to them.

This will mean that people like Patrick, whom I mentioned, and people like Emma and her family would not have to suffer the challenges they face as a result of Bill C-37's stripping of their rights.

In addition to the amendments related to the first-generation cut-off rule, I will also be moving amendments to symbolically recognize those who died before citizenship was conferred upon them. For example, many of Canada's war heroes fought and died for Canada. However, they were never recognized as Canadians. The NDP amendments would also honour them and recognize them as citizens, retroactive to birth.

• (1555)

The situation with what I call "war heroes" is this. The first Governor General of Canada, in 1867, right after Confederation, said that Canadians were a new "nationality". However, according to

Canada's immigration laws, Canadian citizenship did not exist prior to January 1, 1947. That means that no soldiers who fought and died for Canada in battles like Vimy Ridge or D-Day are deemed to be Canadians.

Bill C-37 was supposed to fix this, but it did not happen. Don Chapman, who has fought for so long on the issue of lost Canadians and trying to rectify those concerns, indicated that "the government has confirmed they're leaving out all the war dead [pre-1947]. So, the war dead in Canada were really just British. We might as well just scratch the Maple Leaf off their headstones."

Symbolically recognizing those who fought for Canada and ensuring that they are recognized as citizens would have zero implications, no legal consequence whatsoever or liability for the government. It is really a strictly symbolic gesture, and it is an important one, especially for family members of loved ones who fought and died for Canada. I see some of these family members on Remembrance Day every year. Many veterans went to war and fought for Canada, and never came back. We should remember them as Canadians.

Beyond this, there are a couple of other categories of lost Canadians, who, due to one of the discriminatory rules, such as the gender discrimination rule that existed in Canada, were not recognized as citizens. The NDP's amendments would aim to fix that as well. Suffice it to say, there are long lists of people who have been hurt by this set of rules, and successive governments have said they would fix it. However, it never came to be. Now we have a chance to actually do that work. It is important we do that work now.

I fear that the Conservatives would not support this effort. At committee, when the senator and the sponsor of the bill were before us at committee to talk about this bill, the Conservatives indicated they wanted to just ensure the bill would be left as is and address only the 28-year rule, not deal with the other categories of lost Canadians. To me, that is wrong. Their argument is that it is too complicated, that we do not have time and that if the matter goes back before the Senate, then an election might be called and the bill might just die. That is, of course, if the Conservatives want that to happen.

We could actually work together, collaboratively, to say that we are going to fix this problem once and for all, for lost Canadians. We want to make sure that people like Emma Kenyon, whose child was born stateless, would never be in that situation. We could actually make that happen by amending the bill.

Routine Proceedings

I know that Conservative members, even their leader, would say that they support the immigrant community and that they are there for them. If they are there for them, first, I would say that Bill C-37 should never have stripped of their rights the immigrants who became Canadians, such as myself. If I had a child born abroad, my child should have citizenship conferred upon them. The Conservatives took that away. We have a chance today to fix that, to say that immigrants, such as myself, would be able to have the same rights as those who were born in Canada, and be able to pass on their citizenship rights to their children born abroad.

• (1600)

To be sure that there is a connection between individuals like that, we could put forward a connections test, such as, for example, having been in Canada for 1,095 days. This happens to be the same number of days required, through the Citizenship Act, for people getting their citizenship. We could put in provisions like that to ensure there is a clear connection between them and Canada. There is no reason to say that we are not going to do any of this and that we are just going to strip them of their rights and not recognize them. Let us fix this once and for all.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

Ultimately, this bill is about dignity. The issue is simple. It aligns with action taken in 2005, 2009 and 2015. As such, it is the logical next step on the way to showing these people some humanity and restoring their immigrant status.

[*English*]

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, I thank Bloc members for their kindness and understanding on the issue, because they are exactly right. Stripping immigrants of their right to pass on citizenship to their children born abroad is wrong. It creates a second class of citizens, and it is wrong. By doing that, we are breaking up families; families are being separated. Can members imagine a Canadian's child born abroad being stateless? That is the reality people are faced with, and it should not be that way.

• (1605)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for moving concurrence on a report during a meeting of the immigration committee right now to discuss a draft report on a different matter.

At committee, when there was a discussion on this on the public record, I had moved an amendment that suggested we give ourselves more time to consider new amendments and give the clerk enough time to provide us these amendments in both official languages so we could consider the expansion of the scope of what that would involve.

Why did the member vote against it and why she did not want to have all the amendments presented that would be out of scope beyond the original intent of the bill?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, it is because committee members had the time to do exactly that. That is exactly what I did. I tabled a bunch of amendments that I wanted to see adjusted and amended in this bill, worked with legislative counsel and tabled

them with the committee's clerk in time for the deadline established for all committee members.

The Conservatives, of course, could have done that, but they did not; they chose not to. However, that was their choice, not my choice. I did the work and met the deadline. All committee members could have done the same.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, that is a response that would make sense if the amendments were all in scope. Some amendments turned out not to be in scope, and that is what members of the Conservative Party saw.

This was a Senate bill that came from Senator Yonah Martin, a Conservative senator who had discussed this matter with members of the Conservative caucus. Therefore, we did not need to make amendments to the bill, because we agreed with the intent of Senator Yonah Martin, for a very fixed group of lost Canadians, to expedite a bill through the Senate and the House of Commons. The Senate was kind enough to do it without committee review, and what is happening right now at committee and with this concurrence report is that we are going far beyond what the senator intended with the original bill.

Why did the member want to abridge the process and basically vandalize Senator Yonah Martin's original intent for the bill, which would have expedited fixing a problem for a certain group of lost Canadians? There was always the opportunity to present new legislation, whether it be government legislation, a new Senate bill or even a private member's bill that could have come from the member. Why were those options not considered?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, when Senator Yonah Martin intended to table this bill on addressing the age rule, the "28-year rule", I did actually have conversations with the senator and indicated that it would be really important to address other lost Canadians as well.

I know that Conservative members, including this member, have had conversations with people like Don Chapman and others to talk about the implication of leaving out the lost Canadians, Canadians such as Emma and others like her whose families have been broken apart because of this situation. Families need to leave their children behind because they do not have Canadian status. This is wrong and we need to fix this.

Certainly, I raised this issue with the senator. I raised it with the Conservative members too, by the way. They seemed to be okay with it, and all of a sudden they are not okay with it.

I am of course reminded of the fact that it was the Conservatives who took away those rights to begin with, and maybe they are sensitive to that. We should actually fix this problem and put the people's issues before us to make sure families that have been broken up and separated no longer need to face that situation. We should not do that.

Routine Proceedings

That is why I am moving these amendments, which would be out of scope. That is why I am seeking the House's authority so the committee can move forward in addressing amendments out of scope.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to be consistent on the issue of concurrence reports that come up when we could be debating, in this case, budgetary measures. It is not to take away from the importance of the issue, but I do have a question more so of the principle of when a member wants to move forward amendments.

For example, when one brings forward legislation, whether it is private members', a resolution or a government piece of legislation, there are rules in place to ensure the initial intent and scope are not being changed. In good part, this is because there is a great deal of consultation that has been done in advance from the department and the different stakeholders.

I am wondering if my friend could provide her thoughts. When we look at changing the scope of things, it really dictates a different perspective that needs to be explored before any sort of quick decision. I would like her thoughts on that.

● (1610)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, of course I have been working in collaboration with government members on this, including the minister's office, because the situation is such that the lost Canadians who are impacted by these rules are suffering. They are suffering to the point where people are in such distress. Can one imagine having a newborn baby to two Canadian parents who is stateless? That is the reality they are faced with.

There were witnesses who came before committee, and the witnesses all said that we need to fix this. We need to make sure these lost Canadians are made whole. At committee, I was very open and forthcoming in indicating that this is what we need to do and that amendments need to be brought forward to address this. We then talked about some scenarios, about how these amendments could address some of these issues and what that could look like.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague spoke a lot about some of the folks who are going through this very difficult situation caused by a previous government's laws and regulations. Could she talk more specifically about what someone who faces that statelessness experiences? What would Emma's child have to go through as part of that scenario?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, if a person is stateless, that means they do not have status in the country they were born in because their parents do not have status there. Therefore, their child does not have status in that country. Back here in Canada, they also do not have status, so the child is in the middle of nowhere. Meanwhile, if the parents were to move to Canada, which is what they want to do, they cannot bring their child with them.

Can colleagues imagine what that situation is like? Even if they were able to bring their child to Canada, without status the child would not be able to get education or get medical care like any other Canadian would be able to.

This is why these laws need to be changed. They were wrong to strip immigrants of those rights. We need to make them whole, and we need to do it now.

Hon. Filomena Tassi: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am tabling the government's responses to Questions Nos. 1302 to 1315.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here today to speak to the motion to concur in the 15th report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, with regard to expanding the scope of Bill S-245, which seeks to address lost Canadians.

While the bill is well intended in its aim to address the remaining lost Canadians, as drafted, it falls short of correcting what I see as the key challenges on this file. As a matter of fact, it is something that I spoke to in our first debate on this bill when it came to the House.

Before outlining the concerns that I have with Bill S-245 as written, I will briefly touch on the circumstances that led to the emergence of lost Canadians. The requirements and complexities of the first Canadian Citizenship Act of 1947, and former provisions of the current Citizenship Act, created cohorts of people who lost or never had citizenship status. They are referred to as "lost Canadians".

To address this issue, changes to citizenship laws that came into force in 2009 and 2015 restored status or gave citizenship for the first time to the majority of lost Canadians. Before the 2009 amendments, people born abroad beyond the first generation, that is, born abroad to a Canadian parent who was also born abroad, were considered Canadian citizens at birth, but only until they turned 28 years old. This is sometimes referred to, as my colleague mentioned previously, as the "28-year rule". If these individuals did not apply to retain their citizenship before they turned 28, they would automatically lose it. Some people were not even aware they had to meet these requirements and lost their citizenship unknowingly. These people who lost their citizenship because of this rule are often referred to as "the last cohort of the lost Canadians". Since we began this debate in the chamber, many of them have written to me and other members of the immigration committee.

Routine Proceedings

To prevent future losses, the age 28 rule was repealed in 2009. At the same time, the law was changed to establish a clear first-generation limit to the right of automatic citizenship by descent. This means that, today, children born outside Canada to a Canadian parent are Canadian citizens from birth if they have a parent who is either born in Canada or naturalized as a Canadian citizen. Unlike the former retention provisions of the Citizenship Act, those children do not need to do anything to keep their Canadian citizenship. Those born in the second or subsequent generations abroad do not automatically become Canadians at birth. This first-generation limit is firm on who does or does not have a claim to citizenship by descent.

I would like to lean into this with a personal experience I have had with this, with my own two daughters. As is well known, I am a citizen of two countries, born Canadian but raised in Israel. At a certain point in my early adulthood, I chose to return to Israel to be with my family there. I got married and had my eldest daughter. She was born there, and upon her birth I applied for Canadian citizenship for her. Subsequently, we returned to Canada, in approximately 2008, and my second daughter was born here in Toronto, where we live today, in York Centre. She also obviously has Canadian citizenship, having been born here. However, if my eldest daughter chooses for some reason to live elsewhere in the world, such as in Israel, where she is currently living this year, and if she has children, my grandchildren will not be Canadian, even though she has lived here the majority of her life. Although her core ties to Canada are clear and well committed to, she has lost the ability to confer that citizenship onto her children as a result of the Bill C-37 change that was made under the Harper government in 2009. Ironically, if my younger daughter, who was born here, were to have children abroad, they would automatically be Canadian, as she would be able to bestow upon them what I was able to bestow upon her. Herein lie some of the problems we have been discussing as colleagues in this House.

I can appreciate the work of Senator Martin in wanting to narrow it down to a specific group of individuals, but, frankly, as my colleague from the Bloc said, this is about dignity, compassion, and a sense of heritage and connection that is being stripped away from many, so I will continue to talk about this. There are many people who are born abroad or adopted from abroad to a Canadian parent beyond the first generation. These individuals are not citizens, but still feel they have a very close tie to Canada, just like my daughter does, and also see themselves as lost Canadians.

• (1615)

Currently, these individuals can only become Canadian citizens by going through the immigration process. That is to say, they must first qualify and then apply to become permanent residents. Then after the required time, they must apply to become citizens. In some specialized cases, people born abroad in the second generation are eligible to apply for a grant of citizenship, but only in exceptional circumstances.

Turning back to Bill S-245, though it is well-intentioned as written, it does not address some of the remaining lost Canadians. Bill S-245 is targeting only the lost Canadians who lost citizenship because of the age 28 rule for those who were born abroad after the

first generation and had already turned 28 years old and lost their citizenship before the law changed in 2009.

The bill as written excludes people who applied to retain citizenship but were refused. This is an issue because those who never apply to keep their citizenship would have their citizenship restored by the bill as written, while those who took steps to retain their citizenship but were refused would not benefit from this bill. Recognizing that the age 28 rule was problematic for all, it is my hope that the committee will consider amendments to restore the citizenship status of all those impacted by the former age 28 rule, which has since been repealed.

The committee heard compelling testimony from witnesses that precisely highlighted the problem with excluding one of the cohorts impacted by the age 28 rule. As I understand it, the committee for immigration also received dozens of written submissions from stakeholders both inside and outside of Canada. As a matter of fact, some of those stakeholders have also written to me in light of my previous interventions in the chamber on this matter. It would seem that there were many people watching Bill S-245 closely, like me, as parents. What is interesting is that almost all of the written submissions point out the challenges that exist for people born abroad in the second generation or beyond.

Given the call from stakeholders, I feel strongly that the committee should be empowered to at least consider solutions for some of the other people who consider themselves to be lost Canadians. This is the subject of today's debate. Does the House support the request from committee to expand the scope of the bill to see what could be done for the other lost Canadians? I think we must support this.

My story with my daughters is really not unusual for many of the constituents I represent in York Centre whose children go back and forth between Israel and get married here or in the United States. The Jewish community has very close cross-border ties, and these families, like many Canadian families, sometimes have some fluidity due to faith, culture or language and have other strong connections. They are watching this closely as well.

That is why I think we should be supporting this, because those who were born to a Canadian parent abroad beyond the first generation, including those adopted from abroad, are not Canadian citizens but feel they should be because they have a strong connection to Canada, similar to my older daughter. To address these other lost Canadians, the bill could be amended by introducing a pathway to citizenship for people in this exact situation.

Routine Proceedings

I was really disappointed to hear about the reaction by Conservative members when the motion to expand the scope of Bill S-245 was presented at committee. They are, of course, entitled to their opinion, but rather than give serious or substantive arguments about why the scope should or should not be expanded, some members took the opportunity to make threats about what they would do if the scope were expanded. This is actually very disappointing. The member for Calgary Nose Hill stated:

...do we really want to have the immigration committee all of a sudden drop into a broader review of the Citizenship Act? If we are opening up this bill beyond the scope of what is here right now, I will propose amendments that are well beyond the scope of this bill. There are a lot of things I would like to see changed in the Citizenship Act. I will come prepared with those things, and we will be debating them.

I really take issue with this approach. I am not a member of the committee so I do not know what confidential amendments the members have already put on notice for the bill, but the Conservative member for Calgary Nose Hill absolutely does not have that information. We do know that. When she made these comments, she was fully aware of what members were going to propose.

Furthermore, the member for Vancouver East was pretty clear in her comments on the motion that she was not trying to make changes to some completely unrelated section of the Citizenship Act. As a matter of fact, she said that today as well. It is quite something for a member to threaten to overwhelm committee processes by trying to propose amendments that are, in her words, “well beyond the scope”.

• (1620)

I am disappointed, and it is unfortunate that the Conservatives are closed off to the urging they heard from stakeholders and that all members heard at committee from witnesses. I am not alone in having been put off by that fact, and I want to read into the record a communication that I understand was sent to committee members after the motion to expand the scope was moved at committee last Monday. I think it has a lot of meaning for all of us listening to this debate today. It says:

Dear Members of the Citizenship and Immigration committee of the House of Commons,

First I would like to thank the committee for taking the time to reflect on and discuss Bill S-245. Although the current language of the bill will have no effect on my status as a Lost Canadian, I am hopeful that this bill will help to pave the way for a path to citizenship for myself and others who are lost.

My story is like that of many other Lost Canadians. I live a life unfairly exiled from the country that my mother lives in. She lives alone in Haida Gwaii, and as she grows older, I wonder how I should be able to care for her, when it is illegal for me to live in the same country as her. I will not at this time speak to the immense pain, suffering and grief I live with every day.

I am not writing to you to tell you another story of a Lost Canadian. I am here instead, asking that the language you use while discussing Canadian citizenship be more sensitive and fair to those with ancestral ties to Canada. I do not believe it is the members' intention to further marginalize those Canadians who have been stripped of their ties to Canada and it is for that reason that I make this plea to you all.

Time and time again, when discussing citizenship and lost Canadians, House members use the words “immigrant” and “citizen” as if they are interchangeable. The intent of Bill S-245 has nothing to do with immigration, and everything to do with citizenship. As a Lost Canadian, when I am referred to in the same sentence as someone looking to immigrate I am astounded. I am heartbroken. Above all, I fear that if we are constantly grouped together with those individuals looking to immigrate to Canada, that we will never be seen for who we really are—individuals who have been unjustly stripped of our birthright to Canadian Citizenship.

From an outside perspective it seems that the members' inability to separate these two concepts—citizenship vs. immigration—while trying to address the issue being studied in bill S-245 is creating divisiveness over expanding the bill to make it fair and just for those of us who have been unfairly stripped of, or denied our birthright to Canadian citizenship.... It is disingenuous to speak of this as if it were an immigration issue. [Such language]...continues to reinforce the emotional damage and trauma we experience daily living in exile.

It goes on:

The intent of bill S-245 is to extend Canadian citizenship. To threaten amendments to Bill S-245 such as mandating in person citizenship ceremonies, is not only ridiculously out of scope for this bill, it is insulting to the masses of Lost Canadians simply looking to return home.

I understand that the complexities surrounding this issue of Lost Canadians and second generation born abroad Canadians make the situation difficult to understand. But until the members of this committee, those with the most influence on legislation regarding citizenship can themselves make the distinction between “Citizenship” and “Immigration” there will be no clear path forward for those of us who are lost.

So I beg of you. Lost Canadians are not immigrants. We are Canadians. The language used by the members should reflect that. The words spoken in this moment have much weight for those of us who are suffering. Please see us for who we are so that you may more fully open your minds and hearts, and let us in.... If you can see us as the Canadians we are then I believe this issue can be dealt with more clearly. This cannot be an issue where members let their views, beliefs or desires regarding—

• (1625)

The Deputy Speaker: We have a point of order from the member for Perth—Wellington.

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, I believe quorum has been lost.

The Deputy Speaker: We will start counting.

And the count having been taken:

The Deputy Speaker: We have quorum now. I will wait until everybody has come to order, and then we can start up again.

The hon. Parliament Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: Mr. Speaker, to wrap up my comments, I will share the last thoughts of the stakeholder who wrote to the committee. She said:

If you can see us as the Canadians we are then I believe this issue can be dealt with more clearly. This cannot be an issue where members let their views, beliefs or desires regarding immigration cloud an issue that is very clearly about citizenship policy....

We are Canadians since birth looking to return home, not immigrants desiring to move to a new country. We may be lost, but we are proud and hopeful.

See us for who we are so that you may help us. Kindest Regards, Jennifer Johnnes.

I think the words speak for themselves and show how deeply painful the subject of lost Canadians is and how traumatic it is for them. I would add that the amendments in 2009, in essentially creating a situation where families would be separated, where they could not be reunited and where almost a two-tier system of who is Canadian has been created, is something we should be addressing.

Routine Proceedings

While Senator Yonah Martin may have put this bill forward with one intention, I think it is a unique opportunity for us to correct the path to make sure everyone who is eligible for Canadian citizenship by birthright, by the right of their parents and by the right of their families to raise their children here or their desire as Canadians to raise their children here is contemplated. We must take this up with the utmost urgency.

I humbly ask members of the House to consider the importance of expanding Bill S-245 so that it can be improved and ultimately better meet its objective of addressing more lost Canadians.

• (1630)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not have a specific question for the member. It is more of a commentary on what I heard her read to the House to provide the perspective of her party.

I will mention to those listening at home that the member is a parliamentary secretary. The government has known for almost eight years that there were these different groups of lost Canadians. There is always the ability to table government legislation, and I think we will find that a lot of members of this House are willing to consider plugging holes in legislation.

That is exactly what Senator Yonah Martin has been doing in two Parliaments. She was able to convince the Senate to move Bill S-230 through the Senate with one committee hearing to consider the exact same bill we have today, Bill S-245. She was able to do so because she is widely considered to be a non-partisan member and widely considered to be well informed on the subject of the Citizenship Act. Members at that committee voted against my amendment to suggest, if we are going to go beyond the scope, that we give ourselves more time to consider what groups of lost Canadians we could consider and what different situations lost Canadians might find themselves in. I will tell the parliamentary secretary that the Liberal benches voted against my amendment to the motion that brings us here today to debate this concurrence report.

This is about process. We do not know when the next election will come in a minority Parliament, and it very well could be that lost Canadians will have to wait again for another Parliament before this particular group of lost Canadians will have their citizenship restored to them, as it should be.

This is not a question about whether it is the right thing to do or the wrong thing to do. It is about process. We have a bill and an opportunity to fix something for a particular group of Canadians. We all agree on that, and by doing this, the bill will be sent back to the Senate, and the Senate will thereafter make further considerations and call more witnesses to the committee. That is simply the legislative process.

I know that is difficult for the government to understand. I know it is difficult to have such a thin legislative agenda. However, this situation could have been avoided.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: Mr. Speaker, I will share with the member that I am quite familiar with the process, having successfully passed with my colleagues Keira's law, Bill C-233, and understanding the immense value of unanimous consent and when members work across party lines because issues are so important.

I do not think any of this is partisan. I think this issue affects many families, including my own, and many constituents in my riding of York Centre. As a matter of fact, the member for Thornhill would attest to that as well, as we share similar constituency demographics in that sense. She is a member on his benches, and I would encourage him to perhaps speak to her about the many families in similar situations.

There is always an opportunity to work collaboratively, and I certainly hope the member will consider it.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, a situation with the cut-off rule for first-generation born Canadians has been in place for 14 years now, and many families have suffered during this period. It is true that the government could have brought in legislation to make that change, but that has not happened. With that being said, we now have an opportunity before us through a Senate bill, Bill S-245, to fix the lost Canadian rules once and for all.

If we all care about this issue as we say we do, should we not then seize this opportunity to expand the scope of the bill, fix the lost Canadian community that has not been addressed in this bill and fix those issues once and for all?

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, can the member provide her thoughts regarding the importance of Canadian citizenship and—

• (1635)

The Deputy Speaker: There is a point of order by the hon. member for Vancouver East.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, I asked a question, but the parliamentary secretary did not have a chance to respond. We then went to another government member's question. Somehow, I think we had a gap in the situation here.

The Deputy Speaker: I apologize.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, I believe there is room for further discussion and expansion. I share the member's deep concerns in terms of lost Canadians. I read into the record the letter of Wednesday Coulter, who submitted her thoughts to committee as an indigenous woman and her story of being excluded from Canada, being denied the ability to be with her mom as she ages in Haida Gwaii. This is one of many heartbreaking stories that we need to address through the contemplation of the work that the committee is engaged in right now.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadian citizenship is undoubtedly one of the most important things we have here in Canada. It is held with a great amount of pride, and there are all sorts of benefits to it.

Routine Proceedings

More and more, the world is becoming a smaller community, with people working abroad. Some people have concerns regarding whether they should return to Canada to give birth and ensure the baby is born a Canadian. Two Canadian parents who go abroad, especially on a short-term basis, should not be obligated to come back to Canada for the birth of their child. Could the parliamentary secretary provide her general thoughts on issues of that nature?

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my comments today, I was a mother faced with that exact dilemma with the birth of my eldest daughter abroad. There was much discussion in my household as to what to do and how to do it, as well as checking things and concerns about how to ensure that my daughter would hold the same Canadian citizenship that I was and still am so proud of holding. A pregnant woman can only travel up to a certain number of weeks, especially on flights. To me, it is not acceptable to contemplate putting a mother and potentially a pregnancy at risk in order to hold on to something that is a right for Canadian citizens to have and pass on to their children.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member could perhaps answer the following question: Since we know that Bill S-230 passed in the previous Parliament and was debated at Senate committee, where witnesses came forward from a government department, why has the government not acted on this?

It has been over two years that it has known there are several groups of lost Canadians affected. Why has the government not tabled government legislation through the House of Commons, or starting in the Senate, that would have closed up all these different situations for them? The government did not act when it should have; instead, it waited for a senator on the Conservative benches to fix a problem that the Liberals admit exists. Why did this occur?

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: Mr. Speaker, I will simply say to the member that there are many “why?” questions, but I do not see a lot of talk on working collaboratively for the sake of lost Canadians, and that is really what we are engaged with here today. We could bring up a lot of “whataboutisms”, but we are engaged in the issue right now. We are being asked to do this work on behalf of lost Canadians. I would simply ask the member this: Why would he or his benches be unwilling to do that work right now?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, I am just going to build on that last question. Here we have the Conservatives, who say that they want to fix this problem once and for all. We know that the Bloc is very sympathetic and wants to ensure that people's dignity is recognized. The NDP wants to address this issue, and I have been wanting to do so ever since I was elected as a member of Parliament. The government side wants to do this as well.

We have a unique opportunity, at least in words, where all parties are saying they want to address this issue. Should we not actually be seizing the opportunity, supporting the expansion of the scope and addressing the lost Canadians issue once and for all?

• (1640)

Ms. Ya'ara Saks: Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate what I have said time and time again during the precious time that I have in this debate. This is the power of collaborative work when it is done. I have seen it in my own work on Bill C-233, and I know that when there is the will of members of the House to get good work done on behalf of Canadians, lost Canadians in this case, it can be done.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Before we continue, it is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for North Island—Powell River, Seniors; the hon. member for Kitchener Centre, Persons with Disabilities; the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, Ethics.

[*English*]

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be joining the debate on this bill. I want to begin by thanking my constituents again for returning me to Parliament to serve them, to speak on their behalf and to bring the voice of Calgarians here to Ottawa, to our national Parliament. Every day, I think about how lucky each and every one of us is, all 338 of us, to be able to represent constituents in the House of Commons and work on their behalf.

I also want to start by saying that I am a Canadian who was born overseas; I happen to be one of those who were naturalized back in 1989. I was able to share that story when I was doing outreach activities on the Island of Montreal. I also talked to many new Canadians about their experiences of coming to Canada. I reminded them all the time that anyone could become a member of Parliament if they make the effort, tell the truth and have the work ethic and dedication. Representing people in this country in a legislative body is a great privilege, and we should never forget that.

I want to go over a few points very quickly, just to give an outline of the trouble I have with what is happening today with this concurrence of a report coming out of the immigration committee. There is the issue of timing and how we have come to this point, where the vote would now be necessary. I want to talk about the mover of this Senate bill, Senator Yonah Martin of British Columbia. I want to talk about Senate Bill S-230, the original piece of legislation, and how Bill S-245 is basically the exact same bill.

I also want to speak briefly to process. This is not an issue related to the substance. I think many people agree on the substance; of course, Conservatives agree because this is a Conservative legislative initiative. It is very simple to understand why Conservatives, for example, would not do something like move amendments to a bill being proposed by a Conservative. It is because we all agree with it. We went before our caucus. We had a presentation. Of course we agree with it; it is a Conservative senator proposing a Conservative idea. That idea is the rightful restoration of Canadian citizenship to a particular group of Canadians, and we are talking about a small group that is affected.

Routine Proceedings

The bill is very simple. It is all on one page. It is a simple idea that would address a specific group. This does not mean that others do not have a case for it to be restored. There is a legislative case for it to be done. However, this particular bill has been in the works in two minority Parliaments now to try to fix it. As we know, minority Parliaments are unpredictable, despite there being an NDP-Liberal coalition. Here, we have a government and an opposition party, and we do not know where one begins and the other one ends. We do not know when there could be an election; that would wipe out all the legislative initiatives being considered by the House and by the Senate.

That is exactly what happened to Bill S-230. When the election was called on August 15, 2021, it wiped out all the legislative initiatives that were under way back then. Bill S-230, dealing with these lost Canadians, had already gone through the Senate. It had one meeting of consideration, with expert testimony being provided by government officials; this was useful in understanding that the contents of the legislation were correct and would in fact fix the situation that we are facing. We heard new testimony and new consideration on Bill S-245.

The timing is the issue that I am hung up on. I do not know when an election could come. I want to expedite a bill like this, with no changes, in order to consider new legislation. The House is always free to do that. Any member of the House or any senator could table a private member's bill. In fact, senators can now legislate faster than we can, which I think is wrong. I hope some government members would agree with me on that. It is a separate legislative idea. Maybe there could be changes to the Standing Orders someday.

I know there is at least one member from Winnipeg who would agree with me that members of the House of Commons should be the ones legislating the most often, and senators should not do so as often or as quickly. Now we have a lottery system, and the Speaker drew the numbers. I am going to remind the Deputy Speaker of this, because I think I drew third from last when he was doing the draw. I really think there should have been a recount. I see another member from Montreal, from one of my alma maters, Concordia, saying that she drew a much better number than I did.

Timing is an issue in this matter. This is a group of lost Canadians who could have their citizenship restored. They would be made whole. If we made no amendments to the bill, once passed through the House of Commons, it would receive royal assent from the Governor General and be made law.

• (1645)

Any amendments we make at committee would then return to the House, and any report stage amendments would delay the passage of the bill. The bill could then go again for another set of reviews. I am sure that senators, when they agreed to pass this bill on an expeditious basis, were passing the original bill, Bill S-230. They were passing a bill they had already considered and debated.

They are going to consider the debate that took place in the House. They are going to review why, for example, government officials before the committee in the House of Commons provided different information than some other government officials, though some of them were the same, at the Senate committee two years

ago. They will wonder why the advice was slightly different and why they now have a problem with some of the wording in Bill S-245. They say it does not address the issue as well.

When I looked at the titles of these government officials, they are the exact same positions. Some people have been promoted and some have moved to different positions.

I am sure senators will review the bill. That would be months of extra waiting. As the Senate considers the bill, it will have more witnesses come before the Senate committee, and then with whatever potential amendments the Senate might have, it will send the bill back to the House of Commons. I know I am supposed to call it "the other place", but I feel Canadians at home should know that this might delay and potentially kill the bill. The bill may not become law if this does not get done.

How did we get to this particular situation? We have a terrific vice-chair on the immigration committee, the member for Saskatoon West, who has been negotiating with the other parties in good faith. It is what I hope the government is doing during the public service strike by PSAC and at their negotiations at the table. The member has been negotiating in good faith and providing information to other parties, such as what our voting position is, what our concerns are and what type of subamendments we would consider.

We were considering some amendments that would strengthen some of the ideas we had heard and had talked about before the committee. The motion that was passed at committee, over our objections, broadens the scope beyond section 8 amendments to Bill S-245. The way I interpreted the motion was that it would mean anything in Bill S-245, the Citizenship Act, and that would be concurred in on a vote in the House of Commons. This sounds to me like a statutory review of Bill S-245, so anything in the Citizenship Act could be done.

There are many things I have heard in my travels across Canada in meeting with both new Canadians and people from families that have lived in Canada for generations. They have issues with the Citizenship Act, such as how citizenship ceremonies are organized, and whether they are done in person or virtually, at a click. Some of those are also around the rules of specific lost Canadians. Is it right to put citizenship ceremonies on certain holidays, which were maybe not as major 40 years ago? Those are all issues that members should be mindful of.

Routine Proceedings

When reading this motion, and I am not burdened by a legal education so I read it like a layman would read it, with the words as they are, and it says that it would go beyond section 8, which means that anything else in the Citizenship Act should be eligible for an amendment. We have an opportunity to help lost Canadians. We also have an opportunity to ensure there are no future lost Canadians, who might have missed a citizenship ceremony because of a holiday, travel or any number of other reasons.

We have come here because other parties have not been forthcoming in explaining their position. At committee, I moved a very reasonable amendment that would have provided more time for to consider new out-of-scope amendments. We have no in-scope amendments because we agreed with the contents of the bill.

It would have been good to have more time on out-of-scope amendments, and then we could have provided the amendments. We could have all had time to consider them within our caucuses. That is what our side does. We have a fulsome debate in our caucus where our members of Parliament and senators come to an agreement on different amendments that we might consider, especially if they are major amendments, such as this seems to be, a statutory review of the Citizenship Act.

We can now take a moment to talk about the mover of this bill, Senator Yonah Martin. I think many members of the House of Commons, and I hope of the other place, the Senate, would say that she is a very non-partisan member, a member who is able to work with all members, regardless of political affiliations, on any number of issues.

She has a big heart for the Korean-Canadian community and for the battle of Kapyong. She is mindful to remind us of the battle of Kapyong and how important it is to Canadians of Korean heritage every single year. She has been of huge assistance not only to Conservatives, but also to Canadians of Korean heritage all over Canada, by connecting them with their civic officials, with Canadian political and civic life, and with community organizations.

● (1650)

She has a bill, which she successfully negotiated through the Senate with no amendments. That is unusual. For many of us, when we put together private members' bills or motions, there is always that potential for amendments to come forward that we were not aware of, or were not considering.

This is a member who, at committee, specifically asked that we not make amendments because of the timing issue I mentioned right at the beginning. This is why I want to bring it up. She specifically said, when asked, that she did not want an expansion of the scope of the bill if it would delay the bill. That is what would happen here. There would be a delay of the bill.

She offered a solution, which was new pieces of legislation. The government can always table government legislation to help these Canadians, which they have identified through our witness process, through the submissions the committee received. That would be entirely okay. We could consider the merits.

The House of Commons has expedited bills in the past. We just did it last week. Portions of the budget were expedited through the

House of Commons. It is possible to do these things, especially when there is consensus and we work collaboratively, which I heard a parliamentary secretary talk about.

Many members on that committee will agree that our vice-chair and the Conservatives work collaboratively. We were doing that when this was moved. We were working on a draft report in a committee, and at the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration no less. We are more than happy to do that. The immigration committee has done a lot of work exactly in that manner, collaboratively, by everybody being upfront about the positions they will be taking and the concerns we have with amendments and different policy issues, as well as where we are coming from. That is another one.

I wanted to make sure I brought up Bill S-230, which was the original version of the bill, in the previous Parliament, because I want to highlight the fact that, the committee on Bill S-230 in the Senate had one meeting to consider the details of the bill. We are going to be adding on basically new sections on lost Canadians. What I have found about the Citizenship Act, and I know many members will agree, especially those on the immigration committee, is how complicated it is. It is easy to make a mistake on dates, years, months, days and specific words, where we could have individuals lose their ability to pass on their citizenship to their children or grandchildren or not be able to retain it in cases of marriage.

I was born in Communist Poland, a country I always say does not exist anymore. It is a footnote in history. As a Canadian who was not born here, I know that the Citizenship Act is something to be mindful of. All my kids were born in Calgary, so they are not affected directly for things like the first generation rule, but others are. I absolutely recognize that, but there is an opportunity to legislate.

Another senator could put forward another Senate bill to address individuals, and we could again have an expedited debate to push it through the House if we could get to the terms and the words we all agree on. Like I said, in Bill S-245, there were government officials who came before the committee in a previous Parliament to say that this wording is the exact wording to address the issue the senator is concerned about. The same government officials, at least with the same titles from the same department, said it actually needs to be changed because it might not do what one says it would do.

Now we are left with not knowing what types of amendments are going to be brought forward at the committee if this concurrence of the report passes of the motion that came out of the immigration committee. We just do not know. Nobody knows now what amendments will be brought forward, except for the mover of the amendment, who will be at the table behind closed doors, potentially in camera, considering these amendments. It will hopefully all be done in public.

It is important to remember none of the parties will be obliged to provide any new amendments out of scope to be considered. Like I said, there are lots of different situations we could look at.

I always have a Yiddish proverb to share. I was in Montreal at a synagogue on Saturday, a very observant one, and there is a great Yiddish proverb: Hope for miracles, but do not rely on one. It is unpronounceable for me in Yiddish, but it is indeed a good one. I always hope for miracles. I hope we can come to some type of consensus that this bill should be expedited in its current form.

I want to vote for it the way it is right now, and I think those on my benches want to do the same thing. We want to help these lost Canadians and restore, rightfully, their citizenship. There is an opportunity to help others, and that is what I hope this place would be good at. I hope it would be able to come to a consensus on new pieces of legislation that address certain things.

I am serving in my third Parliament, and I think this would set a bad precedent. To go into another member's bill, and over their objections, say that we are going to change their private member's bill or their Senate Bill, the idea they put forward, is a bad precedent.

• (1655)

I know it has happened off and on in the past 10 to 20 years. In those particular cases, the individual members have brought it up to me that it should not have happened that way. I really believe that for members who have an idea that they are bringing forward, we should honour their requests and have a simple up or down vote.

Even Senator Yonah Martin said that, if there are particular technical amendments to the way this legislation is worded that keep the intent and the principle she is trying to address, which is helping this particular group of lost Canadians have their citizenship regained, which is in the summary that is provided for the bill, and it uses the term “regain”, then she was okay with that. However, what we have talked about so far, and what I have heard from the parliamentary secretary and the member of the New Democrats, are things that are potentially far out of the scope of the original intent and principle of the bill. Here I have concerns.

I have expressed those concerns. I have made forceful promises. I intend to keep my forceful promises. I have done so at other committees, which I have been on, whether it be at the PROC committee, where I remember serving with other members to ensure that the intent of motions and bills was retained. Members would have a straight up or down vote on particular subjects, and that made it very clear what we were voting for and against.

Again, I see this as an opportunity. We do not know when the election could come. I do not want to send this back to the Senate. The Senate already has had its say on the matter. It has reviewed

Routine Proceedings

this piece of legislation. What I want to do is expedite this bill. I was ready to do that at the first meeting on Bill S-245.

We could have maybe considered some particular amendments that were perhaps on the edge of what would be permissible. Looking to my vice-chair, I think it is fair to say that we were willing to consider them.

We had that conversation with the Liberal benches, and we were forthcoming with what our ideas were, what our concerns were and where we wanted to go. My expectation was that we gave it due consideration. We had received valuable insight, information and ideas from Canadians, both overseas and here, who had expressed concerns with different groups of lost Canadians.

We could have addressed those in other pieces of legislation, and then a senator could take up the case, or a member of any party could take up the case in a private member's bill, although probably not me, because, like I said, the Speaker drew me third from last, I believe. I still remember that, so I will probably not be one of those members.

The House can work collaboratively. I will give another example. On bereavement leave, the Minister of Labour was kind enough to work with me before Christmas, and this was 2021, to insert part of my private members' bill on bereavement leave straight into Bill C-3 and then expedite it through the House.

To the parliamentary secretary's saying that they were hoping we could work collaboratively, well, of course we can. There is even an example where we have done that. It was our shadow minister for labour at the time, the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka, who did it. It can be done, when people come in good faith at the negotiating table and we hammer out a deal. That deal was done before Christmas and Canadians in federal jurisdiction had bereavement leave provisions provided to them.

Those types of situations can happen. I call them legislative miracles, getting back to my Yiddish proverb. Legislative miracles can happen when people want to make change. That was a private member's bill that likely would have never passed. It had drawn such a high number that it would not have been able to pass. I would not have been able to have the opportunity to have it debated.

With that said, I have laid out my case of why we should vote down this report, and I move:

That the House proceed to Presenting Petitions.

• (1700)

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion.

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

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I believe if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to defeat this on division.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I have to ask for a recorded division then.

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1745)

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

(Division No. 302)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Berthold	Bezan
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chambers
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	Deltell
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Gallant
Généreux	Genuis
Gladu	Godin
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
Martel	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
Melillo	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	O'Toole
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Perkins	Poilievre
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ruff	Scheer
Seeback	Shields
Shipley	Small
Soroka	Steinley
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vis	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Williams
Williamson	Zimmer— 110

NAYS

Members

Alghabra	Ali
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bérubé	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Champoux
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Desbiens	Desilets
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Gaheer	Garon
Garrison	Gaudreau
Gerretsen	Gill
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Iacono
Idlout	Ien
Jaczek	Johns
Joly	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lemire	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod	McPherson
Mendès	Mendicino
Miao	Michaud
Miller	Morrice
Morrissey	Murray

Routine Proceedings

Naqvi	Ng
Noormohamed	Normandin
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Petitpas Taylor
Plamondon	Powlowski
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sarai
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Serré	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Sinclair-Desgagné	Sousa
Ste-Marie	St-Onge
Sudds	Tassi
Taylor Roy	Thériault
Therrien	Thompson
Trudeau	Trudel
Turnbull	Valdez
Van Bynen	van Koevorden
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vignola	Villemure
Virani	Vuong
Weiler	Wilkinson
Yip	Zahid
Zarrillo	Zuberi — 194

PAIRED

Members

Aldag	Bergeron
Bibeau	Pauzé
Perron	Qualtrough
Schmale	Sorbara — 8

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is important for us to recognize, at the end of the day, what we are really talking about.

I can imagine two Canadians going abroad, maybe it is work-related, and they have a child. Now, they come back to Canada, and that child could completely grow up here in Canada. If that child were to go abroad, get married and have a child, that child would not be deemed Canadian. What is being suggested here, from what I understand, is that the sponsor of the legislation was supportive of the changes. I am wondering if the member can provide his thoughts on the principle of what it is I have said about the changing of the scope.

Does the member support the idea of that particular child I just described being allowed to be considered a Canadian citizen?

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member misunderstood what the sponsor of the Senate bill had suggested at committee, which was that, while the principle is a good one and should be investigated further, there are different ways to regain Canadian citizenship. Someone could have a grant of citizenship; they could have citizenship by birth in Canada; and they could have citizenship passed on because they have a substantive connection to Canada, like parents or grandparents who are Canadian.

There are situations in the Citizenship Act, because there are multiple versions of the Citizenship Act that have been changed over many decades. Every time we think we have plugged a hole,

we usually create new exceptions, but the mover and sponsor of this Senate bill is very specific in that she was okay with changing the wording in her bill, and the current group of lost Canadians would be addressed. However, any new lost Canadians would have to be addressed in new legislation.

● (1750)

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, on the substance of the issue that is in question, the Conservative members keep saying that we cannot do this because it is going to take too long. Of course, it has been 14 years since the Conservatives passed the legislation to strip the rights of second-generation-born Canadians to pass on their citizenship to their children. By doing this, we now have an opportunity to fix that, 14 years later, to make those families whole, so that they do not have to be separated from their loved ones.

If the Conservatives say they support fixing this problem, why would they not seize this opportunity instead of actually just putting it further down the road?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, of course, that is not what the member is talking about here. The member is talking about going procedurally against the wishes of the mover of a piece of legislation that has wide support in the Senate and that has broad support in the Conservative caucus as well. If she wanted to fix it 14 years ago, that particular member has had ample time to propose a private member's bill to address those issues or to convince the government, which she belongs to and is in the same caucus basically as a coalition, to do so. She could have done that at any time in the last decade-plus.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind members, if they have supplementary questions, to wait for questions and comments.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be able to take the floor to let my hon. friend from Calgary Shepard know that the hon. member for Vancouver East did in fact bring in a private member's bill to that effect and has been vigilant on this point. I certainly want to associate myself with her comments. Also, I have been honoured to work with Don Chapman, who has been a leading champion to resolve the injustices that affect lost Canadians.

How would the hon. member suggest that we take this to a vote, that we get it on the record, that we make sure we are improving the situation and not letting Canadians keep falling through the cracks of increasingly Byzantine errors and gaps?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, that is the matter. That is the question. Senator Yonah Martin has been working with the particular gentleman the member referred to on this piece of legislation to address a particular group of lost Canadians who, we can all agree, have a very legitimate case for having their citizenship restored so they can regain their citizenship. As the member said, using exactly the right term, the Citizenship Act, because of the way it has been drafted over many decades, has become a Byzantine piece of legislation.

Routine Proceedings

Every single change that we make, dates that are changed or moved from one decade to the next, has a big impact. The first-generation rule that was introduced was meant to address a particular policy issue that existed at the time. I think we have to be mindful, when we make quick changes to legislation as important as the Citizenship Act, that it should be primarily done through government legislation. What we are talking about here is a small group of lost Canadians who need to have their citizenship restored quickly.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, the debate that is happening here today, to me, seems to be a repeat of the debate that happened at the immigration committee on a motion that went through the immigration committee. It is also happening on a day when the budget is being debated and I am wondering if my colleague thinks that the reason this is happening is because the Liberal-NDP coalition actually does not want to debate its big budget deficit spending item. Maybe it is cutting down—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Calgary Shepard.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I entirely agree with the member. They are delaying debate on the budget implementation act, which is supposed to be the keynote piece of legislation of any government. It has all of its spending and policy measures in it. I would be embarrassed too if I was tabling a \$40-billion deficit after promising \$30 billion, which should be embarrassing as well, but is now \$40 billion more, deficits as far as the eye can see, and now we have this concurrence debate that was started just as the immigration committee was sitting down to consider a report that is now going to be delaying further the debate of the budget implementation act.

The situation could have been avoided. The parliamentary secretary who spoke in the House before me mentioned that we should work collaboratively. That is what we are looking forward to doing, but it did not happen because of the governing party.

• (1755)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, I want to go back to the comment about Don Chapman. Don Chapman came to committee and said very clearly that he wanted to see the scope of Bill S-245 be expanded to incorporate amendments for lost Canadians and the first-generation cut-off rule the Conservatives brought in be rectified so that the families of lost Canadians would not be lost anymore and be supported through this process.

The Conservatives say they support what Don Chapman would like to see done. Would they then pass this expansion of scope request in this House and not filibuster the work that needs to be done at committee?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, the member knows that when the committee was considering this particular motion that has now been brought to the House, I offered an amendment that would have given about two and a half more weeks for new amendments to be tabled before the committee, those amendments that would be out of scope. I will remind the member that she voted against my motion when we could have had those extra amendments that were out of scope to be considered. The NDP did not want to see what other potential amendments there would be.

Conservatives had no amendments because we agree with the substance of this piece of legislation, with the words that were introduced by the Conservative member in the Senate, Senator Yonah Martin, who had worked with Don Chapman on this particular group of lost Canadians. She is saying accurately that Don Chapman would like it to be expanded to others, and that could be done in government legislation, in private members' bills or in other Senate bills.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, we have heard a number of examples of those who have been impacted by this long-standing gap in Canada's citizenship legislation. Could this member specifically articulate how that affects especially members of the military who may have had children abroad over the course of the last number of decades and how the bill could fix some of those gaps that currently exist?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands mentioned before how Byzantine parts of the Citizenship Act can be. It is difficult for me to answer that question from the member for Battle River—Crowfoot because it is just that complicated.

There are so many exceptions, going back to 1977, of how different groups of Canadians are treated with respect to whether they can pass on their citizenship or they cannot pass it on and how we treat members in the military but also how we treat diplomats who work in the foreign service on behalf of Canadians. This is where we run into a great risk that this bill will not pass in this Parliament and it will be dropped off the Order Paper again because there will be another federal election called.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I do want to remind members that if they want to have conversations, especially those across the way from each other, to please take them out to the lobbies or to the hallway in order not to interrupt those who are speaking.

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to start by letting you know that I am going to be splitting my time with the member for Calgary Nose Hill.

I am here to talk about Bill S-245. It is not something I planned to do today, and I am sure most members in the House had not planned on doing this, but here we are, and I want to make sure that people are clear on what it is we are talking about.

This is a private member's bill that has come from the other place, the Senate. Senators, just like members of Parliament, are able to produce legislation called private members' bills, so this is the legislation that has come from Senator Yonah Martin from the other place. It is her intention and her idea. It is something that she wants to see done. That is what we are talking about here. It is now in the House and we are working with it.

The subject of this is the "lost Canadians". We have heard many different explanations of this, but many people may not quite understand what that is. Essentially, our Citizenship Act has some flaws in it that cause certain people to either lose their citizenship or to not get it in the first place. They create these little categories of people who, through no fault of their own, do not have access to Canadian citizenship.

Routine Proceedings

There have been attempts over the years to fix some of these problems. Many of them have been fixed over the years, but there are still some groups of people who are still considered lost Canadians and are not being treated the way they should be, as they are unable to receive Canadian citizenship status. Over the years, there have been bills brought attempting to plug those holes and fix those gaps to ensure that those people who deserve to be Canadian citizens are, and this bill is one of them. There is a particular group of people, a fairly clearly defined group of people, that it seeks to remedy. It is not trying to fix everybody, and that was part of the point initially.

I also want to mention that often times when we think about people who are not citizens of Canada, we immediately think of immigrants. This does not necessarily mean immigrants. There are in fact many people who would not consider themselves immigrants who fit into these categories of lost Canadians. They are just Canadians who do not have their citizenship. There are different categories of these. Part of the point here is that trying to catch them all, and fix all of the holes in the legislation in one shot, is very difficult. It has been attempted over the years and, so far, it has been unsuccessful. We believe that a better approach is to target a very specific area, a specific group of people who are lost, and at least fix those, and then if there were more holes, we would fix those holes, rather than trying to do everything at once. This is a simple bill to fix one of those groups.

This is the same as Bill S-230. In a previous Parliament, the bill was studied in the Senate. It went to committee, was looked at carefully, and was sent here to the House to be worked on. Then an election happened, so that legislation never saw the light of day. Therefore, the attempt to rectify the citizenship situation of those lost Canadians failed. It failed because it did not get through the process in time before an election was called. That is very significant because right now we are in another minority Parliament, which means an election can happen at any time, so we do not have a lot of time. Time is not our friend in this case; we need to move to pass these bills quickly.

The same senator, Yonah Martin, has now put forward the same bill, Bill S-245, which has also gone through the Senate. This time in the other place it was not reviewed or studied because it was exactly the same as the previous legislation. Therefore, the Senate decided to fast-track it, move it through the other place and then to the House here so that we could deal with it. That is where it is now. It is here in the House and we are dealing with it now.

I just want to mention this with respect to the sponsor of the bill, Senator Yonah Martin. She was able to get it through the last Parliament. It took a lot of work and effort to bring everybody together to agree on things, but she was able to get it as far as it got. Unfortunately, it was not far enough. However, she was able to get it here quicker, which is a testament to her ability to work across party lines and with other people in the Senate, because she knew that time was the enemy and the biggest problem that the bill faced. The assumption that went along with that, as she got it to this House, was that it was the same bill as last time. From the Senate's perspective, this bill is the same one that it studied before and therefore it did not need to study it again. That is important and we should remember that.

• (1800)

Why are we here today? We are studying this bill at committee. We are getting very close to the end. There has been a lot of debate and talk about it. We have heard many witnesses speak to this bill. Indeed, there are many groups of people who represent these groups of lost Canadians, because there are numerous groups of lost Canadians. Everybody wants to solve this problem. The Conservatives want to fix this problem, as do the Liberals and all of the other parties. However, we want to fix it; we do not just want to talk about it. We do not want to study it to death, but fix it. We were able to get a lot of testimony and hear a lot of things to understand what the scope is and how it is going to work.

So people understand, what happened toward the end of this process is this. With respect to private members' bills, we have to stay within the scope of the bill. We cannot add things that go beyond the original intent of what, in this case, Yonah Martin had. There must be some ideas out there to do that, to go beyond the scope of this bill, because the government and the NDP teamed up together to bring this to the House now so that it can authorize the committee to go beyond the scope of the bill. That is what we are here talking about today.

This is really significant, because the originator of the bill, in this case Yonah Martin, had an intent for this bill. She came to committee and spoke about the bill and what her intent was. She was specifically asked if she would allow for amendments to the bill that would expand its scope. She was very clear on that. She said that she was willing to accept amendments that would clarify the bill, but she was not willing to accept amendments that would expand it. The reason she said that was very simple and makes a lot of sense.

Why would she accept amendments to clarify the bill? She wants the bill to be successful. She wants to plug that hole for this group of lost Canadians once and for all, so in her mind, if her words were not quite correct and somebody had a better idea to make those words a bit better, she was all ears and willing to do that. It only makes sense, because we want to get the wording correct. We have an army of lawyers in this place who are able to interpret our laws and statutes who I am sure had ideas and suggestions to clarify those things.

Routine Proceedings

Why did she not want to expand its scope? It is very clear. She knows that if the scope gets expanded it creates a whole new pathway for this bill. First, it goes beyond what she had intended, which makes it more complicated, which means more work and more understanding is required. It goes from a simple one-page bill to a multi-page bill that has implications on all kinds of things. Most significantly, should it come through the House and be amended and expanded in scope, then it ends up back in the other place. Why did it pass through the other place very quickly? Because it was the same bill that had been studied in the previous Parliament. It had been looked at and studied in the Senate. The senators had their chance to talk about it and tweak it. That had all been done. The only reason they expedited it through this time was because it was exactly the same as the last time.

If we put two and two together, if it goes back to the other place having been changed, what is going to happen? The senators would say that it is not the same bill and would want to know what happened. Senator Martin would have to explain that it has changed and grown in scope and they would say that they need to study the bill and that it is going to committee to be studied.

With the way timelines work around here, we would be adding months to the process. The enemy of this bill is time, so we would clearly be doing exactly the opposite of what we should be doing, which is adding time to this bill. We would be adding complexity to it, which means it would have to be studied at committee and looked at again. At the end of the day, there could be an election. We all know that an election could happen at any time. It could happen over this issue today. I heard members saying that might happen, so we never know what could happen. We never know what the day is going to bring. Time is the enemy of this bill, and this process would be adding a lot of time to it. That is the whole point of why Senator Martin wanted this to be done.

As I close, I want to highlight two things. First, we are all in support of fixing these problems for lost Canadians. There are no members on either side of the House who do not want to fix this law and correct the problem there. That is a given.

Second, we oppose the idea of the government taking a private member's bill, expanding it and putting things in there that were never intended to be there by the member who raised the bill. That is something we are very concerned about. We do not want to set a precedent. We do not want to allow the government to come in and pull up someone's bill and do that.

It was great to speak in the House today.

• (1805)

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I just heard the member say again that he is in support of ensuring the lost Canadians issue is addressed. The Conservatives say that, and I hope it is actually true. If it is true, we have an opportunity to do it. It is a rare moment when all the parties in this House say they want to do this, and we can seize this opportunity to make those necessary amendments, through Bill S-245, and also indicate to the Senate that this is the direction we want to go.

I believe Senator Yonah Martin, who has done this work and put this bill before us, would support it if the Conservative members

would join the NDP, the Bloc and the Liberals to say that we need to go out of scope to address the lost Canadians issue once and for all, particularly because of the first-generation rule cut-off the Conservatives brought in, which hurt so many families and which we need to get rid of.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Madam Speaker, the member and I have a good relationship at the immigration committee and I enjoy working with her. I agree with her, but the problem in what she is saying right now is that I do not believe it is possible. I do not believe it is possible to achieve what she is talking about. We do not have enough time to deal with this. What she is talking about is wishful thinking.

I have wishes and hopes and dreams too. I wish Canadians could afford groceries and I wish we did not have a strike going on right now, but these are not the realities of our life today. We want to be the most pragmatic we can be. We have the opportunity to at least solve this problem for a group, for a subset of these lost Canadians, so we see the opportunity to push it forward and solve that part of the problem.

I would also like to mention that the government and this member have had many opportunities to present legislation on this subject before, so there is no reason we could not see other legislation on this. There is no reason the government could not put forward legislation to plug the rest of the holes that are here.

• (1810)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to bring it back to the simplicity of what we are talking about by using an example. Imagine that a couple living in Canada is requested by their company to go live in, let us say, France. They are in France and they have a child, and that is not a problem. They come back a couple of years later and the child grows up. At 19, the child joins the military, goes abroad and marries someone. The child of that individual would not be classified as a citizen, as a direct result.

Would the member or the Conservative Party support the principle of allowing that child to be a Canadian citizen?

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Madam Speaker, as I said before, Conservatives are committed to solving this problem and fixing these gaps. This was actually a very good explanation, and I appreciate it. The member was giving one example, so let us just assume that this is the one we are trying to fix with this legislation. We want to get it through and pass it, and then that person would be a Canadian and the problem would be solved.

Imagine that example, and now add family number two, with a slightly different situation, then family number three with a slightly different situation, family number four, etc. It complicates everything and all of a sudden this simplistic solution becomes a very complex solution.

We are trying exactly that, which is to solve this problem for a group of lost Canadians. We are fully willing to work with the government, the NDP or whoever else wants to put forward legislation to try to fix the rest of them.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I request that the ordinary hour of daily adjournment of the April 25 and April 27 sittings be 12 o'clock midnight, pursuant to the order made Tuesday, November 15, 2022.

* * *

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Madam Speaker, despite the size and intent of Bill C-47, there is nothing in it for seniors or housing. There is no long-term solution to fix the underfunding of health care and no sign of EI reform.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

[English]

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Madam Speaker, I believe that question is better suited for the next debate.

Let me take this moment to reiterate one more thing. The government has had many opportunities to solve the problem of lost Canadians. The government has been here eight years. Canadians are tired, in fact, of the government. It has had many opportunities. It has heard of this many times. It has heard lots of speeches and heard about lots of situations and examples. It has had ample opportunity to solve this problem, yet it has not. Now the government wants to take over a private member's bill, hijack it and put its legislation into that member's private bill. That is simply not right.

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Madam Speaker, like many colleagues here, I am on House duty today. I showed up here expecting that we would be having a debate about the budget.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I just want to remind members that they are not to ask questions when it is not question and comment time. I know the hon. parliamentary secretaries know the rules of the House, so I will ask them to hold off.

The hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin.

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, it is a regular occurrence for me when I am speaking to have the two members across the way, who remind me of the old guys from The Muppets, chirping from the gallery as I am—

Routine Proceedings

• (1815)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind members not to use those types of descriptions when referring to members in the House. It does not add to the conversation at all.

I would ask the hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin to have a bit of respect for his colleagues in the House.

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, I am not sure whether the offensive reference was “old” or “Muppets”. Usually they get their back up when I start talking about the Trudeau legacy. We have had this happen on multiple occasions as we talk about budgets and disastrous Liberal economic policy. We get talking about the Trudeau legacy. Of course, I am talking about the Pierre Trudeau legacy.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. parliamentary secretary on a point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I think Kermit was thinking in regard to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members that it is not proper to refer to other members by such names. I think the hon. member actually answered the question the hon. parliamentary secretary was going to ask about.

I would ask members to please be respectful in the House and be mindful as to the references being made.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Shefford on a point of order.

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Madam Speaker, if I understand correctly, the issue is extending sittings until midnight. Indeed, that is the question. Were the leaders actually consulted? We wonder who was consulted during that consultation, because the leaders should be consulted on such a motion. I want to know who.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Okay.

[English]

The hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin.

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, since we are having this conversation, I have a couple of points on this. It is interesting that we are supposed to be talking about the budget today. The NDP and Liberal members have agreed to have this debate here in this House because they do not want to talk about the budget, including all the challenges with the budget and the economic disaster that reflects the previous approach taken by a different Prime Minister Trudeau back in the seventies and eighties. It is also interesting that the debate we are talking about today is something that the coalition could decide to have any day, if they wanted to.

Any day, NDP and Liberal members could decide to move legislation to accomplish exactly what we are talking about today. Instead, they have chosen to do this in a different way, using up valuable House time when we could be talking about the budget. If it was something that was important to them, they could do it on their own through their coalition.

Routine Proceedings

I am not on the immigration committee, but my understanding is that parties have worked collaboratively on that committee. I understand that the senator who moved this Senate public bill did not want to move beyond the scope to the degree that we are talking about right now. This goes way beyond the scope of the bill. It is very unusual to see this approach.

It is sad. First of all, it is an important issue that deserves to be discussed seriously. The bill itself is a bill that members from all parties of the House should be able to support. Instead, we have this political gamesmanship of sorts today.

It seems that this is all because the NDP and Liberal members do not want to talk about a disastrous budget. What we are not talking about today, because we are talking about this, is an approach with the budget that projects endless deficits into the future. If we look at the impact of this budgeting approach, again, we only need to look back to the Trudeau government of the seventies and eighties to see what that disastrous approach would look like. In those years, there was a deficit in 14 out of 15 years. The then Trudeau government came into power with almost no debt in Canada and left with a generational debt. It was a debt that, a generation later, required another Liberal government in the late nineties, the Chrétien-Martin Liberal government—

• (1820)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I have a point of order. This is a concurrence debate on a motion from the standing committee on immigration. The member has been talking about the budget since he began speaking. Perhaps he could bring it back to the subject matter.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is some latitude, but I do want to remind the member that it is about the report before the House. I would ask the member to speak to the issue at hand.

I am sure the hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin will bring it back.

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, of course, but I will point out that the hon. member who just rose on this point of order speaks more and uses more words in the House than almost any other member of Parliament. He has the opportunity to stand any time he wants. He is getting applause. I cannot say how many members he was getting applause from, but it was very quiet. I will point that out—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Not as a percentage of the total number—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is no cross-debate. I want to remind the member that he is to speak about the issue that is before the House at this moment.

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, again, the issue today is that there is a Senate public bill, moved by a senator. The issue is very serious for her. She has asked specifically, in testifying before committee, not to go way beyond the scope of the bill.

We all have those opportunities where we get a chance to move things that are very important to us. I have had the opportunity to do it myself. In fact, we just had much co-operation in the House around a Senate public bill on autism. After taking the time to do the research and put together a private member's bill, working with

stakeholders and fine-tuning it to be something, I cannot imagine moving it and then having members from other parties trying to turn it into a completely different bill than the one I was moving. I think any member of the House of Commons could understand this.

Any member of Parliament who has taken the time to move a private member's bill and do all that work to prepare it could understand—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): On another point of order, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I do not believe anyone has told the member about the concurrence motion. It is about citizenship, and the member has not made one reference at all in regards to citizenship—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, there is a little bit of latitude. The hon. member has referenced the bill, but I would ask him to ensure that he speaks to the issue of the report itself, which is the 15th report for concurrence. I would remind the member to focus his speech there. The member only has four minutes and 18 seconds left to get to that.

The hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, and I would ask members to remember that there is some latitude here.

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, there is latitude. I am talking about process, which is really important here. The two members that keep rising on points of order have the highest word counts in the House of Commons. I have listened to many speeches where they have not even been in the same area code as the subject being discussed. I am actually talking about a process that is important here. I am talking about something that is critical.

The senator who moved this bill said that she does not want to see the bill go in the direction that opposition members from the Liberals and NDP are taking it. It is very clear. I think they are over there strategizing what other point of order they can raise so that we can avoid moving on that talk about—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members that if they want to have conversations to take them outside and not have questions and comments for the hon. member while he is speaking. It is very disrespectful.

The hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin has three and a half minutes left.

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, it is kind of funny to see these two members. I will not make any Muppet references here, but to hear them chirping from the gallery, and here we go again—

• (1825)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): On a point of order, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the Government House leader.

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, the member cannot do indirectly what he cannot do directly. Whether it was intended to be complimentary or not, he is still making those references that you have already asked him not to make.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It appears to me that there is some intent to try to prolong the proceedings here to a certain degree on both sides. I just want to remind the hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin that the hon. parliamentary secretary is correct in that he should not do indirectly what he cannot do directly. I have already asked members on both sides to not use those references.

The hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin has three minutes left.

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, this is the first time I have ever spoken where I have had members stand up three times and raise of points of order to try and delay the speech that I am making.

I will sit down after making this final point, which is, again, the same point that I have been making.

This is a Senate public bill that is very important to the senator who is moving it. The Liberals and the NDP have very clearly tried to change it into something completely different than what it is. That is not acceptable, and I would encourage the Liberals and NDP that, if they feel very strongly about the things that they are bringing up and the ways that they want to change the bill, they move forward with government legislation as quickly as they can. We can have this conversation tomorrow if they choose to.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member mentioned on a number of occasions that apparently the NDP and the Liberals are trying delay discussing the budget and that is why we are involved in this tactic right now on this motion. However, is he aware that the only speakers who are getting up right now are Conservatives? As a matter of fact, if no Conservatives rose right now and just stayed seated, we would be beyond this concurrence motion and we would be talking about the budget.

The member accused myself and the member for Winnipeg North of sometimes not being in the same area code of what we are debating. Is he even aware of what is going on in this House right now?

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, we had a vote half an hour ago to move on, and the Liberals voted against it.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, Bill C-37 was passed unanimously. Can we know why this bill, which has exactly the same objective, is being debated again in the House of Commons?

[*English*]

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, again, we are talking about a Senate public bill that could be supported by all parties and we are having a conversation about some parties in the House taking the bill in a completely different direction than the senator originally intended. Not one member in this House would accept that if it was

their own private member's bill, but they are expecting us to move on with it today. The government could do this if it wanted to tomorrow.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, this has come up numerous times. I was not actually going to get into conversations that I have had with the senator and conversations that I have even had with Conservative members.

The truth of the matter is this. When this bill came before us, the scope was narrow. I had already mentioned it to the senator that the scope is very narrow and that we need to actually look at broadening it to ensure that other lost Canadians are captured. Since that time I have been working at it, thinking about how we can do this, to make sure that families who have been impacted would not continue to be lost Canadians. We have been working diligently on this.

I was just reviewing evidence from the committee and the senator was saying that she could be supportive of expanding its scope although it is not before this committee right now because it is not part of that bill, so conceptually she is in support of supporting expansion of the bill in terms of its scope. However it is the Conservatives who continually want to say we cannot do this. If they really wanted to actually get on with it they could. Why do they not do what they say they want to do and support the expansion of the scope—

• (1830)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin.

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, the hon. member has been in this House for a long time. She just said if we wanted to do something we could do it. She should know that it is very clear that the Liberals have expressed support for what she wants to do. Her party is in a coalition agreement with the Liberals. All she needs to do is walk across the floor to the two Liberal members who have been heckling me the entire time I have been speaking and cut a deal with them to do it tomorrow—

Ms. Jenny Kwan: All you need to do is talk to your members. They also said they support it.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I do want to remind the hon. member that she has had an opportunity to ask a question. If she has other questions when it comes to questions and comments, she may want to stand for that.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley.

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Madam Speaker, I happened to sub in on this committee when Senator Martin was testifying and she was very clear. She did not want this bill changed. I heard her say it several times during her testimony at the immigration committee. Now she may be open to other legislation to more Canadians being brought into citizenship but she was definitely not open to changing this legislation.

I wanted to put that on the record.

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, that was just a comment and I agree with it.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, we are late into debate here in the House of Commons today. For those who may just be catching up on what is happening, I would like to offer a little refresher, if I may.

Today what was supposed to be debated in the House during this time period was legislation regarding the federal budget. That is what we were supposed to be debating right now. Of course, the federal budget is something that the Liberals and their coalition partner of the NDP are getting together on. There are a lot of questions in the Canadian public about the prudence of the federal budget but we are not debating the federal budget right now. Why are we not debating the federal budget? I think it is really important to note why we are not.

What we are debating is something called a concurrence motion. I am being shut down right now. They are shutting me—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We have a point of order.

The hon. member for London—Fanshawe.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Madam Speaker, I cannot let this pass that there is yet another Conservative speaker who is extending debate on this issue when they do not have to do it. If they are so concerned about debating the budget all they have to do is stop talking and we could get on with it. I have a speech today and I would like to talk about the budget.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): What the hon. member is raising is actually debate, but I do want to remind members that we are not talking about the budget at this point. We are talking about this concurrence report that is before the House on immigration.

I just want to remind members to please stay on the issue at hand. I know that there is some latitude to a certain degree, but I would ask members to please reference the issue that is before the House.

The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Madam Speaker, I would just note that, when the Liberal-NDP coalition was trying to shut me down on this, I was barely a minute into my speech. These members need to let me get to the point I am trying to make, instead of just trying to silence me, as the government is doing with its censorship bills. This is what we are dealing with here, being silenced.

Instead of debating the budget, as we are supposed to be doing, the NDP put something forward called a concurrence motion. That is what we are debating right now. The concurrence motion is to deal with a very tricky bit of Liberal-NDP machinations, which is actually really harming people and delaying the help that Bill S-245 would provide.

Instead of debating the budget, we are debating a concurrence motion on something that happened, and I want to break down what happened. Bill S-245 is an act to amend the Citizenship Act. It went through the Senate. It was introduced by Senator Yonah Martin to deal with a very narrow scope, dealing with something called “lost

Canadians”. It was very narrow in scope, and because it was so narrow in scope, it sailed through the Senate, on the understanding that it would stay narrow and it would go through the Senate.

It came to the immigration committee. What ended up happening was that, first of all, before moving this in the immigration committee, the member for Vancouver East went and did a press conference, pre-positioning herself to do this.

The Liberal-NDP coalition got together and did two things. It moved a motion to extend amendments to the bill by 30 days, which delayed action for people who would have been impacted by the bill, and then it also moved a motion to extend the scope of the amendments that would be debated well past what was in the bill itself.

For those who are watching who may not understand what this does, it allows members, in a private member's bill, which is supposed to be very narrow in scope, to put forward any amendment they want. What that does, in effect, and the reason why I do not think we should have done that, is forces the bill to go back to the Senate yet again.

This is going to delay justice for the people who we had non-partisan, all-party agreement to deal with. That motion itself, to do what the NDP-Liberal coalition wanted to do, passed in the citizenship committee with its support. Even though it passed, it introduced this concurrence motion in the House of Commons today, and it is doing what? It is eating up time to debate the deficit budget issue because it doesn't want to talk about it.

If it is saying, oh no, nobody should talk about this and then we go back to the budget, we actually gave it an opportunity to go back to debate. My colleague from Calgary Shepard rose to move a motion about an hour ago to move on from the debate, yet it voted against that.

That is the agenda here. The agenda here is to curtail debate on the budget while it is supporting the passage of Liberal censorship bills Bill C-11 and Bill C-18. These are the types of tactics that we are going to see over and over and over again from this Liberal coalition because it does not want to stand up for what Canadians need, either in the budget or in Bill S-245.

When the Liberal and the NDP coalition decided that it was going to delay the passage of the bill through the committee and delay justice for people who were in that bill, who we all support justice for, and open up the scope of the bill, it forgot one thing. It forgot that, if it opened up the scope of the bill for its one issue, which the senator and the Senate did not want because they agreed to sail it through on a small amendment, it forgot that maybe other people would want to put forward amendments too, such as me and my colleague from Calgary Shepard.

Routine Proceedings

It then had the audacity and the gall to stand in this place during this debate, which it did not need, and which it put forward to waste time on debate on the budget because it does not want to talk about how much deficit spending money it puts forward, which has caused an inflationary crisis in Canada, all while it is putting forward censorship bills. Because it does not want that debate to happen, it puts this debate forward.

Now it is saying that it is because the Conservatives want to put forward amendments to the Citizenship Act. Well, guess what? What is good for the goose is good for the gander.

If the NDP-Liberal coalition, which is supporting censorship bills Bill C-11 and Bill C-18 to shut down conversations in the Canadian public, are using a concurrence motion to shut down debate in the House of Commons, we are absolutely right that Conservatives will be putting forward motions beyond the scope of the bill. It is as simple as that.

• (1835)

If the NDP-Liberal coalition wants a statutory review of the Citizenship Act, then let us giddy-up and do it. I have a lot of great ideas, which I will definitely be bringing forward. This does nothing to help the people who could have been helped if the NDP had just let this go.

The other thing I can show is why we should not be delaying this bill and why the scope of the amendment should not be put through. It is not just because it delays justice for people within this bill; it is also because the NDP is propping up a government that has refused to do this in its own government legislation. If the government had actually wanted to do anything else, it has had nearly eight years to put forward, through its own government legislation, what my colleague from the NDP wants to do.

The NDP is actually in a coalition with the government. I do not know if the NDP wants to go to an election, but I know the Liberals do not. Considering what the polling numbers show today, I do not think there are a lot of people on the Liberal backbench who would want to go to an election today.

The NDP could be using that coalition agreement to say that, within a piece of government legislation, we need to do this. However, they do not actually have the leverage they claim to have over the government, so what they are trying to do is sneak through committee what they cannot get the government to do in the House.

To people who are watching and are impacted by this bill, I say that the Liberals delayed the passage of the bill because they did not understand what they were doing. That is brutal. It is terrible. I cannot believe it. I cannot believe they would not do what we all agreed to do in a non-partisan way, as the Senate did, which is to get Bill S-245 through.

Today, we are debating the concurrence motion and the substance of the motion, and we are using House of Commons time that we could have used to debate the budget. The Liberals moved this concurrence motion even though the bill has already passed through the immigration committee. They actually ate up hours of critical, precious House debate time, which we could have used to talk about the budget. This is a path to ruin that the government, the

Liberal-NDP coalition, put us on by inflationary, deficit spending in the budget bill. That is critical.

People cannot eat. People in Vancouver, the member's home riding, are eating out of dumpsters because of the inflation crisis and the affordable housing crisis. Today, she moved a motion that would essentially cut off debate on the budget today, even though it has already passed through the House of Commons.

If my colleague wants to open up the scope of the bill so that it is going to have to go back to the Senate anyway, through her actions, not mine or those of any of my Conservative colleagues, then we will be putting forward other amendments as well. One of the amendments I would like to put forward, given that we are now reviewing the citizenship bill, has to do with the fact that the Liberals said they were going to do away with the need to have in-person citizenship ceremonies. This is something that has received wide, cross-party condemnation. I have an opinion piece published in the Toronto Star on April 10. The title is "I'm horrified by the suggestion of cancelling in-person citizenship ceremonies". It goes through quotes from non-partisan people, including Adrienne Clarkson, a former governor general; a Syrian refugee; and others who are saying the government should not be doing away with the requirement for in-person citizenship ceremonies.

I would like to amend the Citizenship Act to ensure that, rather than doing away with the ceremonies because the government cannot figure out how to get services to where people want them, the government would actually be required to make sure new Canadians have the right and the ability to go to an in-person ceremony, take the oath with fellow new Canadians and be welcomed into the Canadian family in such a glorious way, instead of doing what it is doing now.

Members in this place have used up precious House time. I am speaking here because members of the Liberal-NDP coalition voted against a motion to end debate on this and move forward. They gave me an opportunity to speak. For once, instead of speaking on Bill C-11 or Bill C-18, the censorship bill, I am, they are darn right, going to speak in this place. I am certainly also going to be putting forward amendments. I do not know if they have forgotten how this place works or have forgotten that each of us has our own individual rights to work within the process that they put forward.

Routine Proceedings

• (1840)

They stand up and say that one person can put forward an amendment that is completely out of scope, but they are going to use that to justify delaying justice for the people in the bill and use that to delay debate on the government's inflationary budget deficit crisis bill. Therefore, yes, I am going to put forward amendments that make sense for my constituents. My constituency is a diverse community in north central Calgary where the Citizenship Act matters. If the member for Vancouver East is going to use her Liberal-NDP coalition position to try to get the Liberal government to extend the scope of the bill and, in doing so, delay justice for people, while delaying debate on the budget, then yes, I am going to be putting forward amendments to amend the Citizenship Act.

To the people and stakeholders watching this, this bill could have been through our committee already. It could have been sailing through the House. However, what is the Liberal-NDP coalition doing? Instead of the government putting forward its own legislation to address any additional issues, the NDP is proposing a motion to extend this by another 30 days, plus have a statutory review of the Citizenship Act. It is plus, plus, plus. They did not think through the process. I am sure that when they were talking to stakeholders, they did not talk to them and were not honest with them about what could or might happen if this path were undertaken.

If I had been meeting with those stakeholders, I would have said that this is something we need to lobby the government for in different legislation, because the senator who put it forward in a private member's bill had agreement among her peers on a narrowly defined scope in the bill in order to get it through and get justice for people. If we do what the member for Vancouver East is suggesting, we would delay it for another 30 days. Then it would probably have to go back through the Senate. The Senate takes a lot of time to look at things. Then it would have to come back here again. That would be months and months of delay, when it could have been done maybe before June. Now we do not know when it is going to be done.

That is why I opposed the approach in committee. Frankly, it is why I oppose using all this time in the House to continue a debate that the NDP-Liberal coalition settled at the immigration committee, an unwise course of action, only to vote against it. They just voted, an hour ago, against moving forward. Also, as we saw at the start of this debate, time after time my colleagues were getting interrupted by points of order, with members saying we should not be allowed to raise the issue of the budget. Absolutely we should be able to raise the issue of the budget, after the NDP-Liberal coalition voted against a Conservative motion that would allow us to move forward to debate the budget.

However, here we are, and if members have given me the opportunity to speak by not moving on that, absolutely I am going to speak about it. Of course, the Liberal-NDP coalition does not want to talk about that inflationary budget, that big, expensive nothing burger that would cost Canadians more, that would lead to food inflation and that is not addressing the core issues facing this country, because it is an embarrassment. They do not want an election because they are all afraid of losing their seats. Canadians are on to them, just as I am on to them right now.

I am tired of this. I am tired of these games. We did not need to have this debate in the House. This could have gone forward to the immigration committee. What we have done, in effect, is delay justice for the people in Bill S-245, delay debate on the budget and, in doing so, delay justice for all Canadians, who are dumpster diving in Vancouver East to eat and who continue to not be able to afford places to live.

This is a hard truth. It is an inconvenient truth for everybody in this place. However, it is time coalition members are confronted with it. There are consequences for the actions of the coalition and its backroom dealings. They lead us into places like this, where they make mistakes on parliamentary procedures and where they do not explain the implications of their actions to stakeholders who are advocating for change in this bill. Again, the government could have done this.

• (1845)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith the question on the motion now before the House.

The question is on the motion.

[*Translation*]

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

[*English*]

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, 2022, the recorded division stands deferred until Tuesday, April 25, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

* * *

[*English*]

PETITIONS

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have petition 11759654 signed by 28 members. The undersigned citizens and residents of Canada draw the attention of the House of Commons to the following. Whereas Canadians have the right to be protected against discrimination, it is a fundamental Canadian right to be politically active and vocal. It is in the best interests of Canadian democracy to protect public debate and the exchange of different ideas. Bill C-257 seeks to add protection against political discrimination to the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Therefore, the undersigned citizens and residents of Canada call upon the House of Commons to first, support Bill C-257, which bans discrimination on the basis of political belief or activity, and, two, defend the rights of Canadians to peacefully express their political opinions.

• (1850)

ETHIOPIA

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, as always, it is a true honour to rise in this place and bring to the attention of this House some incredibly important issues that Canadians have signed petitions about. Today, I have three petitions that I am pleased to table on behalf of many Canadians.

In the first petition, citizens draw attention to the House of Commons the following and ask the government to take these following actions: one, immediately call for an end to violence and for restraint from all sides and parties involved in the Tigray conflict in Ethiopia; two, immediately call—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the member that he is to summarize what is in the petition and not read everything in the petition.

The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, although I cannot show you, I think I am doing an admirable job of summarizing what is in a very lengthy petition. I thank you for that reminder and can assure you I am doing so as briefly as I can.

The petitioners also call for humanitarian access to the region and for independent monitoring to be allowed, and for international investigations into the credible reports of war crimes and gross violations of human rights law. They call for engaging directly and consistently with the Ethiopian and Eritrean governments on this conflict; and for promoting short-, medium- and long-term elections monitoring in Ethiopia.

HAZARAS

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, the second petition that I have the honour of tabling here today is specifically that there are residents from Alberta who draw to the attention of the House a host of details surrounding violence against the Hazaras. With the fall of the Afghan government in August of 2021 and the Taliban taking over control of Afghanistan, the Hazaras once again find themselves in a situation they faced at the end of the last millennium and the beginning of this millennium of massacre, arrest, forced mass displacement and confiscation of their land. The Taliban regime is perpetrating so many of these things.

Therefore, there are many Canadians calling upon the Government of Canada to recognize the ongoing genocide and persecution of the Hazaras and to prioritize refugees from this persecuted group of people within Afghanistan.

JUSTICE

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, the third petition that I have the honour of tabling in this House today is on an issue that so many Canadians have followed closely, and that is that the Supreme Court of Canada in *R. v. Bissonnette* struck down section 745.51 of the Criminal Code, which

Adjournment Proceedings

allowed for parole ineligibility periods to be applied consecutively for mass murderers.

As a result of that, some of the most notorious and disgusting individuals are able to apply for parole after only 25 years in prison even though they have committed crimes for which these individuals should never see the light of day. The courts have actually said, by virtue of sentencing, that they should never see the light of day again.

Therefore, there is a host of individuals urging the Liberal Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada to invoke the notwithstanding clause and override this unfair and unjust decision that is truly an insult to so many victims of the worst mass murderers and criminals in Canadian history.

It is always an honour to table petitions by Canadians who are passionate about these issues in this place.

TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present a petition from many residents of Winnipeg North and Winnipeg who are of Indo-Canadian heritage, in particular.

The petitioners want to see international flights going between Winnipeg and India or, secondarily, Europe. This demand continues to grow. They are looking to the government and members of Parliament to do what they can in terms of lobbying for that additional international flight.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (1855)

[English]

SENIORS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to talk about seniors.

Across my riding of North Island—Powell River, I am hearing from more and more seniors who are struggling to make ends meet. They are having a hard time affording food, affording their medication and being able to pay for the key things that make their life reasonable.

I am also hearing from more and more seniors in rental units who are being evicted and have nowhere else to go. It is very concerning to listen to the organizations that work so hard to keep people fed and housed in our region and understand how many seniors are falling through the cracks.

Adjournment Proceedings

I was able to ask a question several weeks ago about the fact that OAS for seniors is being increased only for seniors 75 and older, which means that seniors aged 65 to 74 are really struggling. It was very interesting to me when a constituent got a hold of my office and talked about the fact that her neighbour, who is over 75, received a letter informing her that her old age security would be increased by about \$200 a month, which was a huge relief to that senior. However, the senior who wrote to me is not near 75 yet; she has a few years until she gets there. She talked about how hard it was. She looked it up online, trying to figure out why she did not get the increase, and then she realized it was because of age. This did not reflect her needs.

My question to the government was simply this: Given the reality of inflation, why is the government telling seniors 65 to 74 that they do not require this, especially some of our most vulnerable seniors, who are struggling with poverty?

When I look at the budget, I am very happy to finally see dental care for seniors. I have heard from seniors across my riding, some of whom have waited outside the door with their information because they heard I was fighting for seniors to get dental care. It was absolutely sad to hear the stories of the extreme pain and then often having to wait years, saving money and trying to find a way to pay for root canals and the different procedures they needed. One senior said to me that they could afford a couple of hundred dollars it cost every year to get their teeth cleaned, but they could not afford anything else. Therefore, whenever they had a problem, such as a cavity, it could take them a few years to pay for it. Thus, I am really pleased that dental care is in the budget, but I am unhappy that we do not see anything else.

We know that we forced the government to do this. Two years ago, the Liberals voted against dental care for seniors in this country. We made them do it, and I am glad that it is here. Nevertheless, too many seniors are falling through the cracks, and we could do something about their suffering in this country if the government had the political will to do so.

I want to point out that single seniors are perhaps the most impacted group of seniors. Their cost of living is two-thirds the cost of a couple, and they have to make up that resource for themselves. We know that a lot of single seniors are renting; the cost of housing is significantly higher than it was, and it is only increasing.

Single Seniors for Tax Fairness has come up with some really important ideas that I was hoping to see in the budget. However, we did not see those things reflected in the budget, which I think is very unfortunate.

We need to make sure that the seniors of this country are getting the supports they need so that they can live according to a bar of dignity. Having the OAS increased for those seniors between 65 and 74 would bring up that bar of dignity. It is not the only solution, but it is a solution that this government could put in place fairly quickly if it had the political will.

I am back here again fighting hard for seniors because they deserve to have the financial support to live with dignity. Single seniors with a very fixed income deserve to feel that they can live with dignity, and too many across this country are making decisions

between appropriate housing, clothing, bills, heat and medication. I think Canada should do so much more for seniors, and I wonder why the Liberal government does not agree.

● (1900)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):

Madam Speaker, the hon. member for North Island—Powell River raises the very important issue of dignity and I wholeheartedly agree with much of what she said. Seniors do deserve a dignified retirement after a lifetime of hard work. They deserve to live knowing that they have the means to pay for their housing, food and medications, to name a few. With food costs and rental costs soaring, it is hard for people to put their financial cares aside.

This is the reason why our government increased the old age security pension by 10% for seniors over the age of 75. As seniors age, they tend to have lower income and are often facing higher health-related expenses because of the onset of illness or disability. Now, thanks to the increase to the OAS, we are strengthening the financial security of 3.3 million Canadian seniors.

Because higher prices on essential goods are causing undue stress, we passed Bill C-46, the one-time grocery rebate, which will deliver targeted inflation relief for 11 million Canadians who need it the most, providing eligible seniors with an extra \$234, on average.

Our new dental benefit, as the member mentioned, will help seniors get the dental care they need. That is why, in budget 2023, we proposed to provide \$13 billion over five years and \$4.4 billion on-going to help nine million Canadians, including seniors, receive the dental care they need.

These new measures build on the supports that our government has already provided to seniors in the form of program changes, tax breaks and top-ups. Since 2015, we have made significant progress for seniors. To begin, we increased the GIS for nearly a million low-income single seniors. We then restored the age of eligibility from 67 to 65 for GIS and OAS pensions, which the Conservatives had planned to increase this year, if they were still in power.

We enhanced the Canada pension plan, and we reduced income taxes through increases to the basic personal amount. Finally, budget 2022 committed a top-up of \$500 to the Canada housing benefit to help low-income renters, including seniors, with the cost of renting, and a one-time doubling of the GST credit for six months.

We are committed to making life more affordable for Canadians, and our government has the record to prove it.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Madam Speaker, it is interesting that the largest impact I see for seniors are things that the NDP asked for. We said to the government, “If you do not play with us nicely, we are not going to support you unless you do these things.” It is great that the government is announcing the things that are in the budget that the NDP proposed, such as the dental benefit and the doubling of the GST. What I am not hearing is anything about how there is going to be real action taken, especially for single seniors. I am worried about all seniors, but I know that single seniors in particular, largely women, are really struggling. They are talking about the financial challenges they have. There are some really common-sense responses that could be done. When is that going to happen?

The other thing I heard the member talk about was the supports for low-income renters. In my riding, there is so little housing. It is not about getting the extra money to pay rent; it is about actually having somewhere to live. Is there going to be an investment in housing that is going to sustain seniors in a meaningful and respectful way?

Those are a couple of my questions. I certainly hope that the member will take it back to his government, that single seniors deserve better and that we need more rental units, especially in rural and remote communities, because there simply are not any there.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I certainly did talk about single seniors. I talked about some of the supports that we have. I talked about some of the supports that we introduced years ago and some of the ones that are in budget 2023.

More broadly, to her point about the NDP forcing the hand of the Liberal Party, the NDP can play it any way it wants. I hear it routinely in the House, where this member and other members get up and say that they forced the government to do all these great things. If they want to take credit for it, that is great. The NDP can take credit for it, but at the end of the day, Canadians, and in particular seniors, are better off because of the relationship between the NDP and the Liberals.

I have no problem saying that I am very grateful to this member and the NDP for their willingness to work with this government. They are acting like the adults in the room and that is exactly what Canadians deserve.

● (1905)

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, time and again, and we will probably hear it from the parliamentary secretary again tonight, we hear from the governing party that it is keen to move ahead with the Canada disability benefit. However, once again, in budget 2023, the only money allocated was to continue designing the benefit. There is nothing for the benefit itself, leaving people with disabilities living in legislated poverty.

This is why in question period a few weeks ago, I reminded my colleagues in the governing party what it looks like when the federal government is serious about a new program. I gave the example of child care. First came the funding, then agreements with provinces and territories, and then the legislation.

Adjournment Proceedings

I shared how it is the exact opposite of how it has transpired with the Canada disability benefit and how disappointed I was, and still am, that it again was not funded in budget 2023, despite billions more being set aside to subsidize the oil and gas industry, or even to put a car on the moon. I asked why we should trust that the government is serious about the Canada disability benefit in light of this.

So many of my constituents ask me this same question, and I would like to share just one example of a constituent I recently spoke with, Barb. The Canada disability benefit would change their life. Barb and I spoke in my community office just last Friday. I was told they wanted to discuss their advocacy for expanding medical assistance in dying to include mental health.

We ended up talking for almost an hour, and what I learned over the course of our conversation is that, first, Barb lives in legislated poverty, accessing the Ontario disability support program, or ODSP for short. I learned that because of this, Barb has been unsheltered before and now is precariously housed. I also learned that Barb is keen for more mental health supports, and like me, is deeply disappointed the federal government has not funded the promised \$4.5-billion Canada mental health transfer. It is only in light of all of this that they are now advocating to be eligible for medical assistance in dying.

I will tell the House what I told Barb last Friday afternoon, which is that I do not support medical assistance in dying for mental health, in part because I believe the federal government must do far more to support people who need it most, people just like them. It pains me to know there are so many people like Barb in my community and right across the country, people with disabilities who have been organizing and calling out for years for better.

The federal government must listen to them, and it could start by funding the Canada disability benefit today. Failing this, it could at least introduce a disability emergency response benefit similar to what was done in the pandemic as a stopgap measure.

My question to the parliamentary secretary is two-fold. First, if the federal government is continuing to delay bringing in the Canada disability benefit, will it at least bring in a disability emergency response benefit to be sure people such as Barb have the support they need in the meantime? If not, what will the federal government do to show that it really is serious about the Canada disability benefit?

Adjournment Proceedings

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the member for Kitchener Centre for his advocacy on behalf of Canadians with disabilities.

Furthermore, I would like to thank him for his excellent work in getting Bill C-22 through committee and improving that bill along the way. My thanks again for his tremendous advocacy and great teamwork.

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

The minister understands the challenges that so many persons with disabilities face each and every day. She understands that many working-age persons with disabilities face a challenging income gap. That is why she has been working tirelessly to create a groundbreaking Canada disability benefit, which the member referenced, an income supplement with the potential to seriously reduce poverty and improve financial security for hundreds of thousands of working-age persons with disabilities.

Like my colleague, the minister wants to see Canadians with disabilities receive the new Canada disability benefit as quickly as possible. I remind the hon. member that, as set out in the legislation, details of the Canada disability benefit will be addressed in further regulations including the benefit amount, eligible criteria and other features. We will work out all of these details in consultation with our partners, including the disability community. We will continue to work closely with the provinces and territories to ensure that the Canada disability benefit will align with and complement services, benefits and supports. I am pleased to report that conversations in this regard are going very well. There is a shared commitment to improving the lives of persons with disabilities across this country.

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

• (1910)

Mr. Mike Morrice: Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary correctly pointed out that the disability community will be involved in the design of the disability benefit because they called for it. Throughout the process of Bill C-22, they made clear the importance of that, so I brought forward an amendment that would require the government to meaningfully engage the disability community in the regulation.

What remains true today is that if the government really was serious, it would not wait for this whole process of regulations and everything else. Just like child care the government would have started by funding it and then moving forward with the rest. Why not do the same here?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, as I indicated to the member, the consultative process, which he understands, respects and agrees needs to happen, needs to be done in a way that not just engages with the various stakeholders but indeed engages and aligns itself with the provincial delivery of similar services to Canadians with disabilities. We would love to see this happen more quickly. I do not understand why anyone would suggest that it should not happen more quickly, but making this happen will take the necessary time to get it right. What is most important here is that we get it right. That is what we plan to do.

That is why we are going through the process we are now so that we can bring in those regulations and various different stipulations regarding the implementation of this benefit as quickly as we can.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes not being present to raise during the adjournment proceedings the matter for which notice has been given, the notice is deemed withdrawn.

[*Translation*]

The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:13 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Monday, April 24, 2023

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Declaration on the Essential Role of Artists and Creative Expression in Canada Act	
(Bill S-208: On the Order: Private Members' Business):	13281
The Speaker	13281
(Order discharged and item dropped from Order Paper)	13281
Sitting Suspended	
(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:05 a.m.)	13281
Sitting Resumed	
(The House resumed at 12 p.m.)	13281

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Budget Implementation Act, 2023, No. 1	
Bill C-47. Second reading	13281
Mr. Lamoureux	13281
Mr. Trudel	13282
Mr. Morantz	13283
Mr. Johns	13283
Mr. McKinnon	13283
Mr. Morrice	13284
Mr. Hallan	13284
Mrs. Atwin	13285
Mr. Fortin	13286
Mr. Green	13286
Mr. Lehoux	13286
Ms. Bendantan	13288
Ms. Gaudreau	13288
Mr. Davies	13288
Mrs. Chatel	13288
Mr. Epp	13289
Mr. Trudel	13290
Ms. Idlout	13290
Mr. Blois	13290
Mr. Morantz	13292
Mr. Fortin	13292
Ms. Blaney	13292
Mr. Melillo	13293
Mr. Gerretsen	13294
Mr. Trudel	13294
Mr. Davies	13295
Mr. Aboultaif	13295
Mr. Lauzon	13296
Mr. Trudel	13296
Mr. Green	13297
Ms. Gladu	13297
Mr. Lauzon	13297

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Pizza Nova	
Ms. Sgro	13298
Fishing Legend	
Mr. Epp	13298
Tourism	
Mr. Weiler	13298
Tourism Week	
Mrs. Vignola	13299
Eid al-Fitr	
Mr. Arya	13299
Carolle Pelletier	
Mr. Paul-Hus	13299
Sikh Heritage Month	
Mr. Sarai	13299
Hispanic and Latin American Leaders	
Ms. Dzerowicz	13300
Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada	
Mr. Lawrence	13300
Community Service	
Mr. Ali	13300
Passports	
Mr. Muys	13300
Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada	
Mr. Van Popta	13300
National Volunteer Week	
Mrs. Romanado	13301
Climate Change	
Mr. Davies	13301
Armenian Genocide	
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe	13301
Public Service	
Mrs. Kramp-Neuman	13301
Sikh Heritage Month	
Mr. Dhaliwal	13301

ORAL QUESTIONS

Labour	
Mr. Poilievre	13302
Mrs. Fortier	13302
Mr. Poilievre	13302
Mrs. Fortier	13302

Ethics			
Mr. Poilievre	13302	Mr. Genuis	13307
Mr. Holland	13302	Mr. Holland	13308
Mr. Poilievre	13302	Mr. Berthold	13308
Mr. Holland	13302	Mr. Rodriguez	13308
Mr. Poilievre	13303	Mr. Berthold	13308
Mr. Holland	13303	Mr. Holland	13308
Mr. Therrien	13303		
Mr. Holland	13303	Labour	
Mr. Therrien	13303	Mrs. DeBellefeuille	13308
Mr. Holland	13303	Mrs. Fortier	13308
		Mrs. DeBellefeuille	13308
Labour		Mrs. Fortier	13309
Mr. Boulerice	13303		
Mrs. Fortier	13303	National Defence	
Ms. Blaney	13303	Mrs. Gallant	13309
Mrs. Fortier	13304	Ms. Anand	13309
Mr. Paul-Hus	13304	Mr. Bezan	13309
Mrs. Lebouthillier	13304	Ms. Anand	13309
Mr. Paul-Hus	13304	Mr. Martel	13309
Mrs. Lebouthillier	13304	Mr. Guilbeault	13309
Mrs. Kusie	13304		
Ms. Gould	13304	Health	
Mrs. Kusie	13304	Mrs. Shanahan	13309
Ms. Gould	13304	Mr. Duclos	13310
Mr. Chambers	13305		
Mr. Boissonnault	13305	Telecommunications	
Mr. Chambers	13305	Mr. Williams	13310
Mrs. Lebouthillier	13305	Mr. Champagne	13310
		Mr. Williams	13310
Ethics		Mr. Champagne	13310
Mr. Villemure	13305		
Mr. Holland	13305	Fisheries and Oceans	
		Mr. Perkins	13310
Democratic Institutions		Ms. Murray	13310
Mr. Villemure	13305		
Mr. Holland	13305	Labour	
Ms. Gaudreau	13305	Mrs. Zahid	13311
Mr. Holland	13306	Mr. O'Regan	13311
		Mr. Johns	13311
Labour		Ms. Jaczek	13311
Ms. Ferreri	13306		
Ms. Gould	13306	Foreign Affairs	
Ms. Ferreri	13306	Mr. Vuong	13311
Ms. Gould	13306	Mr. Oliphant	13311
Mr. Chong	13306		
Ms. Gould	13306		
		GOVERNMENT ORDERS	
Telecommunications		Digital Charter Implementation Act, 2022	
Mr. Masse	13306	Bill C-27. Second reading	13311
Mr. Champagne	13307	Motion on parts 1 and 2 agreed to	13313
Mr. Green	13307	Motion on part 3 agreed to	13314
Mr. Champagne	13307	(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee) ..	13314
Automotive Industry		ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS	
Mr. Jowhari	13307	Government Response to Petitions	
Mr. Champagne	13307	Mr. Lamoureux	13314
Democratic Institutions			
Mr. Genuis	13307		
Mr. Holland	13307		

Committees of the House**National Defence**

Mr. McKay 13314

Foreign Affairs and International Development

Mr. Ehsassi 13314

Motion for concurrence 13314

Division on motion deferred 13314

Procedure and House Affairs

Ms. Chagger 13314

Motion for concurrence 13315

(Motion agreed to) 13315

Citizenship and Immigration

Ms. Kwan 13315

Motion for concurrence 13315

Ms. Larouche 13317

Mr. Kmiec 13317

Mr. Lamoureux 13318

Ms. Mathysen 13318

Ms. Saks 13318

Mr. Kmiec 13321

Ms. Kwan 13321

Mr. Lamoureux 13321

Mr. Kmiec 13322

Motion 13325

Motion negatived 13327

Mr. Lamoureux 13327

Ms. Kwan 13327

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) 13327

Ms. Rempel Garner 13328

Mr. Kurek 13328

Mr. Redekopp 13328

Ms. Kwan 13330

Mr. Lamoureux 13330

Business of the House

Ms. Gould 13331

Committees of the House**Citizenship and Immigration**

Motion for concurrence 13331

Ms. Bérubé 13331

Mr. Lake 13331

Mr. Gerretsen 13333

Ms. Sinclair-Desgagné 13333

Ms. Kwan 13333

Mr. Morantz 13333

Ms. Rempel Garner 13334

Division on motion deferred 13336

Petitions**Human Rights**

Mr. Aboultaif 13336

Ethiopia

Mr. Kurek 13337

Hazaras

Mr. Kurek 13337

Justice

Mr. Kurek 13337

Transportation

Mr. Lamoureux 13337

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS**Seniors**

Ms. Blaney 13337

Mr. Gerretsen 13338

Persons with Disabilities

Mr. Morrice 13339

Mr. Gerretsen 13340

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>