



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

---

# House of Commons Debates

Official Report  
(Hansard)

**Volume 151 No. 190**  
Wednesday, May 3, 2023

---

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



## **CONTENTS**

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

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 3, 2023

The House met at 2 p.m.

---

## Prayer

---

• (1405)

[English]

**The Speaker:** It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

[Members sang the national anthem]

---

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### CANADIAN NAVAL TRIBUTE PROJECT

**Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, on April 29, I proudly attended the unveiling of the Canadian naval tribute project. The monument honours 14 Canadian heroes who put service before self, with some making the ultimate sacrifice in the defence of Canada.

Thanks to the leadership of honorary naval captain Mark McQueen, navy lieutenant Sean Livingston, navy lieutenant Mark Phillips and my former commanding officer, Commander Walter Moniz, Spadina—Fort York is now home to our nation's largest flagpole, which flies the largest naval ensign in Canada. At its base, 14 panels recognize a diverse but previously uncelebrated group of people for their contributions and impact on the Royal Canadian Navy. These are heroes like Lieutenant-Commander Margaret Brooke, who bravely worked to save a nursing sister even though her own life was at risk; Quartermaster William Hall, the first Nova Scotian and Black recipient of the Victoria Cross; and trailblazers like Lieutenant-Commander William King Lowd “Lo” Lore, who was thrice rejected for the navy until the chief of naval staff intervened. A personal hero of mine, Lore was the first Chinese Canadian officer and the first naval officer of Chinese heritage to serve in any Commonwealth navy.

I am proud to be a member of the ship's company and serve at His Majesty's Canadian Ship *York*. I invite all Canadians to learn about this incredible naval project.

## YOUTH IN BRAMPTON

**Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, to kick off National Youth Week, I was proud to celebrate the grand opening of the Susan Fennell Sportsplex Youth Hub in Brampton South. Supported by more than half a million dollars in federal funding, the hub will provide young people in Brampton with a safe and accessible space to connect, learn and grow. It is in addition to more than \$15 million in federal funding for green energy retrofits.

I want to thank the youth of Brampton for inspiring us with their energy and creativity. They are the driving force behind this project, and we are committed to supporting them as they follow their dreams and build a bright future for themselves and our community.

This National Youth Week, let us continue to reflect on the value of empowering and supporting the next generation, because they are our true leaders of today.

\* \* \*

## FIREARMS

**Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I represent thousands of law-abiding firearm owners, each of whom was approved by the RCMP to legally purchase, own and use a long gun in Canada. They follow the law, pay their taxes and enjoy time at the range and hunting in the woods. Earlier this week, the Liberal government introduced another backdoor hunting rifle ban that again targets law-abiding Canadians. This ban will not improve public safety, because criminals do not acquire their firearms legally.

Over the past eight years under the Liberals, why has violent crime increased by 32% and gang-related murders doubled? It is because the Liberals often help offenders avoid mandatory jail time for gun crimes. Why do criminals selling fentanyl and crystal meth stay in business? It is because Liberals give dealers house arrest for dealing death sentences. Why are all 13 of Canada's premiers demanding bail reform? It is because the Liberals are soft on crime.

*Statements by Members*

Ottawa's priority must be to go after gun smugglers and criminals using illegal firearms. It is hard work but it will make Canada's cities safer.

\* \* \*

**MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS**

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, approximately one in 400 Canadians lives with multiple sclerosis. MS can happen to anyone, without warning. Canada is home to many world-leading MS researchers. New scientific discoveries, like the research that identified the Epstein-Barr virus as the leading risk factor for developing MS, are within our grasp and can change the outcome of the disease. Canada has one of the highest rates of MS in the world. Let us prioritize and fund the research that shows so much promise. Families living with MS are eagerly awaiting the passage and implementation of the Canada disability benefit and an EI sickness benefit that takes episodic illness into account.

Today, in honour of MS Awareness Month, I am wearing a carnation to show my solidarity with the MS community. I ask my fellow parliamentarians to join me to support MS Canada's quest to accelerate MS research and legislation that will have a life-changing impact on those living with multiple sclerosis.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AWARENESS MONTH**

**Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, multiple sclerosis, or MS, is a disease that affects thousands of Canadians.

On average, every day, 12 people are diagnosed with MS. This disease usually occurs in people aged 20 to 49, in the prime of their working lives.

Struggling to keep a job while living with an episodic disease like MS can be a terrifying and exhausting ordeal for many people. Therefore, it is essential that employment supports be put in place to help all those who are living with MS.

Today, I am wearing a carnation in recognition of Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month, and I urge each and everyone of us to continue showing our commitment to all those affected by multiple sclerosis during this month of awareness and throughout the year.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

**SASHBEAR FOUNDATION**

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as part of Mental Health Week, I am paying tribute to the Sashbear Foundation. It was created in 2012, shortly after the suicide of Sasha Menu Courey, the daughter of its founders, who lost her fight against borderline personality disorder, or BPD.

Since 2012, the Sashbear Foundation has offered free mental health and suicide prevention programs in English and French to more than 14,000 people. Its mission is to lead a reform of mental health services by making people aware of the need for early prevention, recognition and access to affordable treatment.

I would like to thank the co-founders of the Sashbear Foundation, Lynn Courey and Mike Menu, and their team of more than 150 volunteers for their dedication and commitment to dispelling myths about mental illness, creating a community and building relationships, as well as giving hope back to families affected by BPD and emotional dysregulation.

In the Sashbear family, no one is left behind.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**EDMONTON OILERS**

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an exciting time in oil country, as our hometown Oilers are second round bound.

Round two starts tonight in Las Vegas, but I know that ICE District Plaza and Joey Moss pit will be packed with fans in Edmonton. This is a big deal. The Oilers, rather fittingly, during the week of His Majesty's coronation, have first knocked off the Kings and now are going after all his Knights. We have 97, 29 or 93 reasons, and we can take our pick, to get excited about this round, and I can assure everyone that all of Edmonton is behind what many in our country are now referring to as "Canada's team".

It is time to "leaf" the other teams in our dust as we quest toward the cup. Game one starts tonight, and I know I speak for nearly everyone in the chamber when I say, "Go, Oilers, go."

\* \* \*

**POLISH CONSTITUTION DAY**

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Windsor—Tecumseh, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today is a special day for the over one million Polish Canadians celebrating Polish Constitution Day.

Known as the constitution of May 3, the Polish constitution is the first written constitution in modern Europe and the second constitution in the world after the United States. The Polish constitution introduced progressive democratic reforms that included a constitutional monarchy and the separation of powers.

Here in Canada, Polish Canadians celebrate Constitution Day by gathering in Polish halls and church basements to sing hymns and act plays, recite poems and reflect on Poland's legacy of fighting for freedom and democracy.

*Statements by Members*

To all Polish Canadians across Canada, I wish a happy Constitution Day and a happy Polish Heritage Month in Ontario. I join all Polish Canadians in reciting the beautiful words *witaj maj, trzeci maj, dla Polaków błogi raj*.

\* \* \*

**MENTAL HEALTH**

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, mental health must be a standard part of all perinatal medical checkups. Today, I join the Canadian Perinatal Mental Health Collaborative, along with the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, fellow MPs and community members, for the second annual Flora's Walk to raise awareness in ensuring that postpartum psychosis and perinatal mental health are identified quickly and treated seriously.

I am proud that the minister today announced close to \$857,000 to support perinatal mental health.

Although a number of Canadians have a perinatal mental illness, it is, sadly, not often talked about. When it is, many support and mental health services may not be there, and there are gaps.

I thank Jaime, Patricia and all of those who have been a part of bridging the gap and working to make sure that perinatal mental care includes mental health care. Let us continue to support Canadian women and their babies.

\* \* \*

**COST OF LIVING**

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when my family came to Canada, we chose this country because it was the land of hopes and dreams. That Canadian dream was a promise to the common people. If one worked hard, one could achieve anything. That is what my parents did, and so did many newcomers to this country.

Today, after eight years of the Prime Minister, that Canadian dream is broken. One in five people is skipping meals, and one in five newcomers wants to pack up and leave because of the high cost of living.

However, there is hope on the horizon. Conservatives are ready to step in and restore the promise of a better tomorrow. We are ready to restore common-sense policies for the common people. We will bring home powerful paycheques so that it pays to work again in this country. We will bring home lower prices by scrapping the failed carbon tax scam. We will bring home more affordable homes by firing the government gatekeepers. There is a big mess to clean up, but Conservatives, under the leadership of Canada's next prime minister, are ready to turn the hurt into hope and restore the Canadian dream for the common people once again.

Now, let us bring it home.

• (1415)

**OPIOIDS**

**Mr. Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago, four more Yukoners in three different communities died from toxic drug overdose. Old Crow is the latest remote Yukon community to declare a substance use emergency. Families and communities everywhere in Canada are grieving, and chances are that everyone is part of at least one.

In recent years, we have made progress and saved lives, but we are not where we should be. Our approach is incremental; the epidemic is a tidal wave.

In the pandemic, we made bold decisions based on the best available evidence. We took risks because we had to. All parties and all levels of government worked together. This toxic drug crisis requires no less of us.

We must end the criminalization of those who use drugs. We need investments in prevention, treatment, social supports, and yes, accessible safe supply for those who need it. Every drug death is another toll of a dark bell that tells us there is more we can do. I know my colleagues will stand with me as we contemplate all options to overcome this terrible crisis.

As we showed in the pandemic, by working together, we can overcome. We can and will do better.

\* \* \*

**LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight years, Liberals are out of touch, Canadians are out of money, and everything feels broken. Out-of-control Liberal taxes and spending mean Canadians pay more for gas, groceries and heating. There is more taken from their paycheques, making it impossible to get ahead.

Criminals and gangsters terrorize neighbourhoods because Liberals give bail, not jail, for serious crimes. Hostile states threaten Canadians and their families, buy up resources and influence elections. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister turns a blind eye to the basic dictatorship he admires. He jets off to fancy mansions, where his fancy vacations are paid for by taxpayers. At the same time, housing costs for everyday Canadians have doubled, and they cannot afford the basics.

*Statements by Members*

However, Conservatives have a plan to turn hurt into hope. We will cut taxes and axe the carbon tax to bring home powerful paycheques and make sure hard work pays again. We will keep violent criminals behind bars and combat foreign threats. We will end the costly coalition's inflationary spending to make life more affordable, and we will fire the gatekeepers so businesses can build more homes and Canadians can afford a roof over their heads again.

Conservatives are ready. Let us bring it home.

\* \* \*

**LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

**Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians from across the country continue to be failed by the Prime Minister, who has only made their lives more difficult and more expensive. It is time for a change.

As Conservatives, we stand for the common sense of the common people, united for our common home: Canada. Our leader is committed to bringing home a country for those who have done the hard work. He will bring home lower prices by ending inflationary deficits and scrapping the carbon tax on heat, gas and groceries. He will bring home powerful paycheques by lowering taxes and clawbacks to reward hard work. He will bring home housing that workers can afford by firing the gatekeepers and freeing up land to build. He will bring home safety by ending the catch-and-release of repeat violent criminals. He will bring home freedom from foreign interference and woke government censorship.

It is time to make Canada honoured and respected once again. It is time for a new Conservative government that will bring home a country we can all be proud of.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY**

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on this day, May 3, various countries around the world are celebrating the 30th anniversary of World Press Freedom Day. This is a special opportunity to celebrate the principles of press freedom and to pay tribute to the journalists who have been killed or imprisoned for doing their job.

[English]

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees freedom of the press. Unfortunately, even in Canada, the safety of freedom of the press is increasingly under threat. Many members of the press are regularly subjected to hate and racist, sexist and otherwise abusive messages. This is unacceptable.

According to Reporters Without Borders, in 2022, 533 journalists were detained, making a new world record. Our thoughts are, of course, with American reporter Evan Gershkovich, who has been imprisoned in Russia since late March for carrying out his work. That is unacceptable; journalism is not a crime.

I thank Canadian journalists for their hard work, transparency, accountability and dedication to the truth.

• (1420)

**MY VOICE, MY CHOICE**

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the phenomenal work of My Voice, My Choice. The women of My Voice, My Choice have courageously sought justice through a system that we know is retraumatizing. They have continued to courageously advocate to make sure other survivors have a choice when it comes to publication bans.

Currently, there is no obligation to inform or get consent from a victim-complainant when a ban has been placed on their name. If they choose to speak out about their own experiences, they can face criminal charges. This is outrageous.

I stand with them today as a sexual assault survivor who chose not to go through the legal system, knowing that this system is not kind to victims. As MPs, we have a responsibility to listen to survivors and to reform these systems. My Voice, My Choice advocates have fought tirelessly, and their work has led to the introduction of Bill S-12.

They are here in Ottawa with a clear message that we must amend and strengthen this bill to ensure that survivors never face criminal charges for sharing their own story and that they are always given the choice.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**MICHEL ROCHEFORT**

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today, I have the pleasure of paying tribute to Michel Rochefort, an extraordinary man from Salaberry—Suroît. He is so extraordinary that his town recently decided to name an arena in his honour.

Well known as a physical education teacher, Mr. Rochefort has dedicated his life to athletic development. Who would have thought that all those hours at the hockey rink, the baseball field or the Quebec Games would get Mr. Rochefort an arena named after him?

Little did he know in 1982, when he was a key player in the civic centre construction project, that the building would one day bear his name. I hope he takes this as a well-deserved mark of recognition for his contributions over the last 50 years. Every day, families from Salaberry-de-Valleyfield will go to the Michel-Rochefort arena to play.

We thank Michel for everything he has done.

[English]

### ETHICS

**Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday Morris Rosenberg, the former deputy minister of foreign affairs and ex-CEO of the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, stated that Alexandre Trudeau, the Prime Minister's brother, was only involved in the signing of one donation. To no one's surprise, it was the infamous \$200,000 donation from two wealthy Chinese nationals with direct links to the Communist regime in Beijing. He then signed the tax receipts not to the actual donors, but rather to an address in China. In his former role, he was briefed daily on foreign interference, yet saw no red flags and found it acceptable by his own standards to send the tax receipts abroad.

This is the same so-called ethical and independent professional whom the Prime Minister appointed to produce a report on foreign interference in the last election. It begs the question, what else has this individual swept under the rug?

\* \* \*

### SASHBEAR WALK

**Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Milton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 11th anniversary of the Sashbear Foundation's Sashbear Walk for mental health and suicide prevention. Starting on May 13 and running through the month of June, the Sashbear Walk will be held virtually and in five in-person locations in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Quebec and Newfoundland.

The foundation and annual community fundraiser were inspired by Sasha Menu Courey. She was a champion swimmer and Olympic hopeful who lost her battle with borderline personality disorder because she and her family could not get the services and support they needed.

Funds raised from the Sashbear Walk go toward the Sashbear family connections program, which provides skills support for family members to regain balance in their lives and be more effectively involved in the lives of loved ones who have emotional dysregulation. The walk also supports Sashbear's free educational webinars, which are presented by scientific and clinical experts to provide information and skills to families coping with self-harm, suicidality, trauma and more.

I encourage all members of the House of Commons to visit [sashbear.org](http://sashbear.org), attend a Sashbear Walk in their community and work together to provide more mental health resources to those who are struggling. Let us all make waves for emotional dysregulation support and suicide prevention.

---

## ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

### DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, two years ago, our intelligence agencies indicated in a report that a member of Parliament and a member of Parliament's

### Oral Questions

family were threatened by an agent for Beijing in response to a vote in the House of Commons.

The Prime Minister is saying that he did not know about this, even though the former head of CSIS has stated that the Prime Minister's advisers were informed. Even the Prime Minister's chief of staff has said that nothing is ever kept hidden from the Prime Minister.

How is it possible that the Prime Minister did not know that such a risk existed here in Canada?

• (1425)

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the leader of the Conservative Party knows, this government takes any threats of foreign interference very seriously.

As soon as we were informed of the matter concerning the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, we contacted him and offered him a briefing. We gave him that briefing yesterday. It was not the first briefing that the member opposite received.

We will continue to do good work to protect everyone who works in the House and to protect our democratic institutions.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is hard to imagine what information would have qualified as important enough to pass on to the Prime Minister, if information about threats against a member and his family failed to make the cut.

It is impossible to believe that the Prime Minister did not receive this information. Either he was unaware and is incompetent, or he was aware and is dishonest. Which one is it?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Wellington—Halton Hills was briefed by CSIS yesterday, and it was not the first briefing he received.

This is one example of how the government is taking concrete action to fight foreign interference. On this side of the House, on the government side, I mean, we are going to keep taking action to protect all the members who work in our democratic institutions.

[English]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the question was for the Prime Minister, not for his incompetent minister.

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

**The Speaker:** I just want to remind all members in the House, when they are asking questions, or answering them, to try to be respectful to each other.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Mr. Speaker, the question was for the Prime Minister, and he should have the courage to stand up and answer it.

*Oral Questions*

The former head of CSIS indicates that a briefing note with explosive revelations about a threat against the family of a member of Parliament would have been brought to the Prime Minister's top advisers. His top adviser says everything is brought to the Prime Minister. It is impossible to believe that he was not made aware of these threats two years ago when they were documented by his own intelligence services.

How does the Prime Minister expect us to believe such a ridiculous claim?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, does the member opposite really think that by exaggerating his rhetoric and lobbying attacks at the government, he is doing any service to the member for Wellington—Halton Hills?

Of course the members of this government care about the safety and security of the member for Wellington—Halton Hills and his family. That is why we provided a briefing for him yesterday. It was not the first briefing that he received. We will continue to do the work to protect the members that work in this space and our democratic institutions.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if intelligence services would not tell the Prime Minister about this, what would they tell him about?

It is hard to imagine a threat to the security of our democracy that is more grave than members of Parliament having their families threatened because of how they voted on the floor of the House of Commons. If the intelligence agency is not telling the Prime Minister these things, it is because he is not competent enough to ask for them.

There are two options. Either he did not know and he is incompetent, or he did know and he is dishonest. Which is it?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we put confidence in our intelligence agencies to take the actions that are necessary when threats are posed against members in this chamber.

As we heard, the member for Wellington—Halton Hills was briefed yesterday. He has been briefed on a number of occasions. The Liberal government will continue to ensure that parliamentarians are getting timely and concrete briefings. We have issued fresh instructions to CSIS on this point, so that we can protect the people and the families that work in this space, as well as our democratic institutions.

• (1430)

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, they are not protecting anybody but themselves. The same agent for Beijing who carried out the threats against the family of a member of Parliament is able to do so because he has diplomatic immunity from Canadian laws. If any other Canadian had done this, they would be charged and in jail, but because the Prime Minister has given diplomatic immunity and credentials to this agent, he is able to act with impunity right here on Canadian soil. Even if they believe the Prime Minister's far-fetched claim that he did not know about this until Monday, since Monday he has not kicked that agent out. Why is that?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am afraid the Conservative leader is inventing the laws around diplomatic immunity.

More important, it is this government that has introduced new laws to provide CSIS with the powers necessary to protect parliamentarians and Canadians from foreign interference. It is this government that has raised the bar on transparency by creating NSICOP and NSIRA. We will continue to work with all members of Parliament so we can ensure they are able to represent their constituencies in a way that is safe and secure from foreign interference.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I find it irresponsible at best, and perhaps imprudent, for the Prime Minister to say he knew nothing and to systematically attack the quality, integrity and service of Canada's intelligence officers. Heaven knows that coming from a sovereignist, this is no trivial statement.

I would like to hear, from whoever wants to answer, if we are really sure that Mr. Trudeau, the PM's brother, Mr. Johnston and Mr. Rosenberg are above reproach.

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government appointed Mr. Johnston, a distinguished Canadian, as a national security adviser.

Mr. Johnston will make recommendations, which may include holding a public inquiry if necessary. That is another tangible example of how this government has put in place policies and resources to counter foreign interference.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, that is fine, but let me try to clarify something.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister said that he has had no contact with the foundation for 10 years. Let us assume we are a naive bunch and say that is true.

That is not what I was asking yesterday. It was a supplementary question. If the Prime Minister's brother were to be implicated by the Canada Revenue Agency, by another authority or even by the committee, would the Prime Minister acknowledge that he is not qualified to be involved in appointing the chair of a public commission of inquiry?

**Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister has said several times, there is no connection between him and the Trudeau Foundation, either direct or indirect. It is very clear.

The foundation is responsible for granting scholarships. I think it is entirely irresponsible to attack an independent foundation.

If the leader of the Bloc Québécois has any questions, he should ask the foundation.



*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the revelations about threats made against a member of Parliament and his family are disturbing.

It is also disturbing that the Minister of Public Safety cannot say when he was informed of these threats.

The minister has had 24 hours for someone to jog his memory, so now can he tell us when he was informed of these threats?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that we have laws to protect information that is classified as “top secret”.

We rely on the advice of our independent, non-partisan public servants to guide us in decisions about disclosing information. CSIS briefed the member for Wellington—Halton Hills yesterday.

We will continue to work with all members of Parliament to protect the people who work in our democratic institutions.

• (1435)

[English]

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think the government understands how serious this is. We have a member of Parliament, and his family, being threatened by a foreign government for the work he does in Parliament. That is a problem. That is something serious. The government is not taking it seriously. I have written a letter to the Prime Minister to call all party leaders to deal with this really serious matter.

In the meantime, could the government and the Prime Minister inform the House of whether there are any other members of Parliament who are currently the subject of similar threats?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, of course we care for the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, which is why we have been providing him support through multiple briefings from CSIS, as we care for the safety and security of all members in the chamber, the people who support them and their families. That is why the government, since day one, has been giving additional powers to CSIS to address concerns about foreign interference.

I would just pause to note that we are in a different era. This threat landscape has become much more complex. The government will continue to be vigilant when it comes to protecting our democratic institutions and the people who work within them.

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in reference to the July 2021 intelligence assessment, this morning, the Prime Minister said, “CSIS made the determination that it wasn’t something that needed be raised to a higher level”, but former CSIS director Dick Fadden said that the assessment would certainly have been sent to the Department of Public Safety, the Department Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister’s national security adviser, who appears to have been David Morrison, the current deputy minister of foreign affairs.

Will the government confirm the Prime Minister’s assertion this morning that the intelligence assessment never made it out of CSIS?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can certainly confirm that we are guided by the advice we get from our intelligence agencies, which is strictly governed under the Security of Information Act, as my colleague across the aisle knows.

It is important that we navigate this very carefully because when we talk about matters that relate to national security, it is people’s lives that are at stake: the people who work for CSIS, within the law enforcement community and in this chamber, including the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. That is why we briefed him numerous times. We will continue to ensure his safety and security so we can protect the people who work within these institutions.

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, again, Dick Fadden said today the assessment would certainly have been sent to the departments of foreign affairs and public safety and to the Prime Minister’s national security adviser. Cherie Henderson, a CSIS assistant director, recently testified, “I can say that we definitely have seen specific cases of hostile activities of states against politicians. In those specific cases, we definitely brief our government on the challenges that are being faced.”

How are we supposed to reconcile these differing and conflicting accounts?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would hope that the member opposite would be able to reconcile that with his own personal experience, which was that, within the last 24 hours, he not only received a briefing, but also, on a number of occasions, received support from CSIS—

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

**The Speaker:** I am having a hard time hearing the hon. minister. The hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills has asked a question, for which he deserves to hear the response, so I am going to ask everyone to bring it down a notch to listen to what the hon. minister has to say.

The hon. Minister of Public Safety can begin from the top, please.

**Hon. Marco Mendicino:** Mr. Speaker, as I was saying before I was interrupted by the Conservatives across the aisle, the member opposite has received briefings from CSIS on a number of occasions. That is one of the ways in which we are attempting to address the concerns that have been raised around foreign interference.

More importantly than that, we have put in place people, resources, new laws and transparency mechanisms to shine a light on the way in which we are combatting foreign interference, so we can protect the people in this chamber, as well as their loved ones. That is our paramount objective.

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the only light that is being shone is by the Globe and Mail on the government’s failure to keep parliamentarians informed and safe when foreign actors are threatening them.

*Oral Questions*

We heard very clearly from CSIS officials at committee who said, “In those specific cases, we definitely brief our government on the challenges that are being faced.” We heard from the Prime Minister’s own chief of staff that the Prime Minister is a voracious reader of all the briefing notes that come across his desk. Are we supposed to believe that the Globe and Mail gets briefed by CSIS before the Prime Minister?

• (1440)

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, those types of absurd suggestions do not advance this debate, neither does the suggestion that we do not care about the members opposite or their safety and security.

As I said yesterday, there are intense debates in the chamber about both foreign and domestic policy, but rest assured that the members of this government will do everything in their power to fight against foreign interference to protect the members who work in the chamber, and their families, so we can defend our democratic institutions. That is something we should all be united behind.

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the exact opposite has proven to be true. For two years, they failed to inform the member for Wellington—Halton Hills about these threats against his family. This is an attack on all parliamentarians. We have now known, based on the reports in the Globe and Mail, that the government knew two years ago.

The question is very simple, and instead of the minister carrying on with non-answers, he needs to be very direct. When did the minister’s office become aware of this specific instance?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear that, as soon as we became aware of this specific issue regarding the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, we took decisive action.

We reached out. We spoke to the member opposite. We offered him a briefing. We made sure that the briefing occurred. It occurred yesterday. It was not the only briefing the member opposite received, which is because we want to be sure we can protect him, his family and, indeed, all members in this chamber, so they can do their job, represent their constituencies and defend our sworn obligation to uphold this democracy.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L’Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, words are just that, simply words.

On March 7 in a parliamentary committee, the Minister of Foreign Affairs stated, “let me tell you, if we have any form of clear evidence of any wrongdoing, we will send diplomats packing very quickly.”

The Liberals have known for two years that a diplomat from Beijing targeted a Conservative MP and his family after a vote in the House. As of Monday, every Canadian knows about this secret that the Prime Minister had hoped to keep to himself.

Was it because it is a Conservative MP that the Prime Minister did not consider this diplomat’s actions reprehensible and send him packing very quickly?

[*English*]

**Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that assertion is utterly false and below the dignity of this chamber.

Let me be very clear. Our government has repeatedly stated that we follow the Vienna Convention. If there is any evidence that is brought to our attention that a diplomat is acting outside of the Vienna Convention, we will act upon it because we take the rule of law seriously, and we take the rule of law to the core.

We will continue to fight to ensure that not just members of Parliament are protected, but every Canadian is protected from foreign interference.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L’Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Vienna Convention is very clear. They do not need a reason to expel a diplomat. They could do it right now, immediately, if they wanted to. However, they will not, because the reality is that they were the ones who benefited from what was happening.

What does the Prime Minister have that is so important to protect? We want to know. The government has known for two years. The public has known since Monday. When will the Prime Minister finally do the right thing and expel the bully diplomat from Beijing?

[*English*]

**Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let us dial down the rhetoric on this a little bit. Let us dial down the temperature a little bit.

I will state very clearly that their government might have operated in their best interest, but this government will always operate in the best interest of all Canadians, every member of Parliament and all people of every persuasion.

We will act with due diligence, following the rule of law and following the conventions that we have signed. We will take our time and always do it appropriately to ensure that Canadians are protected and members of the chamber can do their work as well.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the government, the Prime Minister’s Office and therefore the Prime Minister himself were aware of the threats against the member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

The threats were directed at the member and his family, yet they said nothing and did nothing. No matter how we ask him the question, the Prime Minister gives us no valid reason. If parliamentarians and their family members can be targeted by threats because of votes or positions taken in the House, none of us are safe.

Will the Prime Minister apologize right now in the House to the member for Wellington—Halton Hills?

*Oral Questions*

• (1445)

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I share the concerns of my hon. colleague. That is why we offered the member for Wellington—Halton Hills a briefing.

We have a strong track record when it comes to fighting foreign interference by giving new powers to our intelligence services and to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. We also have new committees to enhance transparency. In co-operation with the Bloc Québécois and all members of the House, we are going to build on this track record.

**Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, that was not an apology.

A member of Parliament and his family are threatened. The government is informed, but keeps that information to itself for two years. Let us pause for a moment and think about the gravity of the situation. On top of that, according to *The Globe and Mail*, other MPs might also have been targeted.

Three questions come to mind. First, has the government been informed of any other MPs who have been or are being threatened? Second, has it notified the MPs in question? Third, if not, is it because the MPs in question are not part of its political party?

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

**The Speaker:** Order.

The hon. Minister of Public Safety.

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there are many questions. The short answer is that the government will continue to take concrete action in the fight against foreign interference with resources, new powers, consultations and commitments to all Canadians, including new registries, for example. We must continue to be vigilant, working closely with all members and parliamentarians, to protect our democratic institutions.

[*English*]

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, CSIS says that Beijing sees Canada as a “high-priority target” and that its agents are “unconcerned about repercussions”. No wonder, because under the Prime Minister's watch, Beijing diplomats with impunity have been interfering in our elections and setting up illegal police stations.

We now learned that a diplomat at Beijing's Toronto consulate tried to punish the family of a sitting member of Parliament. On what date did the Minister of Public Safety's office first learn of this serious incident?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague opposite raised a number of concerns, one of which is how it is that we are protecting our democratic institutions, including our elections. As he knows, we have set up independent panels, including with protocols, to make sure that we inform Canadians when there are threats, but also making sure that we are vigilant about the threats that occur today, which is why in budget 2023, there is \$49 million for the law enforcement community to protect Canadians from foreign interference.

I sincerely hope that the Conservatives will see fit to support that budget because that is the way we will protect Canadians from foreign interference.

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister's non-answer is an absolute disgrace. The seriousness of this cannot be understated. We are talking about a hostile foreign state that targeted a sitting member of Parliament to intimidate him from doing his job, from being able to vote freely in this place, free of Beijing's coercion. CSIS told committee that it definitely briefs the government when it learns of foreign states targeting politicians.

Again to the minister, on what date did his office learn of this most serious incident?

• (1450)

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as we have said before, the idea that somehow we are not concerned about the safety and security of the member for Wellington—Halton Hills is outrageous. That is why we took decisive, concrete action to ensure that he was provided with a briefing yesterday. We will continue to be vigilant on this front, putting in place the resources, the personnel and the authorities to protect the people who work in this chamber so that we can uphold our democracy.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our country is a country of law and order that respects international agreements. Article 9 of the Vienna Convention states that a country may without having to explain its decision expel a person declared *persona non grata*.

The question is very simple. Since at least Monday, Canadians have been aware that there is a so-called Chinese diplomat here who should be expelled. Why has the government not done that yet?

[*English*]

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as you heard, my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary for Global Affairs informed this chamber that we will leave all options on the table for any agents who may be engaging in conduct which goes beyond—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, order.

The hon. minister can continue.

**Hon. Marco Mendicino:** Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, my colleague, the Parliamentary Secretary for Global Affairs, informed this chamber that if any agent representing a foreign government exceeds their lawful authorities and activities here, we will take whatever appropriate steps are necessary.

Canada's record in condemning the actions of foreign and hostile actors is universally well known. We will continue to take the steps that are necessary to protect our institutions.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if the minister does not have the honour or dignity to provide a clear answer to a very precise question, then we will need to default to the parliamentary secretary. The Vienna Convention is very clear. Article 9 gives a country the full authority to expel any diplomat it wants. Since Monday, Canadians have been aware that a diplomat from Beijing acted in an unacceptable manner toward an MP. To attack an MP is to attack all MPs and Canadian democracy as a whole. When will the government send him packing?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government is focusing on an issue that affects everyone in the House. That is why we supported the opposition member who works for the community of Wellington—Halton Hills. That is why we created new powers for our intelligence service. That is why we will work around the clock, seven days a week, to protect all MPs in the House and their families so that they can do their work.

\* \* \*

[English]

**INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, Canada's failure and neglect is so evident in Grassy Narrows First Nation with the decades of mercury poisoning. Governments knew and did nothing, so Chief Turtle and his nation fought back. Three years ago, the Liberals finally announced they would build a mercury treatment centre. Three years later, nothing has been built. It is neglect once more.

Grassy Narrows is doing its part. Why are the Liberals continuing to fail Chief Turtle and his nation?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member opposite that what has happened in Grassy Narrows is a national tragedy. In fact, we have to do better to protect waterways across this country from the kind of toxic poisoning that Grassy Narrows now lives with. That is why this government has worked with Grassy Narrows and Chief Turtle to build a recovery centre, but we have to do more to prevent these kinds of tragedies in the future.

I will be meeting with Chief Turtle and council this afternoon.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians pay the third-highest prices in the world for prescription medicines. Since 2015, the Liberals have been promising to lower costs, but failed to deliver. Now officials from Canada's drug price regulator confirm the Minister of Health stopped them from lowering drug prices for Canadians by billions of dollars. Former board member Matthew Herder testified that big pharma knows it can get the minister to do its bidding.

Why are the Liberals putting big pharma's profits ahead of Canadians' health?

• (1455)

**Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government and the Minister of Health appreciate the leadership and contributions of the PMPRB as an independent quasi-judicial body. The minister does not provide direction to the PMPRB and, as stated in section 96(5) of the Patent Act, the PMPRB must consult with various parties, which include the minister, before issuing any new guidelines.

In this context, on November 28, 2022, the Minister of Health sent a letter to the PMPRB, which is available online for everybody who would like to see it.

\* \* \*

**DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**

**Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the chair of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

Yesterday, Conservative MPs in the finance committee held the committee hostage, blocking supports to countless middle-class Canadians. Not only is that shameful, but this obstruction caused our PROC committee meeting to be cancelled. It is at that same committee meeting that we were set to hear from high-level Conservative Party staffer, Jenni Byrne, as part of our study on foreign interference.

Does the chair not find this highly suspicious? Will the committee address these avoidance tactics by the Conservatives?

**Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member for Whitby is correct. It is very concerning that Conservative members are filibustering at finance committee to avoid Jenni Byrne's testimony.

It is essential that Canadians be able to have confidence in our democratic institutions, and that is why all parties agreed—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, order. There seems to be some confusion here. I just want to remind the hon. members to just get up when it is their turn to speak, just a few seconds before, maybe five or 10 seconds before. It just makes the job for the Speaker a lot easier, so that we do not have confusion.

Please, I know everybody is trying to help each other, but offering advice across the floor is not a good idea. Maybe just help yourselves out.

The hon. member for Waterloo, from the top, please.

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Bardish Chagger:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Whitby is correct. It is very concerning that Conservative members are filibustering at finance committee to avoid Jenni Byrne's testimony.

It is essential that Canadians be able to have confidence in our democratic institutions, and that is why all parties agreed to prioritize the study on foreign election interference. Canadians now know that the previous Conservative government knew of foreign interference in our elections. Jenni Byrne served in senior roles to both Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Conservative Party. She was to appear yesterday evening, yet the Conservatives chose, using dirty tricks, to avoid accountability.

They say this is a serious matter, but they sure—

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

**The Speaker:** I understand that there may have been something offensive said, but I have no idea what the hell it was, because I could not hear it.

I apologize for using unparliamentary language.

The hon. member for Brantford—Brant.

\* \* \*

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, once again, the public safety minister is misleading the House.

He claimed that the RCMP had taken decisive actions to shut down all Beijing-funded police stations, yet contrary to this claim, two Montreal community groups under investigation for holding secret Chinese government police stations say they continue to operate normally, with no closure requests from the RCMP.

Why is this minister misleading Canadians? Why would he not shut these stations down?

• (1500)

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with respect, it is the quality of that question that betrays the member opposite's understanding of what we do in elected government and what our police agencies do, which is operationally independent.

It is astonishing to me that the member opposite does not understand that. The RCMP have been clear that when there have been activities associated with police stations they have taken concrete action. If more pop up, our expectation is that they will do so, backed by the record investments that the government has put into keeping our communities safe.

**Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our democracy is at stake.

The public safety minister looked Canadians in the eyes and claimed that decisive action had been taken to shut all of these stations down. This minister has a significant credibility deficit. He has misled Canadians in the past and continues to do so today.

When will the minister finally stand up, prioritize the safety of Canadians, stop mocking the Conservatives and shut these stations down?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we take this issue very seriously, which is why the RCMP have been on top of it, providing public updates to everyone around the actions they are taking to disrupt any foreign interference that may be affiliated with these so-called police stations.

Obviously if there are more threats along these lines, our expectation is that they will do so, but they will do so in a manner that is respectful of operational independence. It is quite shocking to me that at this stage in the member opposite's career he does not understand that important democratic principle.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on our side, we are simply talking about the facts.

Fact one: Two months ago, the RCMP announced that there were two police stations being run by Beijing, one in Brossard and one in Montreal.

Fact two: The Prime Minister has already clearly stated that he would take any action possible to stop hostile operations in Canada.

Fact three: Last Thursday, the Minister of Public Safety stated in committee that the police stations run by Beijing were closed.

Why is the Minister of Public Safety misleading Canadians?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with respect, my colleague must read the RCMP's updates.

The RCMP indicated that it is taking concrete action on activities of the so-called police stations run by Beijing. With the help of our government's investments, it will remain vigilant on this issue.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** That is the problem, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Public Safety is there to give an account of what is happening in terms of public safety in Canada. The RCMP is saying one thing and the minister is saying another. Then, the minister comes back and says that he is not the one in charge of RCMP operations. However, he is the minister responsible for public safety.

Canadians need to know the truth. Have the police stations run by Beijing in Canada really been shut down, yes or no? Are they still open, as we learned on Monday? What is the real answer?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I already explained plenty of times, the RCMP has taken decisive action in connection with the activities of the so-called police stations run by Beijing.

*Oral Questions*

We are seeking to address this issue with existing investments and resources and with investments and resources that are set out in budget 2023.

I hope that the Conservatives will support this budget. It is very important for protecting Canadians.

\* \* \*

**DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, when the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, or CSIS, informed the Prime Minister in 2019 that a prospective Liberal MP was receiving support from China, he kept it secret and did nothing.

When CSIS informed him in 2021 that an opposition MP and his family were being threatened by China, he kept it secret and did nothing.

The Prime Minister keeps things secret when it serves the Liberals and when it does a disservice to the opposition. After all that, this same Prime Minister tells us to trust his investigation, to trust his rapporteur, whom he appointed and who reports to him.

When will there be an independent public inquiry?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the reason we have confidence in Mr. Johnston is that he is an individual with a remarkable track record. What is more, he served as governor general, having been appointed by a former Conservative prime minister.

This is not a partisan issue. We are always willing to work with Mr. Johnston. When the recommendations are made, the government will respect them.

• (1505)

**Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we are two days away from the coronation of Charles III and the Liberal convention, and Liberal MPs are starting to be heard. They are telling us that the oath to the King is outdated and it is time to make it optional.

Members of the House should be loyal only to the public. There should not be two loyalties: one to the Crown and one to the citizens. There should be only one loyalty, and that is to the people.

People no longer want oaths to the King, nor *God Save the King*. The time has come for change. This is a good opportunity.

Why not finally cut ties with the British monarchy once and for all?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I get the feeling from the other side of the House that there is a lot of enthusiasm for the response.

While Quebecers and Canadians are concerned about affordability, health care, dental care, building the economy of tomorrow and talking about investments, the Bloc Québécois is talking to us about the monarchy.

That is quite something, in 2023, to be talking about the monarchy while Canadians' minds are on affordability.

[English]

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Public Safety knew two years ago that a foreign agent participated in threats to a member of Parliament's family because of his vote in this House. Aside from the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, any evidence of any threat against any member in this House should have resulted in expulsion of that agent.

Who was asleep at the switch two years ago, and who is still asleep this week?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, by now, given the repeated nature of the questions we are receiving from Conservatives, they will know that we have taken decisive and concrete action in supporting the member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

It was the Conservatives who were asleep at the switch, respectfully. They were asleep at the switch for 10 years when they had the reins of government. They could have introduced new powers for CSIS; they did not do it. They could have introduced an NSICOP; they did not do it. They could have introduced NSIRA; they did not do it. It was their incompetence and their being asleep at the switch that allowed us the opportunity to do that work, and we will continue to build on it so we can protect the people in our institutions.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government is now trying to hide behind the Vienna Convention to explain its inaction with regard to an agent from Beijing harassing a member of Parliament's family. Let me read it. Article 9 states, "The receiving State may at any time and without having to explain its decision, notify the sending State that...any member of the diplomatic staff of the mission is persona non-grata.... In any such case, the sending State shall...either recall the person concerned or terminate his functions".

Why is that agent from Beijing still in Canada?

**Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is increasingly clear, and it has been for several years, that China is a disruptive power. China is interfering in our society. We are very aware of that and we are fighting it every day. We are also very aware of the Vienna Convention. We are very aware of our abilities and our responsibilities.

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

**The Speaker:** I am going to have to interrupt. Part of my job is listening to find out what is being said, and if I cannot hear it, I cannot do my job, so I am going to ask everyone to take a deep breath and let the hon. parliamentary secretary finish his response, and then we can go from there.

The hon. parliamentary secretary, from the top, please.

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Robert Oliphant:** Mr. Speaker, I want to be extra clear: Our Minister of Foreign Affairs has been clear to her Chinese counterpart, as recently as a few weeks ago, when she was absolutely clear that any interference in Canada by any agency of the Chinese government is inappropriate and we will deal with it.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for almost two years, the current government has known that an agent from the Communist regime in Beijing has been operating in Toronto. That agent orchestrated a harassment campaign against a member of Parliament because of a vote taken in this House. The government does not need to explain itself. If this does not rise to the level of expelling a diplomat, what on earth would? Why is the government more worried about the feelings of a Communist agent from Beijing than the very foundations of our democracy?

• (1510)

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is the foundations of democracy that are being well served by the authorities and the investments that this government has made in our intelligence community, which the Conservatives never did. They brag about their record when it comes to national security. They talk tough, but they never back it up with concrete action. It is the members on this side of the chamber who are rolling up our sleeves, doing the heavy work and protecting the people who work in this chamber so that we can protect our democracy.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**JUSTICE**

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there are still too many victims of sexual violence.

We know how important it is for police forces to have access to tools such as the national sex offender registry, to investigate and prevent sexual violence. We also know that the criminal justice process can be daunting for victims.

Could the Minister of Justice tell us more about the bill we introduced to protect Canadians and empower victims?

**Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Vancouver Granville for his question and his French.

We recently introduced Bill S-12 in the Senate to strengthen the national sex offender registry. Offenders will have to register, unless they can prove that they do not pose a risk to public safety.

Bill S-12 also gives victims more choice over publication bans by clarifying the process. Some victims want to protect their identity, others want to tell their stories. It is their voice and it should be their choice.

\* \* \*

**DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister expects us to believe that the dictatorship in Beijing donated \$140,000 to the Trudeau Foundation to in-

fluence him but he knew nothing about it, even though it was his brother who arranged it. He would have us believe that Trudeau Foundation donors paid for the Prime Minister's vacations but he knew nothing about it. He would have us believe that intelligence officers knew two years ago that a member of Parliament and his family were being harassed, but the PM knew nothing about that either.

If the Prime Minister knows nothing, how is he supposed to protect us?

**Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister has confirmed on a number of occasions, he has no relationship with the Trudeau Foundation, which is responsible for scholarships.

It is irresponsible to engage in such partisan attacks against a non-profit organization. The opposition is doing so without any evidence to prove such a relationship, because it does not exist.

The member should direct his questions to the foundation.

[English]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we might disagree on some things, but here are the facts on which we all agree. We all agree that a foreign dictatorship had an agent organize threats against the family of an MP because of how he voted in the House. We all agree on that. We all agree that the government knew about this two years ago. We all agree, whether we like it or not, that the Prime Minister is the head of government. In other words, he is responsible for the action or inaction of his own government. In other words, he should have known and he should have taken action.

When will he finally show up for work, take responsibility and do his job?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is precisely what this government has been doing since we took the reins of government in 2015. We have put in place the authorities, the personnel and all the technology to protect our institutions from foreign interference.

We will continue to work with the members opposite, despite all of the chicanery, despite all the lobbying of insults, despite all of the distraction, and despite their incompetence of 10 years when they had the opportunity to do this work. We are doing this work and we will do it regardless of partisanship to make sure that all the MPs in this chamber can do their job.

• (1515)

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this is actually not about one member of Parliament. This is not about all members of Parliament. This is about millions of patriotic Canadians of Chinese descent who face this kind of abuse and harassment every single day. We hear stories of Chinese Canadians in tears because they are being intimidated by agents just like the one who attacked this member's family. These are our people. This is our home.

When will the Prime Minister finally do his job and protect us?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is finally some measure of relief to hear that from the Conservative leader, who, for weeks and months, has been trying to politicize an issue that touches not only all members in this chamber, but all Canadians. One can only hope that now the Conservatives will abandon their hopped-up rhetoric and their counterproductive insults and work with the government to protect all members and all Canadians from foreign interference. That is our sworn obligation. We will continue to do that to defend our democracy.

\* \* \*

**HOUSING**

**Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, while the leader of the official opposition blames local mayors and councillors for a lack of housing supply, our government has taken a different approach. Can the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion inform this House as to the level—

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

**The Speaker:** As important as it is to hear the answers, I would like to hear the questions as well.

The hon. member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, from the top.

**Mr. Chad Collins:** Mr. Speaker, while the leader of the official opposition blames local mayors and councillors for a lack of housing supply, our government has taken a different approach.

Could the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion inform the House as to the level of support our housing accelerator fund will provide to municipalities that expedite the planning and approval process for new developments, which increase housing supply for all Canadians?

**Hon. Ahmed Hussien (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is a great question, and I want to thank the hon. member for his attention to this important issue.

To get more housing supply built we need everyone at the table. The Conservatives are just not serious about this. They want to pick fights with mayors and cut funding to cities. Just yesterday, the leader of the official opposition stood in the House and attacked what he called Canada's "woke mayors"—

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

**The Speaker:** There is some noise in the chamber that is really making it difficult for people to understand or hear the minister's answer. I will have him start right from the top, please.

**Hon. Ahmed Hussien:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his attention to this important issue.

We know, on this side of the House, that to get more housing supply built, we need everyone at the table, but the Conservatives are not serious about this. The leader of the official opposition has picked fights with mayors and cut funding to cities. Yesterday, he stood in the House and attacked what he called Canada's "woke mayors".

Conservative cuts and that type of far right rhetoric will not build one affordable housing unit. Unlike the Conservatives, we know that we need to work with our municipalities to get more homes—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]**DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, Quebec is on high alert. Just about everywhere, rivers are exceeding major flooding thresholds. Several families have had to evacuate their homes.

In Charlevoix, two firefighters were swept away by the waters of the Gouffre River while trying to rescue a family whose home was in danger. The body of one of those firefighters has now been found. Our thoughts are with their families, but also with all Quebecers who are facing these floodwaters.

Will the federal government deploy all available aid to help citizens in the face of this disaster?

[*English*]

**Hon. Bill Blair (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie has a very important question. I want to join him, as I believe does every member of the House, when expressing my concern and thoughts for all of the communities of Quebec that have been impacted. In particular, we extend our sincere condolences to the families of Christopher Lavoie and Regis Lavoie, the firefighters who rushed to save lives and appear to have lost their own lives.

We immediately deployed Canadian air force aircraft to search and engage in the initial search, and I have reached out to Mr. Bonnardel of the Quebec government to offer all federal support as required, and to assure him that our government will be there for the people of Quebec—

● (1520)

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

\* \* \*

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I extend my condolences for the loss of the people and the firefighters in this climate event.

My question is for the Prime Minister. In relation to the business that we will take up later today, the amendments to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, known as Bill S-5, there is still time to improve this act by increasing the opportunities for public participation for science and indigenous knowledge to inform the act.



The amendments by the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby and myself need to be supported by the government. Will it stand for public participation and indigenous knowledge?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the last time CEPA was reformed was more than 20 years ago. What our government did was introduce strong amendments to CEPA, which were applauded by environmental organizations, scientists and industry alike.

The parliamentary process was a clear success. Both Senate and House committees worked on this bill, and they have spent 50 hours studying it. They heard testimony from over 80 witnesses representing civil society, academia, industry and indigenous organizations. We received more than a hundred written briefs. It is now time to pass the bill as reported by the environment committee and send it back to the Senate.

**The Speaker:** That is all the time we have for question period today.

The hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton is rising on a point of order.

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in question period, the Minister of Housing claimed that I had praised the housing accelerator program, so I reviewed the 479 interventions I have made on Hansard here and in committee, and I have been consistent in claiming that the government has been inadequate in their approach to affordable housing. I just wanted to correct the record.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

### BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

#### OPPOSITION MOTION—HOME OWNERSHIP AND RENTING AFFORDABILITY

The House resumed from May 2 consideration of the motion.

**The Speaker:** It being 3:22 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 of the member for Carleton relating to the business of supply.

Call in the members.

• (1535)

[English]

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

(Division No. 309)

#### YEAS

##### Members

Aboultarif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Berthold	Bezan
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Caputo

Carrie	Chambers
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	Deltell
d'Entremont	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Findlay
Gallant	Généreux
Genuis	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	Maguire
Martel	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
Melillo	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	O'Toole
Patzner	Paul-Hus
Perkins	Poilievre
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ruff	Scheer
Schmale	Seeback
Shields	Shiple
Small	Soroka
Steinley	Stewart
Strahl	Stubbs
Thomas	Tochor
Tolmie	Uppal
Van Popta	Vecchio
Vidal	Vien
Viersen	Vis
Vuong	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Williams
Williamson	Zimmer— 116

### Business of Supply

#### NAYS

##### Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bérubé
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Casey	Chabot

*Private Members' Business*

Chagger  
Champagne  
Chatel  
Chiang  
Collins (Victoria)  
Coteau  
Damoff  
DeBellefeuille  
Desjarlais  
Dhillon  
Dong  
Dubourg  
Duguid  
Ehsassi  
Erskine-Smith  
Fillmore  
Fonseca  
Fortin  
Fraser  
Fry  
Garon  
Gaudreau  
Gerretsen  
Gould  
Guilbeault  
Hanley  
Hepfner  
Housefather  
Hussen  
Iacono  
Ien  
Johns  
Jowhari  
Kayabaga  
Khalid  
Koutrakis  
Kwan  
Lambropoulos  
Lamoureux  
Larouche  
Lauzon  
Lebouthillier  
Lighbound  
Longfield  
MacAulay (Cardigan)  
MacGregor  
Maloney  
Masse  
May (Cambridge)  
McDonald (Avalon)  
McKay  
McLeod  
Mendès  
Miao  
Miller  
Morrissey  
Naqvi  
Noormohamed  
O'Connell  
O'Regan  
Perron  
Plamondon  
Qualtrough  
Robillard  
Romanado  
Sajjan  
Samson  
Savard-Tremblay  
Schiefke  
Sgro  
Sheehan  
Sidhu (Brampton South)  
Sinclair-Desgagné

Chahal  
Champoux  
Chen  
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)  
Cormier  
Dabrusin  
Davies  
Desilets  
Dhaliwal  
Diab  
Drouin  
Duclos  
Dzerowicz  
El-Khoury  
Fergus  
Fisher  
Fortier  
Fragiskatos  
Freeland  
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  
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)  
McPherson  
Mendicino  
Michaud  
Morrice  
Murray  
Ng  
Normandin  
Oliphant  
Pauzé  
Petitpas Taylor  
Powlowski  
Rayes  
Rogers  
Sahota  
Saks  
Sarai  
Scarpaleggia  
Serré  
Shanahan  
Sidhu (Brampton East)  
Simard  
Singh

Sorbara  
Ste-Marie  
Sudds  
Taylor Roy  
Therrien  
Trudeau  
Turnbull  
Van Bynen  
Vandal  
Vignola  
Virani  
Wilkinson  
Zahid  
Zuberi—211

Sousa  
St-Onge  
Tassi  
Thériault  
Thompson  
Trudel  
Valdez  
van Koeverden  
Vandenbeld  
Villemure  
Weiler  
Yip  
Zarrillo

PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declared the motion defeated.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

● (1540)

[*Translation*]

### FIGHTING AGAINST FORCED LABOUR AND CHILD LABOUR IN SUPPLY CHAINS ACT

The House resumed from April 26 consideration of the motion that Bill S-211, An Act to enact the Fighting Against Forced Labour and Child Labour in Supply Chains Act and to amend the Customs Tariff, be read the third time and passed.

**The Speaker:** Pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, 2022, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill S-211 under Private Members' Business.

● (1550)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 310*)

### YEAS

Members

Aboultatif	Aitchison
Albas	Aldag
Alghabra	Ali
Allison	Anand
Anandasangaree	Arnold
Arseneault	Arya
Atwin	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Berthold
Bezan	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Block	Blois
Boissonnault	Bradford
Bragdon	Brassard
Brière	Brock
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Casey
Chagger	Chahal

*Private Members' Business*

Chambers	Champagne	Oliphant	O'Regan
Chatel	Chen	O'Toole	Patzer
Chiang	Chong	Paul-Hus	Perkins
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Cooper	Petitpas Taylor	Poilievre
Cormier	Coteau	Powlowski	Qualtrough
Dabrusin	Dalton	Rayes	Redekopp
Damoff	Dancho	Reid	Rempel Garner
Davidson	Deltell	Richards	Roberts
d'Entremont	Dhaliwal	Robillard	Rogers
Dhillon	Diab	Romanado	Rood
Doherty	Dong	Ruff	Sahota
Dowdall	Dreeshen	Sajjan	Saks
Drouin	Dubourg	Samson	Saraï
Duclos	Duguid	Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Dzerowicz	Schiefke	Schmale
Ehsassi	El-Khoury	Seeback	Serré
Ellis	Epp	Sgro	Shanahan
Erskine-Smith	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Sheehan	Shields
Falk (Provencher)	Fast	Shipley	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Fergus	Ferri	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Small
Fillmore	Findlay	Sorbara	Soroka
Fisher	Fonseca	Sousa	Steinley
Fortier	Fragiskatos	Stewart	St-Onge
Fraser	Freeland	Strahl	Stubbs
Fry	Gaheer	Sudds	Tassi
Gallant	Généreux	Taylor Roy	Thomas
Genuis	Gerretsen	Thompson	Tochor
Gladu	Godin	Tolmie	Trudeau
Goodridge	Gould	Turnbull	Uppal
Gourde	Gray	Valdez	Van Bynen
Guilbeault	Hajdu	van Koeverden	Van Popta
Hallan	Hanley	Vandal	Vandenbeld
Hardie	Hepfner	Vecchio	Vidal
Hoback	Holland	Vien	Vierson
Housefather	Hussen	Virani	Vis
Hutchings	Iacono	Vuong	Wagantall
Ien	Jaczek	Warkentin	Waugh
Jeneroux	Joly	Webber	Weiler
Jowhari	Kayabaga	Wilkinson	Williams
Kelloway	Kelly	Williamson	Yip
Khalid	Khera	Zahid	Zimmer
Kitchen	Kmiec	Zuberi— 271	
Koutrakis	Kram		
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek		
Kusie	Kusmierczyk		
Lake	Lalonde		
Lambropoulos	Lametti	Angus	Ashton
Lamoureux	Lantsman	Bachrach	Barron
Lapointe	Lattanzio	Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Lauzon	Lawrence	Bérubé	Blaikie
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier	Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)	Blaney	Boulerice
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert	Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Lightbound	Lloyd	Chabot	Champoux
Lobb	Long	Collins (Victoria)	Davies
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)	Desilets	Desjarlais
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire	Fortin	Garon
Maloney	Martel	Garrison	Gaudreau
Martinez Ferrada	May (Cambridge)	Gazan	Gill
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Mazier	Green	Hughes
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McDonald (Avalon)	Idlout	Johns
McGuinty	McKay	Julian	Kwan
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLean	Larouche	Lemire
McLeod	Melillo	MacGregor	Masse
Mendès	Mendicino	Mathysen	McPherson
Miao	Miller	Michaud	Morrice
Moore	Morantz	Normandin	Pauzé
Morrison	Morrissey	Perron	Plamondon
Motz	Murray	Savard-Tremblay	Simard
Muys	Naqvi	Sinclair-Desgagné	Singh
Nater	Ng	Ste-Marie	Thériault
Noomohamed	O'Connell	Therrien	Trudel

**NAYS**

## Members

Ashton  
Barron  
Beaulieu  
Blaikie  
Blanchette-Joncas  
Boulerice  
Cannings  
Champoux  
Davies  
Desbiens  
Desjarlais  
Garon  
Gaudreau  
Gill  
Hughes  
Johns  
Kwan  
Lemire  
Masse  
McPherson  
Morrice  
Pauzé  
Plamondon  
Simard  
Singh  
Thériault  
Trudel

*Routine Proceedings*Vignola  
Zarrillo— 57

Villemure

## PAIRED

Nil

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.  
(Bill read the third time and passed)

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**FIRST NATIONS FISCAL MANAGEMENT ACT**

(Bill C-45. On the Order: Government Orders:)

March 23, 2023—The Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations — Second reading and reference to the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs of Bill C-45, An Act to amend the First Nations Fiscal Management Act, to make consequential amendments to other Acts, and to make a clarification relating to another Act.

**Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

There have been consultations, and I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order, special order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-45, An Act to amend the First Nations Fiscal Management Act, to make consequential amendments to other Acts, and to make a clarification relating to another Act, be deemed read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs.

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

Agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

**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 response to five petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 15th report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and In-

ternational Development, entitled "The Human Rights Situation in Haiti".

[English]

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

[Translation]

## TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

**Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 12th report of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, entitled "Main Estimates 2023-24".

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

\* \* \*

[English]

**PETITIONS**

## PUBLICATION BANS

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present, in both official languages, two petitions, which collectively have over 5,000 signatures. The subject of these petitions is publication bans.

The petitioners note that these restrictions, when unwanted, are paternalistic and prevent a victim complainant from exercising freedom of expression. They reinforce shame and the notion that anonymity always equals protection. Unwanted publication bans can give the impression that abusers are protected and benefit from the restrictions on the victim complainants, as they prevent open communication about the offence and harm experienced.

The petitioners are calling on the government to allow victim complainants to attribute their own experience of sexual offences without being charged; to grant adult victim complainants of sexual offences a choice in the application of publication bans; to produce comprehensive, accessible, multilingual and public information on these bans on government websites; to simplify the process to lift a ban without the services of a lawyer; and to allow victim complainants to opt out of these bans on their victim impact statement forms.

● (1555)

## HAZARAS

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I have done before, I am tabling another petition on behalf the minority ethnic Hazara community from my riding specifically.

They are again drawing the attention of the House to the ongoing genocide of the Hazaras by the Taliban regime, something that has been ongoing for many decades now.

*Routine Proceedings*

The petitioners are calling on the government to recognize the genocide of the Hazaras by the Taliban and to include the Hazara ethnic minority from Afghanistan within the 40,000 Afghan refugees that the Canadian government is trying to resettle by the end of this year.

## HUMAN RIGHTS

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition today on behalf of many constituents across the country who have asked that the government acknowledge the important contributions that German Canadians have made to this country, and recognize that during World War I and World War II, innocent German Canadians and Austrian Canadians were interned, alongside enemy combatants.

They recognize that Ukrainian Canadians, Japanese Canadians and Italian Canadians were apologized to, and the petitioners would like the government to apologize for their unlawful internment.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, your home, my home, our home, let us bring it home and stand with petitioners in Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon who want federal action to combat the vandalism and theft of telecommunications infrastructure.

While these crimes are not considered to cause actual danger to life in the context of the Criminal Code, and thus are not prosecuted as severely as they otherwise would be, they can in fact be life-threatening. Damaged and stolen cables could lead to local residents being unable to call 911 in the event of an emergency, or keep up to date on emergency weather situations in ridings like mine.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to enact tougher penalties for vandalizing or stealing telecommunications infrastructure. When seconds matter, Canadians must be able to contact emergency services without delay.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present a petition signed by 141 people in my area of Hamilton, who are concerned about the Ford government's proposal to build Highway 413 and pave over more than 2,400 acres of land, including protected greenbelt, farmlands, forests, wetlands and the traditional indigenous lands of the Mississauga, Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat, Chippewa and Six Nations.

This petition calls upon the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to commence a complete and thorough federal environmental impact assessment to identify, predict and evaluate the environmental effects of the Highway 413 project, and conduct public hearings prior to the start of any construction.

## SYRIA

**Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to present a second petition that highlights the need for greater action to address the humanitarian crisis in Syria, particularly in light of the earthquakes that devastated the region earlier this year.

The petition highlights the call from the UN Special Rapporteur, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and member of the European Parlia-

ment Clare Daly to take immediate action to ensure greater aid could reach the most in need.

The petitioners calls for the Government of Canada to immediately end sanctions against Syria and urge other states to follow suit, and amplify its aid and rescue efforts in all areas of the region.

• (1600)

## CLIMATE CHANGE

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in this place today to speak. I want to let people watching know that the reason we are all wearing red carnations is for multiple sclerosis awareness.

The petition I am honoured to present today is from a rather specific and unusual group of petitioners, medical doctors who are also mothers. The Physician Mothers of Canada are calling on the Government of Canada to recognize that the World Health Organization has identified climate change as “the greatest threat to global health in the 21st century.”

They are calling upon the Government of Canada to view the advice from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the special report on 1.5° as the call for urgent and transformative change.

In short, the petitioners, being the Physician Mothers of Canada, call on the Government of Canada to act on the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment's calls for action to decarbonize our economy rapidly and to recognize that we must ensure green energy policies at every level. Every minister in the Government of Canada should view their actions through the climate lens.

There are other elements of this petition. I am summarizing a really important work rather quickly.

## CRIMINAL CODE

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as always it is an honour to be able to rise in this place and share a petition on the matters that are so important to Canadians and specifically one today that references Bill C-311, an important bill that protects pregnant women and the unborn.

These petitioners establish that there is an increased risk of violence against women who are pregnant and that there needs to be action taken to ensure that violence against pregnant women is addressed accordingly. These petitioners call upon the House of Commons to pass legislation that the abuse or infliction of harm on a pregnant woman and her preborn child is an aggravating circumstance in the sentencing of those crimes.

*Routine Proceedings*

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am really pleased to stand today to bring a number of petitions forward all on the same topic, again in regard to Bill C-311. It is well established that the risk of violence against women increases when they are pregnant. We all agree on that in this House and we know that to be the case.

Currently, in the injury or death of a woman and the child that she is carrying as victims of crime, pregnancy is not considered an aggravating circumstance for sentencing purposes in the Criminal Code of Canada. It is true Canada has no abortion law and it is still a huge discussion in our country. However, the majority of Canadians, crossing all those boundaries, agree that this legal void is extreme and we must protect pregnant women from abuse and from murder that impacts their lives and the lives of the children they are choosing to carry.

**Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, regarding Bill C-311, Canadians are very concerned that there is no law protecting the unborn from injury or death, and that it is not considered an aggravating circumstance for the purposes of the Criminal Code of Canada. The petitioners feel that justice requires that an attacker who abuses a pregnant woman and her pre-born child be sentenced accordingly. The sentence should match the crime.

**Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed here by many Canadians that is similar to the ones we have just heard about.

The petitioners recognized that there is a legal void in our legislation that does not recognize preborn children as victims of crime in the event of violence against a pregnant woman. There is recognition that pregnant women are more prone to violent attacks. What these petitioners would like is recognition, in the case of a pregnant woman being attacked, that there be an aggravating circumstance in the sentencing of the perpetrator.

• (1605)

## SENIORS

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the petition I would like to table today is in regard to the growing retiree population in Canada that is increasingly becoming a target of fraud. They have built up wealth over their lifetime to help them support their retirement years and they are vulnerable due to lack of controls and protection in the transmission of money within the Canadian banking system. Seniors are seeing their savings, built up over years, removed in many cases through sophistication and deceit and trickery.

They are calling upon the House of Commons to undertake a serious and comprehensive review of the current transit system of Canadian citizens' money in this country, with the aim of putting more stringent procedures, protocols and safeguards in place to protect our seniors.

\* \* \*

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 1319, 1320 and 1325.

[Text]

Question No. 1319—**Mr. Michael Barrett:**

With regard to foreign affairs, as of March 16, 2023: (a) how many diplomats and diplomatic staff does the People's Republic of China currently have accredited in Canada; and (b) how many diplomats and diplomatic staff does Canada currently have accredited in the People's Republic of China?

**Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the following reflects a consolidated response approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers.

Diplomatic representation varies considerably by country and depends on a host of factors, such as foreign policy objectives, the size of the diaspora community requiring consular services, and the need for specialized technical and language services.

With regard to part (a), based upon these aforementioned considerations and the fact that there are ongoing rotations of officers, the number of diplomats currently registered in the country does tend to fluctuate. The most recently available figure is that China has 178 registered diplomats accredited to the embassy and consulates in Canada plus an additional five accredited to the International Civil Aviation Organization in Montreal. This information is updated daily by the office of protocol. For the most up-to-date information, which includes a breakdown of the numbers by city, please consult the following website: [https://w05.international.gc.ca/Protocol-Protocole/Detail.aspx?lang=eng&\\_ga=2.253317963.333778327.1681259541-16336162.1620220341](https://w05.international.gc.ca/Protocol-Protocole/Detail.aspx?lang=eng&_ga=2.253317963.333778327.1681259541-16336162.1620220341).

With regard to part (b), as noted above, Canada's numbers in China also tend to fluctuate given changing circumstances. It should also be stated that Canada relies quite heavily across its entire global mission network on locally engaged staff to support accredited Canadian diplomats in-country. These staff are not formally accredited and thus do not count towards Canadian numbers, but often assist with important, although not commercially or politically sensitive, issues and provide administrative and logistical support.

China does not employ locally hired staff and brings in all personnel from China. This is a practice also maintained by other countries.

For Canada's presence in China, the latest figure is 147 accredited personnel. This includes 81 positions at the embassy in Beijing, of which 10 are currently unstaffed, and the following at Canada's various consulates: five in Chongqing, five in Guangzhou, 15 in Shanghai and 23 in Hong Kong. This is also updated on a daily basis.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1320—Mr. Michael Kram:**

With regard to the agreement between Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark and Greenland, signed on June 14, 2022, concerning maritime and land boundaries in the area between Greenland and Canada: (a) what is the summary of the agreement; and (b) what is its date of entry into force?

**Mr. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the following reflects a consolidated response approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers.

On April 25, the Minister of Foreign Affairs tabled in Parliament the agreement between the Government of Canada on the one hand and the Government of the Kingdom of Denmark together with the Government of Greenland on the other hand, on the maritime and land boundaries in the area between Greenland and Canada, done at Ottawa on June 14, 2022. Please see Sessional Paper No. 8532-441-33.

With regard to part (a), on June 14, 2022, Canada and the Kingdom of Denmark signed the agreement between the Government of Canada on the one hand and the Government of the Kingdom of Denmark together with the Government of Greenland on the other hand, on the maritime and land boundaries in the area between Greenland and Canada.

The agreement resolves all existing boundary disagreements with the Kingdom of Denmark, including the long-standing disagreement regarding the sovereignty of Hans Island, Tartupaluk, Canada's last remaining Arctic territorial dispute.

In particular, the agreement results in solutions to four boundary issues with the Kingdom of Denmark.

The first is with regard to the Lincoln Sea. The agreed maritime boundary resolves an outstanding disagreement regarding how to draw the boundary line in Lincoln Sea, the body of water north of Ellesmere Island and Greenland. The boundary in Lincoln Sea extends to the 200 nautical mile limit from the coasts of Nunavut and Greenland. The maritime boundary in Lincoln Sea builds on the 1973 treaty that established a continental shelf dividing line extending from the top of Nares Strait in the north to the bottom of Davis Strait in the south. At the time, the 1973 treaty did not determine the boundary in Lincoln Sea due to a technical disagreement over how the boundary should be determined. With the agreement, those technical differences have now been resolved.

The second is with regard to the modernization of the 1973 boundary line. The agreement establishes a modernized single maritime boundary within 200 nautical miles, which runs from the 200 nautical mile limit in Lincoln Sea in the north to the bottom of Davis Strait in the south. The modernized maritime boundary between Canada and Greenland, at almost 3,000 kilometres in length, is the longest uninterrupted maritime boundary in the world.

The third is with regard to Hans Island, Tartupaluk. The agreement divides the island along a natural ravine on the island running generally in a north-south direction. This equitable division forms part of the larger package of agreements. By using a natural landmark, it makes the division of Hans Island easy to administer.

Continued access to and freedom of movement on the entire island will be maintained for Inuit in Nunavut and in Greenland, in-

cluding for hunting, fishing and other related cultural, traditional, historic and future activities. A practical and workable mutually agreeable border implementation regime will be established by Canada and by the Kingdom of Denmark for all visitors.

The fourth is with regard to the Labrador Sea. Canada filed a submission to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, CLSC, regarding the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles in the Labrador Sea in 2013. The Kingdom of Denmark, together with Greenland, filed its own submission to the CLCS for the same area in 2012.

The submissions revealed an overlapping area of continental shelf, which is a normal part of the scientific process under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, UNCLOS, to delineate the outer limits of the continental shelf. The agreement establishes a binding boundary line in the overlapping area, which represents an equitable solution, consistent with article 83 of UNCLOS. The agreement divides the overlap area approximately in half and confirms as Canadian continental shelf an area important to the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. This is among the first delimitations of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles in areas of overlap between countries. By resolving the area of overlap now, and in advance of the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf recommendations, it puts Canada and the Kingdom of Denmark in a position of leadership in this area. This is particularly important as we think towards the future and find solutions for large areas of continental shelf overlap in the Arctic.

With regard to part (b), regulatory changes in domestic law are needed in both Canada and the Kingdom of Denmark before either country will be in a position to notify the other that internal procedures necessary to allow for the ratification of the treaty have been completed. One of the key regulatory changes required is to the border/customs regime to enable continued Inuit movement on Hans Island, Tartupaluk, and to set out the rules for other visitors to the island. For example, to allow continued movement, exceptions to presentation, examination, reporting of goods and other regulatory requirements specific to the island are needed from both sides.

It is difficult to provide an exact timeline for the implementation into domestic law of the required changes, particularly as the Kingdom of Denmark is also required to make similar regulatory changes before it can ratify the agreement. It could take 12 to 24 months to complete this work, with likely entry into force of the agreement sometime in 2024 or 2025.

**Question No. 1325—Mr. Peter Julian:**

With regard to the staff currently employed at the RCMP Depot Division in Regina, Saskatchewan, broken down by RCMP staff and civilian staff: (a) what is the number of full-time equivalent staff; and (b) what is the total annual salary of staff?

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the total full-time equivalents, FTEs, employed at the RCMP depot division in Regina, in fiscal year 2021-22 was 468 FTEs, of which 228 FTEs were RCMP staff and 240 FTEs were civilian staff.

*Routine Proceedings*

With regard to part (b), the total FTE salary expenditure for fiscal year 2021-22 was \$53,058,711. Of this, \$36,857,728 was for RCMP staff and \$16,200,983 was for civilian staff. Included in these expenditures are one-time costs of \$10.4 million related to retroactive salary increases as the result of collective bargaining.

The figures above exclude the police dog services training centre located in Innisfail, Alberta, which reports to depot division, as well as cadets enrolled in the cadet training program.

Please note that "RCMP staff" includes regular and civilian members. "Civilian staff" are considered to be public service employees.

\* \* \*

[English]

**QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 1316 to 1318, 1321 to 1324, 1326 and 1327 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

**Question No. 1316—Mr. Matthew Green:**

With regard to hiring processes within the government, broken down by department or agency since fiscal year 2015-16: (a) what is the data storage policy regarding pre-recorded video interviews, especially concerning the (i) access to videos, (ii) disposal of videos, for successful and unsuccessful candidates; (b) what is the total number of pre-recorded video interviews collected; (c) what is the total number of positions that required a pre-recorded interview as part of the candidate search process; (d) what compensation was offered to prospective candidates for the purpose of a pre-recorded interview, including the reimbursement of (i) camera equipment, (ii) lighting equipment, (iii) video editing software, (iv) space rental, (v) time; and (e) are there any artificial intelligence programs used to evaluate the content of pre-recorded video interviews, and, if so, what content do the programs evaluate?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1317—Mr. Marty Morantz:**

With regard to the government's National Housing Strategy, as of March 16, 2023: (a) how many residential units constructed through the strategy have been completed, in total and broken down by province or territory; and (b) how much has the government spent to date on the strategy?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1318—Mr. Kyle Seeback:**

With regard to asylum claims received by the government, in total and broken down by province or territory where the claims were made: since 2012, what is the number of asylum claims processed each year by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and the Canada Border Services Agency?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1321—Mr. Peter Julian:**

With regard to the Canada Border Services Agency, broken down by worksite and fiscal quarter since 2018-19 to present: (a) broken down by occupational category, what is the total number of (i) employees, (ii) full-time equivalent employees, (iii) employment vacancies, (iv) casual employees; and (b) what ratios or algorithms are used to plan staffing levels at each worksite?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1322—Mr. Peter Julian:**

With regard to the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), broken down by worksite and fiscal quarter since 2018-19 to present: (a) what is the total number of temporary help agency employees or private contract workers for each occupational category; (b) what is the total number of workers employed by CBSA who are (i) former public sector employees, (ii) retired CBSA employees; and (c) for each worker in (a), what is the total number of workers hired on contracts lasting (i) less than six months, (ii) six to 12 months, (iii) 12 to 18 months, (iv) longer than 18 months?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1323—Mr. Peter Julian:**

With regard to the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and students hired through the Federal Student Work Experience Program, broken down by worksite and fiscal quarter since 2018-19 to present: (a) what is the total number of students hired; (b) for students hired in (a), how many students were hired in each occupational category or role; (c) how many students have since become CBSA employees; and (d) for each student hired in (c), what is their (i) job classification, (ii) length of term?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1324—Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:**

With regard to immigration and housing: (a) what measures does the government have in place to address likely increases in refugees seeking to cross our borders due to climate instability, and what provinces have been consulted on these measures; (b) broken down by department and year since 2013, what is the name of all reports commissioned by the government assessing refugee migration due to climate instability; (c) how is the impact of refugees from current crises, such as in Afghanistan and Ukraine, factored into meeting the government's housing objectives, and what additional amounts are allocated to the National Housing Strategy to respond to such events; and (d) how is the impact of refugees anticipated as a result of climate instability factored into meeting the government's housing objectives, and what additional amounts are allocated to the National Housing Strategy to respond to such events?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1326—Ms. Lianne Rood:**

With regard to individuals seeking asylum who entered Canada at Roxham Road: (a) how many individuals have crossed into Canada at Roxham Road in total, broken down by year since 2015; (b) how many individuals are being sheltered by the government as of March 16, 2023; (c) what are the names and locations of each hotel or motel currently contracted by the government to provide such shelter; and (d) what is the total amount, or approximate total amount, the government has spent since November 4, 2015, on hotels or motels for individuals who have entered at Roxham Road?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1327—Ms. Lianne Rood:**

With regard to the Royal Military College of Canada, broken down by year for the 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23 academic years: (a) what is the mandated female student ratio; (b) how many students were accepted into first year intake; (c) what is the breakdown of (b) by gender; (d) how many students identifying as male were declined admission in order to meet the female student ratio; and (e) what is the admissions cap for first year intake?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.



*Government Orders***MOTIONS FOR PAPERS**

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

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS****STRENGTHENING ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FOR A HEALTHIER CANADA ACT**

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill S-5, An Act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, to make related amendments to the Food and Drugs Act and to repeal the Perfluorooctane Sulfonate Virtual Elimination Act, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

[*English*]

## SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Deputy Speaker:** There are three motions in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill S-5.

Motions Nos. 1 to 3 will be grouped for debate and voted upon according to the voting pattern available at the table.

[*Translation*]

I will now put Motions Nos. 1 to 3 to the House.

• (1610)

[*English*]

## MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP)** moved:

That the amendment to Clause 9 of Bill S-5 be deleted.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP)**, seconded by the member for Victoria, moved:

Motion No. 2

That the amendment to Clause 39.1 of Bill S-5 be amended by replacing subsections 108.1(1) and (2) with the following:

“108.1 (1) If the information that the Ministers assess under subsection 108(1) or (2) is in respect of a vertebrate or a prescribed living organism or group of living organisms, the Ministers shall ensure that the public is provided with the opportunity to bring forward any relevant Indigenous knowledge and scientific information before the expiry of the period for assessing that information.

(2) If the Minister is provided under paragraph 106(1)(a) with information in respect of a vertebrate or a prescribed living organism or group of living organisms, the Minister shall publish that information in the Environmental Registry within five days after its receipt.”

Motion No. 3

That the amendment to Clause 44.1 of Bill S-5 be amended by adding the following after paragraph 114(1)(g.1):

“(g.2) prescribing processes for the consideration of Indigenous knowledge and scientific information provided to the Ministers under subsection 108.1(1);”

[*English*]

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in Parliament to represent the people of Victoria.

People in my community care deeply about the environment. Protecting coastal ecosystems, being able to enjoy clean lakes and clean rivers and to breathe clean air are things that people in Victoria, and across our country, care deeply about. They are things we cannot take for granted. It is why enshrining the right to a healthy environment in the Canadian Environmental Protection Act is so important. The Canadian Environmental Protection Act is the largest piece of legislation that governs environmental protection in Canada, and it has been over 20 years since the last time it was updated. The world has changed and toxic substances are different than they were two decade ago.

The bill was an opportunity to address environmental justice and to better protect the most marginalized who are impacted by pollution. This was such an important opportunity to strengthen environmental protections, and there are some great pieces of this legislation, but there were also so many missed opportunities. While Bill S-5 does not address a number of critical aspects of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act that need to be updated, I am going to start by outlining what we accomplished in committee, what was accomplished in the Senate and why it is important to pass this bill.

The right to a healthy environment would be recognized for the first time under federal law. We were able to strengthen the legislation in committee to ensure that there would be a duty for the government to uphold the principles of environmental justice, intergenerational equity and non-regression. The bill would also require the federal government to take the cumulative impacts of toxins and their effects on vulnerable populations into account. I want to thank Senator McCallum for her work in providing amendments for vulnerable populations. The bill would also update how we control toxic substances and dangerous chemicals. It would prioritize prohibiting the most hazardous substances, and New Democrats worked to improve transparency and accountability.

The bill would not be as strong without the amendments that we fought for and passed at the environment committee, or without the work of senators like Mary Jane McCallum and others, who strengthened the bill in the Senate.

Unfortunately, there were so many important amendments that the government and the Conservatives voted against. They went so far as to take out provisions in the bill so as to water down environmental protections, undermine provisions for public consultation and protection of indigenous rights, and deny Parliament the opportunity to deal with the grave concerns around enforcement. They voted against amendments on the right to a healthy environment for future generations, including voting against implementing enforceable air quality standards, stronger labelling requirements for consumer products, and requirements for public and indigenous consultations regarding genetically engineered organisms, among others.

### *Government Orders*

It was disappointing that the Liberals and the Conservatives teamed up to undermine environmental protections, but it was not surprising to see them, yet again, listening to corporate lobbyists instead of scientists, doctors and environmental experts. One example of this was when the Liberals and Conservatives joined together to remove the reference to tailings ponds in the bill. This egregious amendment came from the Conservative members, who argued that tailings ponds are being managed very well. This is blatantly ignoring the science, the reports and the testimony from indigenous communities about the impact of pollution from tailings ponds. What was shocking is that the Liberals, who say they care about the environment, voted with the Conservatives to remove this vital provision. Pollution from tailings ponds is having devastating effects on communities, and the Liberal members on committee decided they would take out the only reference to tailings ponds in this legislation.

Not even a month after this amendment passed, it was widely reported that the oil and gas giant Imperial Oil had a massive tailings pond leak that affected many indigenous communities near the site, including the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation. What makes this case particularly horrific is that it has been happening since May 2022 and that the indigenous nations that were impacted were only informed almost a year later, in February 2023. This was after 5.3 million litres of toxic waste seeped into the ground and watershed that these communities rely on. That is two Olympic-sized swimming pools of toxic waste. Members from these communities came to speak about the failures of this federal government: the failure to protect the environment and the failure to protect the indigenous communities that were impacted.

• (1615)

We must do more. We need to address this failure and properly regulate tailings ponds. This is why I put forward a report stage amendment to put the words “tailings ponds” back into the bill. I urge my colleagues in the chamber to vote in support of this amendment.

Another area where the bill fails is on air quality. In fact, Bill S-5 does not mention air quality. Air pollution is the single greatest environmental risk to human health. Health Canada estimates that air pollution kills more than 15,000 people each year in Canada, and it is responsible for over \$120 billion in socio-economic costs to the Canadian economy. Exposure to air pollution increases the risk of stroke, heart attack and lung cancer, as well as chronic and acute respiratory illnesses, such as asthma. There are also links to neurological diseases and adverse birth effects.

The U.S. has had enforceable air quality standards for over 50 years. However, Canada has decided to continue to rely on voluntary standards. David Boyd, the UN special rapporteur on human rights and the environment, said that legally binding and enforceable ambient air quality standards are not just a matter of protecting the environment and public health, but that they are also important in creating a more equal Canada.

Air pollution affects everyone, causing widespread violations of the right to breathe clean air, yet the burden of related diseases has a disproportional impact on certain vulnerable populations. Among the most severely harmed are women, children, the elderly, minori-

ties, indigenous people, people living in poverty, people with pre-existing health conditions such as respiratory conditions or heart disease, and people who fall into several of these categories. Major sources of ambient air pollution, including power plants, refineries, factories, incinerators and busy roads, are often located in poor and racialized communities. Therefore, implementing ambient air quality standards in law and enforcing those standards across Canada is a matter of environmental justice.

Parliament should strengthen Bill S-5 to ensure that Canada's first law recognizing the right to a healthy environment does not overlook action on air pollution. People's lives depend on it. When given the chance to make the Canadian Environmental Protection Act the strongest piece of environmental protection possible, the Liberals and Conservatives listened to the interests of big corporations over those of scientists and environmental experts.

I also want to mention the amendments put forward by the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. When it comes to protection of nature and when it comes to addressing genetically modified organisms, we need to ensure not only that we are listening to science, but also that we are listening to indigenous communities that are impacted when the Canadian government pushes through approvals for genetically modified salmon and other organisms that are central to the culture and livelihood of indigenous communities.

There is a lot more to be said, but I will conclude by saying that my NDP colleagues and I are going to keep fighting to ensure that we protect our environment, that we protect human health and that we protect everything that we hold most dear for ourselves, for our children and for future generations. I am proud of the work that has been done, and I will be voting for this bill, but I hope that we do not wait another two decades to make these changes.

**Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Victoria for her work on this very important bill and the collaboration that we enjoyed. We worked closely on this bill for a number of months.

I disagree with her characterization of the ultimate result. From what I have heard from environmental groups, industry representatives and health professionals, the feedback coming to me is that this is a good bill that moves the agenda forward. This is not the last that we will hear of CEPA. We will be entertaining further improvements when other sections of the act open up.

*Government Orders*

Would the hon. member acknowledge that collecting information on tailings ponds is already a provision under CEPA? We had a very robust discussion in committee, and it was decided that this was redundant and was singling out one particular industry. We could have added 10 more.

We are, in fact, dealing with the Kearn issue, which is a separate subject. We are all in agreement that what happened in Alberta was absolutely unacceptable, and we are putting measures in place for a better monitoring and reporting system for the good people of northern Alberta.

• (1620)

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his work on committee, but I have to say that I am extremely disappointed by the question.

I was extremely disappointed to see Liberal members vote alongside the Conservatives to take out the only reference to tailings ponds in this entire piece of legislation. This is an issue that is impacting indigenous communities right now, and the fact that the government has decided that it does not want the words “tailings ponds” in CEPA is egregious, in my opinion.

Honestly, I hope that the members in the House are listening. I hope that they will take the time to listen to indigenous communities who are impacted by the toxic pollution from tailings ponds and that they will reverse this decision and vote in favour of the report stage amendment to put the words “tailings ponds” back into CEPA.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Victoria for voting, in committee, for a number of the over 24 amendments that the Green Party tried to put forward. We worked on Bill S-5 from mid-December right through to March. All those good amendments were defeated, as were the many good amendments that had been brought forward by the Senate.

By the way, I cannot vote for this legislation. We are asked to believe that the legislation is so important, but the government knows it is flawed; if we just wait a minute, any minute now, the Liberal government will bring forward a new version of amendments to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. Nobody has touched this act for 20 years. It stretches credulity to the breaking point.

Has my hon. colleague from Victoria seen any evidence that there is a likelihood of any new legislation from the government on the various sections of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act that were not touched in this amendment review?

**Ms. Laurel Collins:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for her diligent work in committee in attempting to strengthen this piece of legislation. The answer is no.

If the government were serious about actually amending the pieces, especially section 22 on enforcement of the right to a healthy environment, it would have done it this time. This is a critical piece, which it did not allow us to open up.

I do not think it would do to argue for any other well-known bill that the government will be putting it forward now, but we should not worry because another bill will be put forward in a few months

or years. We know that it took 24 years for this iteration, this update. It has been years and years of advocacy to get to this point where we can modernize CEPA.

It stretches the imagination to think that it is going to table a comprehensive “CEPA 2” bill in this Parliament. I do not believe it, but I think it is critical that we start pushing the government to do this work.

• (1625)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to start with the matter before us right now and hope that members will decide to support the amendments that have been put forward in today's debate at report stage. My hon. colleague, the member for Victoria, has just walked through some of them. I want to stress that it is important to vote in favour of the reasoned NDP amendment put forward by the hon. member for Victoria, which is to restore a change that was made in the Senate.

Anyone watching this could be confused. Are changes made in the Senate? Are they going back to the Senate? What is going on here? This is a fundamental concern I have about the bill. The Minister of Environment had the amendments to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act put forward in the previous Parliament, in June 2021. This was when the Liberal government was pretty sure it was going to bring itself down and have a snap election in mid-summer. Therefore, it was put on the Order Paper with no intention of really pursuing it. However, this did give people, environmental law groups and others a chance to read it and say that there is more that needs to be done here. There were a lot of efforts in that regard, to which I will refer later.

We got back from the election, and there was nothing on the Order Paper for the long-promised amendments to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. Therefore, the minister and the Liberal machinery for putting forward legislation decided they ought to start this one in the Senate. Why was this? It was because it was not such an important bill to the Liberal Party that they would start it in the House. It could not get House time, so it was started in the Senate.

Then there was this convoluted process. The Senate worked hard. By the way, having worked on this bill, the Senate sent a letter to the House that said it could not get to some of the key amendments it really needed to make, particularly to make the right to a healthy environment enforceable. This is outside the scope of the bill. What does that mean to people who might be watching this and wondering why I would be voting against the Canadian Environmental Protection Act amendments? In order to make the right to a healthy environment enforceable, one would have needed to open up section 22, which is the section of CEPA that deals with enforcement.

*Government Orders*

That was not before the Senate as a possible place for an amendment any more than it was before the House of Commons environment committee. This is because section 22 has never been used, in the entire long history of this act; it is unusable. We really needed to open that up.

Those were the many amendments made in the Senate. The Senate then said there were some things that really needed to be changed that it could not get at. However, the Senate succeeded in amending this bill to say that we have to pay attention to tailings ponds; that point was then deleted by the House of Commons environment committee. This is why the hon. member for Victoria has put forward the amendment that we find in Motion No. 1 before us today. The amendment to clause 9 that was made in committee restores what had been done in the Senate. I know the procedural path here is a bit circuitous.

I have brought forward amendments, and I want to credit those groups that did the work on them. Nature Canada, the Canadian Environmental Law Association and a number of other groups wanted to see meaningful public participation in this legislation. In order to make sure of this, the amendments put forward at report stage changed the bill substantially. In terms of language, we move away from saying what the bill says now, which is that there will be a consultation with interested parties. "Interested parties" has a particular meaning in law, which might not be the public or necessarily scientists. It would not be indigenous people. The amendment is a compromise.

I want to stress that this is a compromise from what we wanted or what we hoped to get at report stage, which is to allow that when there is a decision to genetically modify a living organism, indigenous knowledge is an important component to looking at that kind of a decision. That is the first amendment. For instance, we have had genetic modification of salmon in this country. We are the only country in the world, by the way, that allows genetic modification of a fish that is intended for human consumption. Pacific salmon are sacred to indigenous peoples in the territories I represent. The second amendment deals with the processes for considering indigenous knowledge and scientific information.

• (1630)

It is really important that we identify where the barriers to this kind of thing lie. Some of them, unfortunately, are in the advice the minister received from people within Environment Canada. This should be a process with significant public participation. However, there is a counter-argument from John Moffett, who is the senior Environment Canada expert in this area. In the evidence given to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development on February 16, John Moffett said, "This is not a public participation process. This is a science-based process."

That would all be very well and good if scientists could also intervene at this point, but it is not clear they can. To say this is not a public process flies in the face of commitments Liberals have made that there will be public participation, there will be indigenous knowledge and we will listen to scientists.

Before my time expires to speak to the rest of the bill, I really urge members on all sides of the House to give favourable consideration to these three amendments at report stage. They will sub-

stantially increase the chance that we will have meaningful public participation, including incorporating indigenous knowledge into the bill.

I am going to go through the deep disappointment I feel in Bill S-5. It is tragic, really. Members may believe it or not, but I worked on this bill before first reading in 1988. I know I do not look old enough for this to be true, or at least I would like to believe that.

I worked on this bill in 1988, when it was brought forward in the time of the Mulroney government. A majority Progressive Conservative government brought forward the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. It brought together many disparate pieces of legislation, including the ocean dumping act and the air quality act, and it created part 5, which is all we are really dealing with here today.

We are dealing with part 5 of the original Canadian Environmental Protection Act, on toxic substances. We are not dealing with part 6, which we should, to modernize genetically modified organisms and how we regulate them. We are not dealing with the parts on the ocean dumping act, which are crying out for amendments. We have a lot going on right now with our ports with cruise ships.

We know we are going to hear the trumpets, the horns and the hallelujahs that we have put a right to a healthy environment into this bill. What kind of a right is it if it is not enforceable? A non-enforceable right is a bumper sticker. It is good to have in the bill, and people can point to it and say it is improvement; however, it is not a right if we cannot enforce it.

The deep disappointment gets deeper when we look at the changes to the schedule for toxic chemicals. The Canadian Environmental Law Association talked of this in its briefs. I agree with it, having worked on this legislation for longer than I care to mention. This bill survived constitutional challenge in the Hydro-Québec case in the 1990s in the Supreme Court of Canada because it focused on toxic chemicals as a health issue and because the Minister of Health and the Minister of Environment jointly administer this act. Therefore, it was seen as a legitimate exercise of federal jurisdiction.

Why would it be changed now? That would be thanks to the lobbying of the plastics industry, which did not like the idea that its products could be described as toxic. We know that, for many decades now, courts have understood the concept of "CEPA toxic", the Canadian Environmental Protection Act's version of toxic. This means that in adequate amounts and sufficient quantities in the environment, something is a threat to the environment and human health. It does not mean that if someone picks up a piece of plastic, they are going to poison themselves. It means that the enormous amounts of plastics we dump into the environment are a threat to our environment on a planetary scale.

*Government Orders*

To help the plastics industry with a potential reputational public relations problem, this bill weakens the constitutional foundations of the act. I am unable to support a bill that takes any risk with the constitutional underpinnings of the act to help an industry out with a public relations problem.

There is also the elimination of key sections of the original CEPA. Actually, the virtual elimination piece came in later, after the first passage of the act in 1990, and so on. We have had a lot of improvements to this act over the years, but Bill S-5 is not one of them.

• (1635)

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member down the way for her intervention and for coming to the environment committee to take part in some of our discussions.

Some of those discussions were centred around the Senate amendments. She mentioned clause 9, and I think proposed paragraph 46(1)(k.3) mentions the tailings ponds, which is included in our legislation. We are also including multiple chemicals from different sources that can add to the cumulative effects on vulnerable populations, which again would apply to situations such as we have in Kearl in the tailings ponds.

The bill as written, and amended by the committee, is now covering situations around tailings ponds, which can be detrimental to human health. Could the hon. member provide her thoughts on the watch-list we have created and the management of it?

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I have to start by saying that the member for Guelph thanked me for coming to the environment committee. I was coerced into being at the environment committee. I am not allowed to be a member of the committee. The motions passed in every committee in this place give me 48-hours notice to submit all my amendments to the committee for clause-by-clause, but I am not allowed to participate. I am not allowed to move my own amendments, so they are deemed to have been moved.

This is not an opportunity I have ever sought because, if not for the motions passed in every committee, I would have a right today, right now, to submit all of my amendments to the committee, argue them out and discuss them here at report stage. We would then have to vote on them. That is why Stephen Harper's PMO invented this motion, which every committee passes without thinking about the fact that the party in the House that has the least procedural fairness in the one right we have to put forward substantive amendments at report stage, had that right reduced because we knew how to use it.

The watch-list is a small improvement within an act that, overall, reduces the effectiveness of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act in a way for which the only word I can use to describe it is tragic.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I must say that I truly share the frustration of the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. When our party was not recognized, we could not move our amendments in committee either.

Instead of asking a question, I would like to make a statement. I must commend the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for the ex-

cellent work that she has done and was able to deliver to the Standing Committee on the Environment. I also want to acknowledge the work of Nature Canada, an environmental protection association that is almost always one step ahead of us. Nature Canada put forward these amendments that we are discussing today, and the members for Victoria and Saanich—Gulf Islands are speaking on their behalf. I want to thank them.

We, as members of Parliament, are generalists and we need these experts, these specialists, to inform our thinking and give us a better understanding of the issues.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my dear colleague from Repentigny. I absolutely agree with what she said about NGOs like Nature Canada that have worked on the issue of genetically modified organisms, or GMOs.

It is unbelievable to think that we now have the opportunity to make changes to part 6 of the bill in order to modernize the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, but that the government is choosing to do nothing. We could protect the public against risks related to GMOs in food. It is outrageous.

We really need to try to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act with regard to the management of toxic substances in order to protect Canadians from big corporations that are a danger to our environment and human health.

[*English*]

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on the amendments the member put forward at report stage, in particular, the work of Nature Canada and the criticisms to the language of interested parties when it comes to public consultation, how important it is that we have public consultation, and how problematic that particular language is.

• (1640)

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, relying on my previous work as a practising lawyer, the words “interested parties” definitely mean the chemical industry would be an interested party. They do not mean Nature Canada would automatically be an interested party.

**Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak to Bill S-5, the strengthening environmental protection for a healthier Canada act. It proposes amendments to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act of 1999, also known as CEPA.

As members know, our government introduced Bill S-5 in the Senate on February 9, 2022. Over the past year, Bill S-5 has moved steadily through the parliamentary process. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the tremendous contribution from parliamentarians on all sides of the House, and their insight and efforts to advance and strengthen this bill.

### *Government Orders*

The parliamentary process was clearly a success. The committees that worked on this bill spent nearly 50 hours studying it. They heard testimony from over 80 witnesses representing civil society, academia, industry and indigenous organizations, and received more than 100 written briefs. In the end, over 40 amendments were adopted, with the government supporting more than half of these changes. The bill is stronger as a result, and the government supports it.

It is now time to pass the bill as reported by the ENVI committee, send it back to the other place and, most importantly, ensure that the bill receives royal assent without delay so we can implement it.

Bill S-5 would be the first major overhaul of CEPA in more than a generation, as many members have pointed out. The bill would modernize CEPA in two key areas. First, it would recognize a right to a healthy environment, as provided under CEPA. Second, it would strengthen the foundation for chemicals management in Canada and enable robust protection for Canadians and their environment from the risks posed by harmful substances.

The recognition of the right to a healthy environment, as provided under this act, would be an important achievement. It would be the first time such a right has been recognized in federal legislation. Under the bill, the government would have a duty to protect that right and uphold related principles, such as environmental justice. Within two years, if it comes into force, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change would be required to develop an implementation framework to set out how that right would be considered in the administration of the act.

People may ask what difference the recognition of this right would make. They should recall that CEPA provides the foundation for multiple programs aimed at preventing pollution, such as those dealing with air quality, environmental emergencies, greenhouse gases and, of course, the chemicals management program. The right would apply to the administration of the whole act.

I will take one principle: environmental justice. I have heard those words in the chamber today. It includes avoiding disproportionate harmful impacts on vulnerable populations. Examining decision making from this perspective would require a greater understanding of who is most impacted by pollution and putting some priority on addressing those situations. Because a solid understanding of the situation would be important, the bill would require the ministers to conduct research, studies or monitoring activities to support the protection of the right to a healthy environment.

Complementary to that right, the bill would confirm the government's commitment to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including free, prior and informed consent. Amendments confirmed the role of indigenous knowledge in decision-making related to the protection of the environment and health, and encouraged examination of whether CEPA is implemented in a way that advances reconciliation.

Bill S-5 would also modernize Canada's approach to chemicals management by, among other things, emphasizing protection of Canadians who are most vulnerable to harm from chemicals, encouraging the shift to safer alternatives and accounting for the reali-

ty that Canadians are exposed to chemicals from multiple sources, often referred to as cumulative effects.

Central to these amendments is the proposal to develop and implement a plan of chemicals management priorities. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Minister of Health would develop this plan in consultation with stakeholders within two years of royal assent. It would set out a multi-year integrated plan for chemical assessments, as well as supporting research and information-gathering activities. The plan would also consider factors such as vulnerable populations, cumulative effects and safer alternatives, as I have already said.

● (1645)

This proposal was strengthened with amendments, supported by the government, that would require the plan to include timelines and that it be reviewed every eight years following its publication. Recognizing that Canadians are exposed to multiple chemicals from many different sources, the bill broadens the scientific basis for risk assessments under CEPA to include consideration of cumulative effects and vulnerable populations. Amendments adopted at committee introduced the related concept of a vulnerable environment. The changes will help ensure that assessors consider real-world exposure scenarios.

To support the shift to safer alternatives, the bill would establish a new watch-list of chemicals of potential concern. Amendments adopted at committee clarify the process for removing chemicals from the watch-list and provide helpful guidance to industry and other chemical users. The bill would also shift the risk-management paradigm under CEPA by expanding its regulatory focus to a broader subset of toxic substances, that is toxic substances that pose the highest risk, and requiring that priority be given to prohibiting activities and releases of these toxic substances.

However, amendments adopted at committee and supported by the government make it clear that it must include toxic substances that are carcinogenic, mutagenic or toxic for reproduction, in addition to persistent and bioaccumulative substances, which departments have always aimed to eliminate. These important changes bring CEPA in line with the latest science and understanding of environmental and health risks.

Having summarized the key chemicals management components of the bill, I will now speak to some cross-cutting themes that came in through amendments.

*Government Orders*

Openness, transparency and accountability in environmental and health protections were major themes underlying many of the amendments made to the bill at committee. These included a preambular statement to this effect, along with various timelines and reporting requirements for the risk assessment and risk management of chemicals. These changes would increase accountability under CEPA and ensure risks to Canadians and their environment from chemicals are assessed and managed in a timely fashion.

Similarly, amendments made to the bill would create a more open and transparent regime for confidential business information by requiring that claimants justify their confidentiality requests against Access to Information Act criteria, and would require that the Minister of the Environment review and validate a statistically representative sample of confidentiality requests and report annually on the results.

Animal testing is another major theme of the amendments to the bill, with the committee adding several new provisions aimed at replacing, reducing or refining the use of vertebrate animals. Moreover, the plan of chemical management priorities discussed earlier would include a strategy to promote the development and use of methods not involving the use of vertebrate animals.

These amendments are consistent with work under way in other jurisdictions around the world, such as the U.S. and EU, and help further this government's commitment to move away from vertebrate animal testing. This includes continuing to work with industry, academia and our international partners to develop and evaluate non-animal alternative methods with the goal of moving closer to ending animal testing. In fact, the government recently reaffirmed its commitment to end cosmetics testing on animals in the 2023 federal budget, and with amendments to the Food and Drugs Act tabled in Bill C-47. These CEPA amendments would be an important complement to this work.

Lastly, on the topic of amendments, not all of the amendments that were made to the bill in the other place were maintained, but I would say majority were. There were some that were not in keeping with the principles of the act, would be difficult to implement or were premature, in light of ongoing consultations being undertaken by Environment and Climate Change Canada and Health Canada. As I mentioned before, this is not the last chapter on CEPA.

• (1650)

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this is the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, and I appreciate that there has been some work done on this bill to make it stronger and very much appreciate the work that my colleague from Victoria has done on this bill. However, as I have been sitting on the committee listening to the testimony on the Kearl mine spill in northern Alberta, I have been listening to horrific testimony from indigenous leaders on what this has meant in their communities.

I wonder if the member could tell me how on earth he can look those people in the eye and explain to them that tailings ponds would not be protected under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act and that the water and land in their communities, where they fish, hunt and live with their families, are not worthy of being protected under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. How

on earth can Liberal members stand and say that tailings ponds do not deserve any sort of environmental protection through this act?

It baffles the mind, and I certainly am not comfortable going back to those people and telling them that the government does not care about the environment they live and breath in.

**Mr. Terry Duguid:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's statement and question.

The sentiment she expressed at the committee meeting was one of disgust and disappointment. I did look Chief Adam in the eye. Everyone around that table was very incredulous at how something like this could happen and how notification was not given.

That is why the minister has established a working group. He has extended his hand to the indigenous peoples of that area and to the Alberta government. We will be working together for solutions, not only in the short term but also in the long term.

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there is a certain substance out there called penta. It has a much longer scientific name attached to it. In essence, it is used to treat utility poles. This substance is being phased out, but the government has not approved a substitute for it yet. As I understand it, if it is going to eliminate something, it is supposed to implement something else to be a replacement for it, yet the government has not done that. The problem with that is it becomes a health and safety issue for people who are working on utility poles.

I am wondering why the government has not bothered to approve a new substance that could be used in place of penta, even though it has forced these companies to no longer use it?

**Mr. Terry Duguid:** Madam Speaker, I was not aware of the particular issue the member has raised today. I will certainly take it back and see where things lie in terms of safer alternatives.

One of the major thrusts of CEPA is looking for those safer alternatives. We will be looking to the innovation and ingenuity of our scientists, researchers and universities to find alternatives so we can replace substances that are harming the environment or human health.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Madam Speaker, it is difficult to be brief when talking about an issue like this.

We had a wonderful opportunity to demand action on air pollution and the labelling of hazardous substances in consumer products.

*Government Orders*

In his speech, my colleague referred to the European Union. Let us look at the example of GMO labelling. The European Union is light years ahead of Canada. Even the United States is beginning to require and tighten regulations.

Why did we not take advantage of the opportunity presented by Bill S-5 to help Canada catch up with the other countries that are really far ahead of us?

[*English*]

**Mr. Terry Duguid:** Madam Speaker, I believe when I was referring to the EU, I was referring to cosmetic testing.

The whole basis of CEPA is to have risk-based analysis versus the hazard-based management system of the European Union. I believe our system is much more superior for protecting human health and the environment. It has served our country well, and we have made major improvements to CEPA that would make it even better.

• (1655)

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Order. It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, Foreign Affairs; the hon. member for North Okanagan—Shuswap, Government Appointments.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to take part in this debate on Bill S-5, dealing with the important issues of the environment and climate change. As hon. members know, I have the pleasure and privilege of being the official opposition critic on the environment and climate change. I was named such by the leader of the official opposition and member for Carleton, and so I take the lead on these matters.

We all recognize that climate change is real, that humans played a role in climate change and that humans therefore have a role to play in addressing climate change and mitigating it as much as possible. I also want to remind members that this bill is at its final stage. We will support the spirit of the bill. We believe it represents significant progress in dealing with environmental challenges.

We have been waiting for such a bill, and rightly so, since the first version of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act was passed in 1999. It has been nearly a quarter century, or exactly 24 years, since there has been an update to this environmental protection legislation. It needed to be done, it has been done and we are happy about that.

I would like to draw my colleagues' attention to the fact that this bill is not new. It was introduced two years ago as a House of Commons bill, Bill C-28. The work was under way, good progress was being made and, all of a sudden, it had to be abandoned. Why? Because the Liberal government, or rather the Prime Minister — I was told that many in the government and in that party did not entirely agree — in the middle of a pandemic, at the start of the fourth wave of COVID-19, decided to trigger an election that cost Canadian taxpayers over \$600 million, only to end up with about the same result.

Consequently, we lost over a year on this bill, which found its way back on the agenda through a side door, let us say. I am not saying that there is a main door and a side door. Let us say that the two doors are equally important: the door of the House of Commons and the door of the Senate. Oddly, the government decided to introduce this new bill by knocking on the Senate door. That is their right, but it is still surprising.

We are now at the last stage after having heard 80 witnesses and studied about 100 briefs. The bill, with its 60-or-so pages and dozens and dozens of clauses, received very little consideration in committee, in the Senate and here. As I said earlier, these are steps forward that are welcomed by environmental groups and by industry.

Before I go any further, I just want to make a small observation. Earlier, I heard the leader of the Green Party rightly point out that she finds it regrettable that, in our parliamentary system, independent members cannot bring forward amendments or take part each day in parliamentary committees to improve the rules. That may indeed be a bit troubling to see, as we are all elected, but the rules are the rules and they must be respected. We know the rules.

I should mention another situation that may seem a bit unfortunate for Canadian democracy, but those are the rules. In 2019, the Liberal Party obtained fewer votes than the Conservative Party. Who formed government? The Liberal Party, because they had more members. In 2021, the Liberal Party obtained fewer votes than the Conservative Party, but the Liberal Party formed government. Why? Because they had more members.

People who observe democracy in the true sense of the word will wonder how those who obtained the most votes do not form government. It is because our rules are established in that way. We, the Conservatives, are a party of law and order, and we respect the rules. Are we happy with the situation? Of course not. Do we follow the rules? Yes. We do our work properly. The same goes for all independent members.

• (1700)

[*English*]

Let us now go to the issue and substance of this bill.

As I said earlier, this bill is not brand new. It was tabled two years ago, but we had an election. This bill would refresh an old bill from 1999 that was debated and adopted by the House of Commons. That is why we have to refresh it.

[*Translation*]

I would like to mention three fundamental aspects. The bill is so thick I could talk about this for hours.



*Government Orders*

Essentially, the bill stipulates that everyone has a right to a healthy environment. This is a major breakthrough. At the same time, the concept of what constitutes a healthy environment is open to debate and interpretation, and needs to be defined. The bill proposes a 2-year period for developing a legal framework that establishes exactly what constitutes a healthy environment.

The first stage is a step in the right direction, and we welcome this progress.

The bill acknowledges the importance of vulnerable populations. These vulnerable populations must be taken into account when it comes time to develop or approve new projects with environmental impacts or to assess the potential toxicity of certain projects.

The bill also provides for the creation of a mechanism for regulating chemical substances. Some might call them toxic substances, but we prefer to speak of chemical substances that can be assessed in some way or another, but that must be effectively regulated by this bill.

[*English*]

This is why I think the bill is going in a good direction. It is not the end of the road, but it is a good direction.

We have to recognize that some green activists are very positive about it, and recognize that we can do something more and that this is not enough. We also have to recognize that industry people sometimes see things as tough but think this a good way to address the issue.

[*Translation*]

That is why this is a step in the right direction. It was eagerly awaited by environmental groups and industry folks who managed to work together at times and against one another at other times. That is democracy for you. This is the bill we ended up with.

This bill is another great reminder that this government is heavy on rhetoric but pretty light on concrete results.

Let us not forget that not so long ago, on April 20, 2023, the commissioner of the environment tabled five reports in the House that were not very positive. The reports were specifically about the government's concrete achievements. The commissioner, Jerry V. DeMarco, made a rather stinging mention of the Prime Minister's very ambitious goal of planting two billion trees by 2031. What a laudable commitment. How beautiful and exciting, emotional even, since he made it in the company of the person who was attracting the most attention worldwide on the environment. The Prime Minister actually used that individual to make an announcement that he considered historic, important and sensible for the future of the entire planet. He promised to plant two billion trees.

Once again, we see a lot of rhetoric and a lot of images, but very few results. We, the Conservatives, are not the ones saying it, it is the environment commissioner who has said that the tree planting program will not reach the objectives set by the government.

This same commissioner also stated that a good number of the regulations made and implemented by the government cannot measure actual effectiveness. It is fine to announce regulations that are supposed to be ambitious, rigorous and demanding, but the ability

to assess results is lacking. There is a lot of talk and few concrete results.

The environment commissioner also stated that the government was not doing enough for species at risk. A COP15 conference was held in Montreal. I want to salute the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, who, as we know, was an ardent environmental activist. He hosted the entire world in his backyard, because his riding is very close to where the conference was held. Protecting certain environments was one of the topics addressed at this conference. That was a good thing, so I say bravo. That said, the environment commissioner said that this government is not doing enough for species at risk.

I also could have talked about the report released by the UN at COP27, which found that, under this government, Canada is ranked 58th out of 63 countries. Canada, after eight years of Liberal governance, is ranked 58th out of 63 countries for environmental protection.

As my time has expired, I will happily and resolutely answer any questions.

• (1705)

[*English*]

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member across the way for his work on the environment committee. He always brings accountability into the discussions and looks at ways forward so we can work together for the betterment of both our ridings and, in fact, of all Canadians.

One of the things we discussed at committee was the plan for chemicals management. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change has to develop this plan within two years of royal assent and have a multi-year, integrated plan for chemical assessments that supports research and information-gathering activities.

The hon. member across the way talked about accountability, and I think he mentioned in committee that we should have timelines. We did modify our proposal so that the plan would be reviewed every eight years following publication.

Could the hon. member talk about the need to hold not only the government's but the industry's feet to the fire to make sure things get done?

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Madam Speaker, I deeply appreciate working with the hon. member and all the other members of the environmental committee. That was my first hard work, I would say, on this issue since I was appointed on the climate change issue. I am very proud to be the shadow minister on this issue.

*Government Orders*

Yes, I do agree. Things are moving so fast in our world right now. We see climate change and we have to address it as soon as possible, but the technology and the impact are moving very fast. This is why we need to review it. We spent the last, I would say, quarter of a century before reviewing the law that had been adopted in 1999.

For sure, we do not have to wait another 24 years to address it. This is why I think we should have a time frame that will let people analyze what is right, what is working and what we have to fix, to be sure that we apply all the good rules to correct the situation.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent for his speech, and I would mention that we are fellow members of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

At the end of his speech, he talked about Canada's standing in the world on environmental protection.

I have a question for him. When we voted on the amendments during our study of Bill S-5, the Conservative Party always voted with the Liberals. Does the member not think he could have voted in favour of the amendments that we developed with the help of experts and scientists specifically to improve Canada's performance?

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Madam Speaker, I want to commend my colleague's contribution. We were elected at the same time in 2015 and, no matter what anyone says, there is always a special connection between members who were elected the same year. I want to acknowledge her support and her efforts when it comes to the environment. I recognize that and I commend her.

Once is not a habit. Yes, there have been times when we voted with the government. It may have happened more often than she thinks or perhaps less often than she thinks. We did it because we were looking for consensus. It is important to balance the needs of environmentalists with the reality of the businesses that will have to work within these laws.

If we implement measures that are so severe, harsh and brutal that businesses are unable to achieve the targets immediately, then it is an exercise in futility.

I recognize that we have worked with the government at times, but we feel that this was a bill that needed to move forward. Yes, we offered our support and co-operation, but we have also been very critical, as I was earlier, of this Liberal government's environmental record over the past eight years.

[*English*]

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, in our region, the great Montreal River was almost destroyed by a tailings pond that gave way because it was not maintained, so we know the damage, yet we are dealing now with industry tailings dams that are so much more massive than the one that hit out of Matachewan, Ontario.

I am concerned that the Liberal government has taken out the reference to tailings ponds, because they are such massive bodies of water and there are so many issues of contamination. It is about reassuring the public that when projects go forward, there is going to

be proper oversight. I would like to ask my hon. colleague why the Liberals have decided to keep the issue of monitoring the tailings ponds out of the language.

● (1710)

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Madam Speaker, I have a lot to say to address the question raised by my colleague from the NDP.

Just to be very clear and very appropriate on this, I think it is a work in motion. Yes, I think that this bill addresses some issues, some specific issues, and maybe not enough for some people. That is fine. We are working forward to adapt it, to modify it and to improve it if necessary.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased I can finally say that the Canadian Environmental Protection Act is going to be revised and modernized. It would be an understatement to say that it is about time.

For more than 20 years—nearly 25 years, actually—successive federal governments have not given this law the attention it needs. Canada has been doing nothing while, elsewhere in the world, environmental regulations have been implemented everywhere. We are at the report stage of Bill S-5. The door to change has opened just a crack, and we are going to have to get our foot in that door before it closes, I am afraid.

The bill first made its way through the Senate. It arrived at the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development just before Christmas. Throughout 2022, I had a huge number of meetings to better understand the expectations and needs expressed by expert associations from various technical, scientific and legal fields as well as environmental protection organizations.

Not long after the 2021 elections, the Minister of Environment acknowledged that the bill to modernize the Canadian Environmental Protection Act would be the first of many. Indeed, the scope of this piece of legislation is so vast that a formal review would have been impossible without a multi-step process. The study of Bill S-5 also confirmed the need to avoid delay in tabling the next part of the modernization, which I eagerly look forward to.

In the time I have to speak at report stage, it would be impossible to cover everything that deserves a mention. When everything seems important, choices can be difficult. Hopefully, I will get an opportunity to discuss other aspects at third reading.

To get right down to business, I wish to talk about the right to a healthy environment. The scope of application of the clauses on the right to a healthy environment does not extend beyond the boundaries of the act itself. They have no impact on other Canadian statutes. If protecting this right is added on to the federal government's mission, the amendments will not necessarily create a genuine, fundamental right to live in a healthy environment, which would have been a good thing. This was confirmed unequivocally by senior officials appearing before the Senate committee and the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

This right will have to be balanced by what is defined in the legislation as reasonable limits and socio-economic factors. We will have to wait for the implementation framework. When I say the door is only open a crack, that is an example.

No one is against virtue, but we have to tell it like it is. This is a step forward—although a cautious and very strictly regulated one—that will not necessarily give citizens more rights to go before the courts and ask for sanctions for projects or situations that harm the environment. I want to commend my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands for the rigorous amendments that she introduced in committee but that unfortunately were rejected.

Another point I wanted to make is that there has been no progress at all on pollution prevention plans, or PPPs. PPPs should be considered as a centerpiece of the environmental legal framework, a pillar even. A few years before the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999, received royal assent, the environment committee of the time said, and I quote, “the Committee believes that pollution prevention should be the priority approach to environmental protection. In addition, the Committee firmly believes that CEPA should provide a key legislative base for promoting pollution prevention in Canada. ...a major shift in emphasis is required in the legislation, from managing pollution after it has been created to preventing pollution in the first place. We believe that pollution prevention will avoid, eliminate and reduce more pollution than ‘react and cure’ strategies”.

This excerpt dates back to 1995. Requiring planning for the prevention of pollution was important 25 years ago, and so just imagine what it should be today. I am saying today, because the opportunity to address the inertia of the past two decades with respect to pollution control standards based on prevention and leading to strict management of risks and dangers was within reach.

Members know that I have an interest in human health and its links to the environment. In medicine, it is often said, and quite rightly, that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. That can also be said about environmental pollution. Prevention, whether of illness or pollution, has to be planned.

• (1715)

The Canadian Environmental Law Association made this a key recommendation, one that was supported by several organizations and experts in environmental law. These experts were invited to testify at both the Senate and House of Commons committees.

The Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources was able to craft an amendment that rallied all

### *Government Orders*

its members. When Bill S-5 was sent to the lower chamber, the majority of the members of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development wanted to set it aside, to discard it. They voted against it.

Focusing the content of Bill S-5 on principles to manage pollution and not prevent it is to give in to the wishes of the industry to continue heading in a less restrictive direction.

A minute ago I was saying that addressing the inertia was within reach. That is true, because the science and knowledge about the environment and the effects of toxic substances on the environment and on our health have grown over the past 25 years.

Experts who have studied and analyzed the regulatory system, from both a technical and legal perspective, have submitted recommendations and testified in the Senate and in committee. We were not short on resources. We had resources that could help us learn about what is happening elsewhere, to fully grasp what could truly structure progress and to offer hope that this review would be fruitful.

The industry's input prevailed when it came time to talk about the regulatory framework on toxic substances. More broadly, the industry wanted to see a legislative measure that was not overly burdensome. Some might say that is obvious.

That being said, I do not deny that listening to industry is essential for a host of good reasons. However, when the dominant narrative from the industry is inflexible and the industry seems to be wiping its feet on environmental considerations and human health just to maintain the status quo, I start to get annoyed—and I think that is an understatement.

We know that between 2006 and 2020, there was an impressive reduction in the quantity of toxic substances that were released into the air, a decline of 60%.

That said, every rose has its thorn. We also know that during the same period, land-based toxic releases, both intentional and accidental, jumped by more than 50%. They are turning their backs on analyses and facts.

Like it or not, the government has severely undermined the excellent amendments put forward by the Senate, Green Party, NDP and Bloc Québécois that relate to the consultation and public participation processes. They are turning their backs on transparency.

High-level experts pointed us in the direction of essential regulatory updates, yet the Liberal-Conservative coalition chose to support industry. They are turning their backs on balance.

Of course, the Bloc Québécois understands that environmental policy requires trade-offs between health and environmental protection objectives on one hand and commercial and industrial interests on the other. We understand that.

At least the door is open. To move forward with regulation, we need to be able to recognize the weaknesses and pitfalls that characterize this regime in Canada. There is some work that has been done in that regard.

*Government Orders*

The legislator needs to remember its responsibilities toward Canadians and the environment. It must not become complacent because that will serve only to promote the financial health of trade and industry, rather than protect the health of millions of people and the health of the environment.

I would like to be able to say that we have taken a small step for man and a large step for mankind, but instead, I have to say that we have taken a small step for health and environmental protection but that we look forward to making greater strides.

• (1720)

[*English*]

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for her work on committee. The member put forward many amendments that were similar to New Democrat amendments. Whether it was on pollution prevention planning, timelines or genetically modified organisms, I am grateful for the work that she diligently tried to push forward in committee.

We were able to strengthen some aspects of this legislation, but there are still so many gaps, and I want to ask about one of those gaps, on air quality standards. We know that the U.S. has had enforceable air quality standards for over 50 years and that over 15,000 lives are lost in Canada every year from air pollution. That is 15,000 people and families. Can the member speak to how this is a matter of life and death? These provisions are important and the government needs to do better.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Victoria, with whom I serve in committee, for her question.

I think that the Green Party, the NDP and the Bloc Québécois were all united in trying to make the legislation a lot more binding and in trying to improve it. We are talking about the health of millions of people, human beings, and about the health of the environment. They are interconnected.

Thousands of people die every year. It is not something that anybody really seems to think about, but I believe, if memory serves, that 6% of the GDP, billions of dollars, go toward helping those who become ill as a result of air pollution.

Bill S-5 was a good opportunity to improve that. I think we missed that opportunity.

[*English*]

**Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, the hon. member on the environment committee, for all her work on this bill, her very important work.

I have a question for the hon. member on the issue of air quality standards that our NDP colleague had raised. I know the Bloc is very sensitive to jurisdictional issues. One of the reasons we defeated the NDP amendment was that this is an area of joint jurisdiction. Our feeling as a committee was that we needed to work on this together.

I wonder if the member would have some reflections on this, particularly the sensitive issue of jurisdiction and the importance of working together to better the environment.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** Madam Speaker, as everyone knows, the Bloc Québécois is quite sensitive about jurisdictions and respect for jurisdictions.

The environment is a shared jurisdiction, to some extent. When the Constitution was being written in 1867, no one was talking about the environment. Now when it comes to the environment, we have to strike a balance between what the federal government can do in terms of regulations and what Quebec and the provinces can do. It is a delicate balance.

I tried to introduce amendments to bring in the idea of respect for Quebec and provincial jurisdictions, but to no avail. I eventually gave up on the idea of getting such an amendment passed.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I have a question.

In this afternoon's debate, we heard about the Senate amendments, which were great amendments, about collecting information on the oil sands and tailings ponds. The Liberals have opposed that amendment.

[*English*]

It is a little complicated, but what we are talking about is that including tailings ponds in Bill S-5 is so rudimentary and obvious that it is deeply shocking that the Liberals do not like it, because what they are proposing to change is—

• (1725)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Could we get a question, please?

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Madam Speaker, the question is this: Does the hon. member agree with me that the mere fact of asking for information gathering about the tailings ponds should not have provoked a reaction that it had to be removed?

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé:** Madam Speaker, yes, there is a lack of transparency there. The Liberal-Conservative coalition voted against every amendment that increased transparency.

The member for Saanich—Gulf Islands is absolutely right.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and add a few thoughts regarding the bill. I know the NDP wants to focus a lot of attention on the issue of tail ponds, and I will deal with that right away, along with the members of the Green Party and, to a certain degree, even my friends in the Bloc.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

• (1730)

*[English]***COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM ACT**

**Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.)** moved that Bill C-316, An Act to amend the Department of Canadian Heritage Act (Court Challenges Program), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, it is often too easy to take for granted the many rights and freedoms we enjoy as Canadians. Canada is a free, successful country because of the decisions made by those who came before us. We are an open and inclusive democracy in large part because the rights of individuals are respected. Canada is a country where the rule of law operates independently from politicians and where our Constitution protects the rights of Canadians. This is something we should champion. It is something we should celebrate. It is something we must do everything we can to protect.

I introduced Bill C-316 to build upon the good work of previous Parliaments. In the 42nd Parliament, at the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, of which I was then a member, as part of our study on access to justice we recommended that the court challenges program, which had previously been cancelled, be recommenced. I am happy to say this was in fact done.

In our report, we also called for enshrining the court challenges program in legislation to enhance its sustainability and to ensure that any government seeking its cancellation in the future would require the approval of Parliament to do so. Bill C-316 would do just that. It would enshrine the court challenges program into Canadian law, providing stability and certainty to the program, and ensuring that it continues to operate predictably. This, in turn, would give greater protection to the rights of Canadians as we continue to provide a mechanism that enables individuals and organizations to challenge laws and regulations that they believe violate their rights.

*[Translation]*

The court challenges program protects and strengthens constitutional rights. It provides funding for individuals and organizations who wish to bring matters of national importance before the courts.

More specifically, the program provides funding to protect our constitutional and quasi-constitutional rights in matters involving official languages and human rights.

Created in the 1970s, the court challenges program played a key role in helping Canadians clarify and assert their rights, especially with regard to official languages and equality rights.

I find it interesting that they are maybe playing a bit with words on the issue. It is not to take away from the seriousness of the issue. We have recognized that. I believe the member knows full well that, in good part, what she is talking about as a concern is already there and the amendment is somewhat redundant. It might make a nice social media post or something of that nature. Giving the member and those who have been speaking on it the benefit of the doubt, I will say that maybe they just do not fully understand everything that has been explained through the legislation.

It is important to recognize that information with regard to tail ponds is already being collected through CEPA. It is important for us to—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I have to interrupt the hon. parliamentary secretary. There is a point of order from the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Madam Speaker, we have a long-standing tradition that debate has to be about the subject at hand, and I do not believe you will see in the legislation anything about tails, so I would ask the hon. member to stay focused on the subject.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, it is quite possible I missed the word “tailings”; that does happen at times. My apologies. I did not mean to offend the member.

Having said that, when we think about tailings ponds, members will find that this is covered within the current legislation. At the end of the day, I would refer the member to the amendments adopted at committee that related to the concept of vulnerable populations and cumulative effects. There are other situations that empower and allow for the minister to track and, ultimately, enforce issues related to tailings ponds. The member, I suspect, would likely be aware of that.

As I indicated, information on tailings ponds is already collected through CEPA. Members tend to give a great deal of attention to this particular issue. I know the member is anxious to ask a question, but unfortunately we are going to run out of time because I only have another minute to go.

I think one of the things we have missed is the recognition of toxic and potentially toxic chemicals. The government takes that very seriously. The right to a healthy environment is being enshrined and supported in a very real and tangible way. Canadians are very much concerned about our environment. Through this legislation, there is a direct connection that would enable Canadians to express their concerns where there will be attention drawn to that concern. That is something I really have not heard in the relatively short amount of time that we have had to debate the issue, but it is something we should be talking about.

We see our constituents growing more and more concerned about our environment. Having a statement that is very clear as to the rights of Canadians to have a healthy environment is something that is very positive. I would like to see more of a discussion the next time the bill comes up, when maybe I will get the tailings—

*Private Members' Business*

The program was eliminated in 2006, and our government restored it in 2017. We expanded it to include rights not originally covered, such as specific sections of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms pertaining to fundamental rights, including democratic rights, freedom of expression, and the right to life, liberty and security of the person.

• (1735)

[English]

Over the years, the program has been used many times to protect the rights and freedoms of Canadians. It has provided funds to disabled Canadians to help them ensure they are treated fairly. It has helped to clarify the rights of LGBTQ+ people to marry whom they love. It has strengthened the rights of official-language minorities to protect their rights and preserve their culture.

The court challenges program also provided support to important cases, such as *Andrews v. Law Society of British Columbia*, where the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that a law society could not prevent a qualified permanent resident from practising law in Canada simply because they were not a Canadian citizen.

[Translation]

The court challenges program strengthened the rights of French-language minorities in British Columbia. It helped protect the rights of francophone children to receive French-language education of equivalent quality to that of English-language education.

In its ruling in June 2020, the Supreme Court of Canada reaffirmed the importance of education in the official language of one's choice. The court also recognized the key role that section 23 of the charter plays in the vitality of official language minority communities.

[English]

I know that some of my honourable colleagues may ask why we would provide funding to allow people to sue us. I think this asks the wrong question. The right question is why we would fund cases defending the charter, and the answer is that, as we know, the cost of justice can be prohibitively expensive. Justice should not be decided by who has the most money. It is of significant public good that the constitutional rights of Canadians be protected, whether or not they have money.

The value of the court challenges program is that it breathes life into the charter and into the Official Languages Act. It provides meaning to our constitutional rights, particularly by enabling those with lesser means to protect their rights. The program allows matters of merit with significant public impact to be brought forward, regardless of the means of those bringing forward the case.

[Translation]

Other members might wonder if the program allows the federal government to decide which cases receive funding. Does it allow the federal government to sue provincial governments that do not agree?

I can say that the answer to that question is no. The program is independent of the government. It is administered by the University of Ottawa. Funding decisions are made by two groups of indepen-

dent experts, one for official language rights and the other for human rights.

These committees are made up of experts who are selected based on their expertise in law. The government has no say in which cases receive funding, and the funds are often used to challenge federal decisions or policies.

[English]

This is, in fact, a good thing. I think that I can say without much controversy that the government does not always get it right, and it is important that, when policies and laws are put into place, we have a process to review, and possibly correct, these decisions. In a constitutional democracy where the rule of law is paramount, allowing Canadians to bring forward cases when their rights may have been infringed upon is an important part of our constitutional democracy.

We face a great many challenges as Canadians. The world is an uncertain place, but Canada is blessed with tremendous resources and potential. We have some of the best and brightest people in the world, and we have inherited the tremendous institutions that have made us successful: pluralism, freedom of speech and debate, and the opportunity to make a better life for our families. These are the things that bring us together as Canadians.

The rights and the freedoms that we hold dear are critically important to Canada's success as a country. We must do everything we can to shore up our democracy and protect our constitutional system. By passing Bill C-316 and enshrining the court challenges program into Canadian law, we would be sending a strong message about the importance of protecting the rights of Canadians. It would demonstrate our shared commitment to ensuring that the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the charter, the Official Languages Act and the Canadian Constitution are respected and upheld.

I hope members will join me in supporting Bill C-316, so we can better protect our democratic institutions.

• (1740)

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I will be supporting the bill, and I thank my colleague for bringing it forward. He spoke a bit about some of the groups that would be protected by having this put into legislation.

Could he perhaps tell us about some of the other pieces of action the government undertakes that we would also need to protect, in the event the government was to change?

**Mr. Ron McKinnon:** Madam Speaker, I certainly think there are many areas in which we could continue to act to protect the rights and freedoms of Canadians. Although my focus at this point is on the court challenges program, I think it is very important that we are able to test the laws in some manner or mechanism to make sure that the provisions of the charter are upheld.

*Private Members' Business*

**Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the member mentioned the suggestion of arm's length and, in developing this committee around legislation, appointing someone who is at arm's length.

In the member's opinion, what is the definition of arm's length in developing the bill? Would that include someone from the Trudeau Foundation? Would it include some sister-in-law from somewhere? What is the actual definition of arm's length in the member's opinion?

**Mr. Ron McKinnon:** Madam Speaker, the key here is that the members of these different committees are not chosen by the government nor any government body. The program is administered by the University of Ottawa and is responsible for selecting appropriate people who are versed in the law and who make the decisions about which cases that come before them are of sufficient public importance that they should be supported under the program.

[Translation]

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would like to know what my colleague thinks.

The court challenges program was established in 1978 to counter the Charter of the French Language, which was democratically passed in Quebec. Then, the 1982 Constitution further reinforced that. It was also established to counter the Charter of the French Language, which should have fallen under Quebec's jurisdiction.

The most frustrating thing is that we do not know who those public funds are going to. The Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights has already proposed that the organization responsible be allowed to disclose who received the subsidies once the court proceedings are complete.

I want to know what the member thinks about making the process more transparent and either excluding Quebec from the program or making sure that the program is not systematically used to dismantle Bill 101 and its reinforcement, Bill 96.

[English]

**Mr. Ron McKinnon:** Madam Speaker, I really appreciate the member's question, because that is precisely what this bill would do. It would add to the existing process requirement that the administrators of the program report to the minister on, I believe, an annual basis, and that the minister table that report in the House within 15 days. The report that is requested is to identify the cases, or at least the nature of cases, that have been supported.

It should be remembered as well, as the member noted, that this program originally was constituted to protect French language rights across the country, and we wish to build on that. I would note that, the more we can defend French elsewhere in Canada, the more it supports Quebec. Both of my children, who were born and raised in British Columbia, speak fluent French.

• (1745)

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC):** Madam Speaker, we are here to talk about the court challenges program, which has been brought forward by the hon. member, and I appreciate his words.

Right now, we already have a court challenges program in place. However, it is based only on a contribution agreement within the heritage department. This bill looks to permanently enshrine in law a court challenges program here in Canada.

What is that? I will quote the bill. It says it is "an independently administered program whose objective is to provide financial support to Canadians to bring before the courts test cases of national significance that aim to clarify and assert certain constitutional and quasi-constitutional official language rights and human rights".

There would be two streams: official languages and human rights. Individuals or groups could come forward and to apply for funding from this supposedly independent body, and then go ahead to essentially go after the federal government or a provincial government in a court challenge.

It should be pointed out, just as an important side note, that this program is currently funded to the tune of \$5 million per year. We know that about \$3.3 million is spent on actual cases, which means that \$1.7 million is being used on administrative costs. That is a lot of money tied up in administration. I have many significant questions, as do Canadians, about that money and its wastefulness. If this program is about equipping Canadians or empowering Canadians to be able to seek justice, then the money should be going toward that and not the hefty fees for administering this program.

Nevertheless, I will also point out that the government has said that it is supposedly doubling this amount. That is what the 2023 budget says. What is the amount it is committing to in the 2023 budget? It is \$4.9 million. It currently spends \$5 million, and it is committing to \$4.9 million, yet it says it is somehow doubling the funding to this program. I point that out because it is as if the government just says something and relies on being believed to pull the wool over Canadians' eyes. Going from \$5 million per year to \$4.9 million a year is not doubling the program. The numbers speak for themselves.

While the Prime Minister and the government may claim one thing, they are really doing another. It is incredibly disingenuous of them. I want to point that out. Nevertheless, the bill itself is deserving of our attention today.

We have to look at the history to fully understand it. It originated with Trudeau senior, Pierre Elliott Trudeau. The reason Mr. Trudeau senior brought this bill forward was because he was faced with Bill 101, which threatened the unity of this country. It looked to make French the sole official language in Quebec.

The prime minister at the time, Trudeau senior, did not want to challenge this himself, so he decided to put in this crafty mechanism called the court challenges program. It gave money to third party groups to challenge Bill 101. In other words, the prime minister, with his left hand, was saying he was in support of Quebec and its independence, and with his right hand, was handing over millions of dollars to have these third party groups challenge Quebec. That is the birth of this bill. It is incredibly disingenuous once again.

*Private Members' Business*

That is where it started. It has morphed over the years. Sometimes it has been backed up and supported, and sometimes it has been scraped or supported less. Nevertheless, it has existed in some form since the late 1970s.

One of the problems with this bill is that it undermines Parliament. This is where laws are made in this country. This is the place that has been entrusted by the Canadian electorate to make decisions regarding legislation. When we take that responsibility or authority, and we put it into the hands of the courts, we are doing a disservice, and even an injustice, to the Canadian people.

I would raise that as a significant concern, and I have many more concerns. They have to do with transparency, accountability and independence. I will explore those.

● (1750)

First, it should be noted that this bill is often used as a direct attack on Quebec and its culture and language rights. For example, even right now, the court challenges program is being used by activists to fight against Bill 21, which is a Quebec bill. It is currently being used to fight that bill.

The other thing I will point out is that this program is often used by woke groups to push woke agendas. Of course, that is supported by the panels that exist. Why is it supported by panels that make these decisions? I would argue it is because those panels are not in fact independent and are not in fact transparent. Again, there is a shroud of secrecy around the court challenges program and how it functions.

Let me explain more. With regard to transparency, panels exist: one panel for language rights cases and one panel for human rights cases. How are the individuals on those panels selected? I do not know. The reason I do not know is that this is not available.

The government claims it is supposed to be available, but my staff and I have checked the government's website numerous times over the last several months and it has always been down. We decided to go on the Wayback Machine, thinking perhaps the site was just down momentarily, but we were not able to find anything on the Wayback Machine. I wonder about that. Is the government purposely being secretive in the selection of these panel members or is the site just down? It is interesting. I am sure someone in IT would be able to fix that should they wish to do so.

Further to that, yes, there is some secrecy with these panels, but with regard to the supposedly independent organization, which is currently the University of Ottawa, how was it selected? Again, there are crickets. I am not sure. I could not tell the House because it is not readily available in the public domain.

I must highlight, then, that there is also an issue around transparency regarding which cases are funded. That was never made public knowledge. That was never made knowledge here in Parliament. There is also this shroud of secrecy around the level of funding, so not only what gets funded but also to what extent. How much money is going toward each of these cases? Again, it is secret.

We have a program taking tax dollars and putting those tax dollars toward these cases, but there is no transparency as to the decision-making process. Canadians deserve better than that.

Transparency is one issue, but another issue would be independence. One would expect the administering body, which is the University of Ottawa, to be functioning fully independently of the government. Well, a bit of research shows us that this simply is likely not the case.

The University of Ottawa is functioning as this body. This is the university whose former president was a man by the name of Allan Rock. He was a cabinet minister under Chrétien who was convicted of an ethics violation for taking a free trip with the Irving family, which covered his transportation and his hotel. Does that sound familiar? We see a lot of that.

Allan Rock is known for initiating legislation that put the Trudeau Foundation in place. He is also known, of course, for his relationship with the Chinese. It is super interesting, is it not? We have this super independent body with these secretive criteria that are not transparent and are being used to select panels, and further to that, there are two panels making decisions.

When I look at the biographies of these panellists, all of them read as if the Liberal Party of Canada platform was just copied and pasted under their names. There is no doubt about it: These panels are not independently selected. There is no merit-based process being utilized, unless it is the same merit-based process used for the supposedly independent senators over in the other place, and we all know how independent that is.

The Speaker will excuse this side of the House for the conclusion we must draw, which is that this program is absolutely ludicrous. It lacks transparency, it lacks accountability, it lacks independence and it must not go on.

● (1755)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about Bill C-316, an act to amend the Department of Canadian Heritage Act, specifically with respect to the court challenges program.

The Bloc Qu b cois supports this bill in principle. We would like to look at Bill C-316 in committee and make recommendations. The Bloc Qu b cois's current position already favours the continuation of the court challenges program, especially considering the important role it plays in promoting the rights of francophones outside Quebec. We therefore support the idea of ensuring the program's future by including it in the Department of Canadian Heritage Act.



However, in my speech, I will go over the Bloc Québécois's reservations concerning the program's terms and conditions, especially the lack of clarity surrounding its management and the process for deciding which cases and organizations will receive funding. Next, Bill C-316 proposes measures designed to make the program's administration more transparent. On the surface of things, it seems to answer a Bloc Québécois demand related to one of our major criticisms of the program, namely, its claim to operate at arm's length from the executive.

Finally, I will address the fact that this program is currently being implemented and administered by the University of Ottawa, but it is impossible to prove that decisions about cases are not politically driven because of the lack of transparency and accountability measures.

First, in terms of transparency, Bill C-316 states that the organization responsible for administering the court challenges program would be required to report annually on its activities, including disclosure of the list of cases funded during the year. These reports would be tabled before Parliament. The Bloc Québécois believes it is imperative that the reports include not only the cases, but also the recipient organizations, as well as the amounts of money allocated. That is one way Bill C-316 could be improved. We would also then be able to assess the amount each part of the program receives, in other words, official language rights and human rights. It would be interesting if the report also had to include a list of the unsuccessful applicants.

Second, the fact remains that the court challenges program can be used to fund challenges to Quebec laws, such as the Charter of the French Language and the state secularism law. The crux of the problem is that we cannot pick and choose, based on our political views, which laws should be challenged and which ones should not be, even if we have good reason to believe that some laws that do not pass the test in the Canadian courts would be deemed constitutional under a future constitution of Quebec.

A partial fix for this problem as far as the official languages component of the court challenges program is concerned could involve a program framework that takes an asymmetrical approach to Canada's official languages. Since the Liberal government recognizes that only one of the official languages is at risk, then it should agree to grant program funding only to cases that defend the rights of francophones.

The text of Bill C-316 amends the Department of Canadian Heritage Act to specify that, in exercising the powers and performing the duties and functions assigned to the Minister of Canadian Heritage under that act, he or she shall maintain the court challenges program.

Here are a few explanations. From the Bloc Québécois's perspective, the court challenges program has two major flaws in its design. The first is the fact that, historically, the program has helped to undermine the protection of French in Quebec. The second is that, historically, the program was politically oriented and acted as the judicial arm of the executive branch.

Bill C-316 could potentially fix, or at least mitigate, the second problem we see, namely the program's lack of transparency and

### *Private Members' Business*

dependence. This would be brought about by adjustments and improvements, in particular by disclosing in the annual reports not just the cases funded, but also all the amounts granted and the recipient organizations.

As for the first problem, it could also be addressed, but this would require refocusing the vision of Canada's official languages policy, which the Liberal government and its NDP ally just rejected in the review of Bill C-13. This problem could be solved with amendments to this bill or with future legislation.

The court challenges program has gone through three historical phases. First, the date of the program's creation is significant. The court challenges program was established in 1978 in a very specific context of heightened language tensions and Quebec-Ottawa confrontations following the election of the Parti Québécois in 1976, and the adoption of the Charter of the French Language the following year. We know that Canada's prime minister at the time, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, and his government very much disliked Bill 101.

● (1800)

The year after Bill 101 was passed, Ottawa created the court challenges program to subsidize anglophone lobby groups' legal fees from challenging Bill 101. It was not originally a formal program. The Department of Justice decided which cases would be funded and how much they would receive based on its own objectives. This approach obviously put the government in a conflict of interest.

Between 1978 and 1982, the court challenges program funded six cases, half of which challenged Bill 101. At the time, the program was not at all independent. The cases that would be brought before the courts were selected and funded by the executive branch. To assess applications for funding for language rights, a committee was formed by selecting members from among a small group of candidates proposed by agencies that dealt with official languages.

The third version was initially called the language rights support program. The Stephen Harper government, which had cancelled the first program, was forced to create this new program following an out-of-court settlement with the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada, or FCFA.

The new and current court challenges program arose from a Liberal campaign promise in 2015. The administration of the program was entrusted to the University of Ottawa. The program relies on two committees of experts to decide which cases can be funded according to two streams, namely human rights and official language rights. We know that there is a bit of bias here.

*Private Members' Business*

Currently, through an access to information request, it is possible to find out which cases were supported, but it is impossible to find out who the recipients were and how much money they got from the program. This means that taxpayers cannot find out how the money allocated to the program is being spent. Since the year 2000, the names of individuals or organizations receiving money cannot be disclosed, after a court ruled that applications and funding contracts are protected by attorney-client privilege. That has made it difficult, if not impossible, to access accurate information for at least two decades. Annual reports, when available, contain only general information and mention only examples.

To ensure transparency and accountability, a report by the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights recommended that, after a case is filed, the names of those who received funding from the court challenges program and the nature of the cases be disclosed in each annual report, unless such disclosure would prejudice the litigants. It appears that no follow-up has been done in this regard.

During the committee's consideration of Bill C-13 on modernizing the Official Languages Act, the Bloc Québécois tabled an amendment to have the program administered transparently, with consideration for the rights granted by provincial and territorial language regimes, and mirroring the position of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, to ensure as much transparency as possible. The amendment was rejected with the NDP's support, despite the party's claims about supporting Quebecers' right to self-determination.

Issues related to the program's transparency and independence came into clear view during the controversy surrounding the \$125,000 in funding provided to the English Montreal School Board to mount a legal challenge to Quebec's secularism law.

The Liberal government is hiding behind the program's alleged independence to avoid having to address the fundamental issue: the Canadian government's financial commitment to supporting challenges to Quebec's secularism and language laws.

In addition to the transparency issues, the other problem with the court challenges program is that, although it has been used to advance the rights of francophone minority communities in other provinces, it has also been used to challenge Quebec laws that are designed to promote and protect the French language in Quebec.

That problem stems from the main flaw in Canada's official languages policy, which assumes that there is symmetry between the anglophone and francophone minority communities. That structure, which was designed by Pierre Elliott Trudeau and which the Liberals just refused to change when they modernized the Official Languages Act, pits the interests of Quebec against those of francophones in Canada.

In closing, the francophone communities of Canada have good reason to care about the existence of the court challenges program and to hope that it will be around permanently because it advances their language rights. That is the main reason the Bloc Québécois is not calling for the program to be abolished. Rather, we are asking for it to be regulated and modernized.

There are some good things about the court challenges program, but it falls into the official languages trap. This would not be an issue if the Liberal Party and the NDP were willing to accept the solution proposed by the Government of Quebec and the Bloc Québécois, which is to use a differentiated approach in the implementation of the Official Languages Act, or in other words, to stop putting both official languages on equal footing.

• (1805)

If the Liberal government recognizes that only one of the two official languages is at risk—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):**  
The hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

[English]

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):**  
Madam Speaker, as always, it is a delight to stand in this place and represent the great people of Edmonton Strathcona.

Today we are talking about Bill C-316, an act to amend the Department of Canadian Heritage Act regarding the court challenges program. Basically what this bill would do is amend the Heritage Act to require that the Minister of Canadian Heritage maintain the court challenges program, making sure that this is now in legislation, so that if any future government wanted to cut this program, it would have to do it through legislation. Of course, it would not be a perfect protection for this program, but it would be a good start. It really does make me think about all of the different policies I would like to see protected that have been put in place by various governments. I am going to come back to that as we go forward.

Some people in the House today have said that this is bad legislation and is not something that should be in place, and they have expressed what I would consider some pretty faux outrage about this particular bill. I want to highlight that there are a number of people who believe in the court challenges program, very notable groups that actually think this court challenges program needs to be put into legislation and also needs to be protected and expanded.

The New Democratic Party has been calling for an expansion of this. There is very little money that is allocated to this. It is a very small fraction, a drop in the bucket, compared to what we spend on the justice department. We would like to see this expanded. We are not alone. The people who would also like to see this program expanded are people like Cindy Blackstock and other advocates within the indigenous communities. Legal organizations, including the Women's Legal Education & Action Fund, or LEAF, would love to see this program expanded and put into legislation so that it is protected. Even more notably, the Canadian Bar Association supports the court challenges program.

There are people around this country who are leaders on this and who have asked for this program to be maintained and expanded. It is something that all parliamentarians need to consider. Very few of us are experts in the fields in which we produce legislation, so we take advice from experts. I would say, when we are looking at the justice system, that the Canadian Bar Association, Cindy Blackstock and others would be excellent examples of experts we should be listening to.

*Private Members' Business*

There are several reasons why this program is so important, but one of the ones that mean the most to me is that it levels the playing field. It allows Canadian citizens to have access to justice. Often, those Canadian citizens who are least likely to be able access justice are marginalized Canadians. They are women, indigenous people and members of the LGBTQ2+ community. For the people who are often disproportionately impacted by the justice system in a negative way, this helps level the playing field.

I strongly support the program. We could work on making the bill stronger. Certainly, I would like to see the government commit to better funding. We have been calling for stronger funding for this program for some time, so we would like to see that.

I want to talk a little tonight about some of the other things that I think we should be putting into legislation. We are all lawmakers in this place. As I was preparing the notes for my speech this evening, I was thinking about how important it is that we put things into legislation to protect them, protect them from potential future governments that do not share the values of ensuring that there is a level playing field within the justice system for Canadians.

The first thing that came to my mind is my Bill, C-205, which is actually about the Impact Assessment Act. I was very happy, because Minister Wilkinson—

• (1810)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The member knows we cannot use names of current members.

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Madam Speaker, when I brought that bill forward, the Minister of Natural Resources was kind enough to take what was in the bill and put it into policy. That bill actually said that coal mines, regardless of size, would trigger the Impact Assessment Act. Prior to that, it had to be over 5,000 tonnes a day, but we just took that little bit out. That made it so that all coal mines would trigger the federal Impact Assessment Act. The reason that was important is that companies were trying to skirt around that. I do not know if members know this, but, in Alberta, there is a real movement to mine in our Rocky Mountains, which Albertans are appalled by. I think most Canadians would be appalled by it. That is an example of something that is only in policy.

I retabled that legislation in Parliament for the simple reason that, in policy, it is not protected the same way. What happens is that, if another government comes in, a government that maybe does not believe in climate change or maybe does not believe that there is a need to protect the environment, to protect the Rocky Mountains and to protect our vital natural resources in this country, it would be able to take that out of policy and just start strip-mining and taking down our mountains. Of course, we do not want that to happen, so we would like to see this put into law, put into legislation to protect against that.

There are other things I can think of that are exactly the same. We saw, in our development dollars spent in the Stephen Harper years, that there was no support for the full range of reproductive services for women around the world. That was cut out of our official development assistance, even though thousands of women a year die because they do not have access to the full range of reproductive services. That is another example where I would very much

welcome legislation being put in place to protect people's right to the entire range of reproductive resources. That is just another one.

I could bring up another example, from last night. Many of us were here very late last night, working with my colleague for Winnipeg Centre, who has been calling, tirelessly, for a red dress alert. A red dress alert is something that, if we put it into legislation, would be very difficult for another government, which maybe did not believe in women's rights the same way, to take that out. I would welcome that from the government, that it would actually step up and make sure that the red dress alert is actually done, finished and put into legislation, and that it would be much more difficult for a government that does not believe that there is a genocide of missing and murdered indigenous women in this country to take it out.

Those are just a few examples of why I think it is important that we look at programs and policies that are in place and think of ways we can protect those very important programs and policies by turning them into legislation.

I know that New Democrats will sort of be supporting this bill. We will continue to call on the government to do better by this program. We will continue to call on the government to allocate more funding to ensure that more people would be protected by this very important program.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, first, I will provide a different perspective by recognizing that this is a substantive piece of legislation. I must acknowledge, right at the very beginning, that it is difficult to get one's name in a position, as a member of Parliament, where one is able to bring forward legislation or a motion. What we have before us today is a substantive piece of legislation that would really make a difference. I want to recognize the member for Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam for his efforts in getting it to the stage where it is now, whether it gets to committee or not. We will wait and see what happens.

I was quite impressed to hear that the member has two older daughters who are perfectly bilingual. That might not surprise many people, depending on where they live, but if someone is living in British Columbia, or a province like Manitoba, it is noteworthy and ultimately emphasizes the importance of enshrining, where we can, language rights.

Just the other day, we were in the chamber, talking about Bill C-13 and the importance of Canada's being a land of two languages, English and French. What we have seen over the years is a commitment from the government to protect the minority languages. What takes place in the province of Manitoba with our francophone communities in particular, though not only them, but all over the province of Manitoba, is that we value the protection of the minority languages outside of the province of Quebec. The same principles apply whether it is in British Columbia, Atlantic Canada or anywhere in between, or up north.

*Private Members' Business*

With respect to the province of Quebec, there is an emphasis on the important role that Quebec plays in ensuring that the majority French language not only continues on but is healthy. It speaks volumes not only for Canada, but also, in fact, for North America. This is a government that has emphasized the importance of languages from coast to coast to coast, with an emphasis on protecting minority languages.

Let us put that in the perspective of when Stephen Harper was the prime minister. There used to be a court challenges program that predates this government, but it was Stephen Harper who ultimately cancelled the funding for that program. I suspect that might have been one of the triggers for the member for Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam to look at the legislation. In that draw, the member is provided the opportunity to do a wide spectrum of types of legislation or resolutions. He could have taken the easy way out and said that we would have such-and-such day being recognized. However, he chose an issue important to his constituents and to all communities in Canada, because we are talking not only about language rights but also about human rights.

I listened to the member for Lethbridge, and at times it can be tough to listen to her. However, there is absolutely no doubt in her mind that if the Conservatives, heaven forbid, form government, this program is gone. That is an important part to the debate, because it amplifies why my friend from Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam is trying to see this legislation get through. It is an important issue.

• (1815)

Does anyone believe in Canada being a country of two official languages? Does anyone believe there is a need to protect minority languages? I, for one, believe that is the case. I also believe it is important for us to recognize that there are organizations and individuals that at times feel threatened regarding those rights, and the issue of financial support is of absolute necessity.

We talk about the independence. It is arm's length. I am not going to question the independence of a post-secondary facility like the University of Ottawa. I am disappointed in the member for Lethbridge trying to give the impression that universities are not independent. I think of the University of Winnipeg. Lloyd Axworthy was a member of Parliament for many years and when he was president of the university, I never saw him as someone who would do anything other than what was in the best interests of the University of Winnipeg, recognizing the academic excellence and expectations that people had for the university.

The University of Ottawa has been, in essence, delegated the responsibility, and I believe that responsibility is taken very seriously. There is a reason it was being financed previously, going into the Stephen Harper regime, and there is a reason we have reinstated that funding. It was a few years back when we reinstated the funding and, in this particular budget, we are enhancing the contribution to the university administration in order to be able to run this critical program.

Individuals might want to raise concerns around the need to incorporate it into legislation, but there should be no doubt about the value of the program. Having a court challenges program to protect and, as I say, expand the rights to incorporate human rights I see as a positive. Maybe this is one of the considerations that was being

taken, as to why, in a time of constraint, we enhance it. We are looking at ways to ensure that these human rights and language rights are protected.

As a government, we recognize that it is good to not only talk about it, but support it. One of the ways we can support it is to ensure that the budgetary needs, at least in good part, are being met by the government through supporting that arm's length organization and allowing the organization the opportunity to do the tertiary things required in order to select the types of cases that need to be heard at the court level. I believe it has the expertise in order to do that, far greater than members in this House, especially if we take them at random. It has been depoliticized. It has a program. The member is mocking it because it has money and questions the administrative costs. I do not think the member realizes that there is a carry-over year to year.

Suffice to say, support for the court challenges program is worthwhile.

• (1820)

**Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I heard a riveting comment from a colleague behind me, but I will not go that far.

It is indeed an honour and a privilege to rise in the House this evening to contribute to the debate on Bill C-316, an act to amend the Department of Canadian Heritage Act, court challenges program. Indeed, as has been mentioned in this House, this program has an off-and-on history in this place and in government through the Department of Canadian Heritage. I did have the honour and privilege of serving for some time at the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage.

Before I get into the meat of my speech, I do want to reflect on one of the more famous quotations from one of the great parliamentarians of this place. The Right Honourable John Diefenbaker was one of the great defenders and protectors of Canadian freedom. He said, "Parliament is more than procedure—it is the custodian of the nation's freedom."

I think too often in this place we forget about our role as the protectors and defenders of the freedoms of Canadians. If we look back at the history of some of the great orators, some of the great defenders in this place, including Diefenbaker and his bill of rights, the first attempt at enshrining the rights and freedoms of Canadians in a single federal statute was by Diefenbaker. From his humble upbringing, his birth in Neustadt, Ontario, which is just north of my riding, Perth—Wellington, to his time as a defender, as a defence counsel and during his time as a parliamentarian, his focus was on the rights and freedoms of Canadians. That was what he lived for in this place.

We will recall that it was under Diefenbaker that the first woman was appointed to cabinet. It was under Diefenbaker that indigenous peoples in all corners of this country finally had the right to vote and it was through Diefenbaker's bill of rights that we saw the first written efforts at enshrining the rights and freedoms of Canadians.

That history and protection of rights and freedoms continues under other Conservative leaders as well. We need to be proud of their efforts. Indeed, under the leadership of former prime minister Mulroney and former foreign minister Joe Clark we saw the strong stand that Mulroney and Clark took in defending us on the world stage in calling out the apartheid regime in South Africa. We saw the efforts they led in the Commonwealth to make that happen and we saw the work they undertook here at home in Canada when it came to the defence of Canadian rights and freedoms. Their efforts on the two constitutional accords did, in fact, fail but, nonetheless, attempted to enshrine those rights and freedoms and ensure that all members in this country signed on.

To the issue at hand of this bill, Bill C-316, I think Canadians would be forgiven in not fully understanding why this is before us today. Members will know that, in fact, the court challenges program exists today. It is a program that is run out of the University of Ottawa and funded by the Government of Canada, so why is this being done today? Canadians might be forgiven for perhaps seeing it somewhat odd or ironic that the government is creating a program that would sue itself, that would provide funds for the Canadian public to sue themselves. There is an odd strategy there.

If we look back at the history of the court challenges program, in 1978 this was first established under then prime minister Pierre E. Trudeau. It was primarily for language cases. We look at the importance of language rights here today in Canada, and indeed we have a bill before the House, as we speak, Bill C-13, which is the modernization of the Official Languages Act. As luck would have it, was one of the first files I worked on when I first came here in 2015 as a member of Parliament. I was the vice-chair of the official languages committee, the Anglo from southern Ontario at the official languages committee but it was, nonetheless, a great opportunity to learn my beloved second language.

• (1825)

The importance of having the rights of official language minorities protected across the country is, indeed, very important. Whether someone is a Franco-Ontarian, a Franco-Albertan or even from a small language community in the country, it is important to protect their right to be able to receive services in their second language.

My time is dwindling, but I understand I will have four minutes remaining when the House takes up this important issue next. I look forward to concluding my remarks on Bill C-316 next time.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member is quite correct.

The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

### *Government Orders*

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1830)

[*Translation*]

### AN ACT RESPECTING REGULATORY MODERNIZATION

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (for the President of the Treasury Board)** moved that Bill S-6, An Act respecting regulatory modernization, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology.

**Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would ask for the consent of the House to share my time with the member for Kings—Hants.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Does the hon. member have the consent of the House to split his time?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Hon. Greg Fergus:** Madam Speaker, before I begin my speech, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge that we are gathered here on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

I am very pleased to add my voice to the debate on Bill S-6, an act respecting regulatory modernization. Regulations are the book of rules that govern how businesses operate and that protect consumers, the environment, our health and our safety. As we have seen, these rules can pile up and become obsolete over time. When that happens, innovation and growth are stifled, which weakens the economy and causes more problems for Canadians.

[*English*]

Modernizing our regulatory system improves Canada's ability to attract investment in growth-oriented businesses. That is why this bill is so important. It would have an important impact on Canadian businesses and advance public service efficiencies.

In a time of economic recovery, Bill S-6 would ensure that the legislative frameworks that support Canada's regulatory system evolve with the changing technologies and environment.

[*Translation*]

The fact is that we have been working on the modernization of regulations for some time. The Budget Implementation Act, 2019, No. 1 amended 12 regulatory instruments with the first annual regulatory modernization bill. It included making changes to digitalize paper-based processes, streamlining the review process for zero-emission vehicles, and enabling innovation by changing regulatory requirements to test new products.

The fact is that regular and eminently sensible updates ensure greater competitiveness. At the same time, we must protect Canadians' health, safety and environment.

*Government Orders*

An important way to ensure that we can modernize and streamline regulations while protecting Canadians and the environment is to put in place an in-depth and effective review process. To that end, this bill will serve as a recurring legislative mechanism. This means that the Government of Canada can ensure that the regulatory system remains pertinent, effective and up to date. It is designed to address the legislative challenges raised by businesses and citizens through consultations and targeted regulatory reviews.

In fact, consultations with stakeholders in the business sector led to the inclusion of this recurring mechanism. The economic strategy tables and the Advisory Council on Economic Growth pointed out that creating a regular mechanism such as this is essential to improving Canada's regulatory system.

I would also like to point out that the External Advisory Committee on Regulatory Competitiveness, made up of stakeholders from business and academia and consumers, has recommended continuing efforts to keep the administrative burden of regulation at a reasonable level and to ensure that regulations stand the test of time.

• (1835)

[English]

At its core, Bill S-6 proposes to modify 28 different acts through 45 common-sense amendments to modernize our regulatory system.

For example, the bill contains amendments to the Fisheries Act that would make it clear that fisheries officers have the authority for minor violations to reach an agreement with fishers instead of taking them to court, an authority that was unclear in the existing legislation. Not only would this reduce the number of lengthy and costly court processes, but it would also ensure small violations do not result in criminal records and the stigma and barriers that could come as a result. Importantly, this change has been supported by the fishing community and by indigenous peoples.

[Translation]

Another example is the minor change proposed to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency Act. In short, this amendment would allow the CFIA to provide services and allow businesses to interact with the agency electronically instead of through paper transactions. This will give businesses more flexibility in their interactions with the federal government, resulting in a reduced regulatory burden.

There are also proposed amendments to the Canada Transportation Act that would allow us to adopt international transportation safety standards faster, in consultation with the businesses affected.

As we have seen, even minor changes can often have a significant positive impact on various sectors of the economy, and I have covered only three of the 45 amendments included in this bill. In addition, all of the proposals are cost-neutral, with little or no associated risk.

[English]

Bill S-6 helps ensure that our regulatory system stays up to date and sets up Canadians and businesses for success in the years ahead by amending laws that are too inflexible, too specific or simply out-

dated. This bill is an important reminder of the need for ongoing regulatory review and legislation that stands the test of time.

I want to also assure all hon. members that the bill is not a one-off.

[Translation]

It will be an annual undertaking. In fact, work on the next bill is already under way.

The Canadian regulatory system plays a key role in helping companies succeed and in protecting Canadians and the environment. For our economy to keep growing, we need a more effective and streamlined regulatory system that keeps on delivering world-class protection for consumers, health, safety and the environment.

This is exactly what Bill S-6 does. It helps modernize the current rules to make things easier for companies, and it will continue to set up regulatory agencies, stakeholders and Canadians for success. This is something we can all get behind.

• (1840)

[English]

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I found it interesting that throughout the member's speech, he quite often made reference to the environment.

Through you to the member, I am curious what specific regulation the government is changing that would prevent it from once again handing out a \$13-billion subsidy to the one automaker in this country that has actually been charged for violating CEPA. Which regulation would it like to change to make sure that does not happen again?

**Hon. Greg Fergus:** Madam Speaker, I know it sticks in the hon. member's craw that Canada is now making a transition to a clean, green economy, especially in key sectors, such as the automotive sector.

Let me get back to Bill S-6.

[Translation]

I can tell members why this process is so important. We are going to review all of the government regulations to ensure that they are still up to date. Any obsolete regulations that are no longer useful must be removed. We must be sure to remain competitive so that the Canadian economy performs and so that we can protect Canadians and especially the environment.

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague for his excellent speech.

*Government Orders*

It is important to modernize regulations and to keep them up to date. It is important that they be simple, clear and identical in both languages. I am a member of the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations, and we often have to repeatedly ask departments and ministers to correct discrepancies between the English and French versions of certain regulations and orders.

This week, we sent a notice of disallowance for a problem that has been going on for 25 years. I was not even old enough to vote when this problem arose. The fact that departments do not respond to the committee and that ministers refuse to testify in committee is an ongoing problem.

Do the government's objectives include fixing the relationship with the committee so that there will be more constructive interaction when it comes to modernizing our regulations and addressing any problems with them?

**Hon. Greg Fergus:** Madam Speaker, I could not agree more with my colleague from Mirabel on this issue.

The committee he is a member of may be one of the House of Commons' most important committees. I am not sure what I did in my life to deserve to be a member of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs and the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics. I wanted to be a member of that committee because at a joint committee of senators and members, parliamentarians have an opportunity to really get to the bottom of things and to require that the machinery of government change or get rid of things that have been dragging on for years. There are consequences to violating the requests of the committee.

Bill S-6 gives us the chance to modernize regulations, in a similar fashion to the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations. I hope it will lighten that important committee's workload.

[*English*]

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I, too, want to thank the member across the way for his speech on the importance of Bill S-6.

Bill S-6 is a massive bill. It contemplates minor amendments to a great series of ministries, and it is important work.

It is my understanding that consultations had taken place, vast consultations prior to COVID, beginning as early as 2017 and manifesting in 2019. However, we found there was not one labour organization consulted. Can the member speak to why there was an absence of consultation with labour?

**Hon. Greg Fergus:** Madam Speaker, unfortunately, I cannot, but I will engage to get back to the member and find out why that was the case.

Labour is a very important element in terms of some of the key stakeholders, and we should be consulting not only with businesses, but also with labour, government and academics.

I do engage to get back to the member with a response.

• (1845)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be here in the House with all my colleagues to discuss Bill S-6. This bill is very important for addressing the red tape that exists in our federal system.

[*English*]

I heard some of the comments, and it seems that most members of Parliament believe this is reasonable and straightforward legislation. We are taking important steps to be able to reduce unnecessary irritants in our legislation to create an ease and efficiency about how the Government of Canada interacts with a variety of different sectors.

I am the proud chair of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, and a lion's share of the provisions in Bill S-6 relates to agriculture; therefore, I put my hand up for the opportunity to speak to this legislation today. It relates to the opportunity to work with different agencies to help reduce some of that administrative burden. Representing Kings—Hants, where agriculture and farming are big parts of our economy, I often hear from stakeholders about the importance of small legislative and regulatory tweaks that actually mean just as much, in some cases, as government programming and funding.

I want to take an opportunity tonight to address some of the elements of the bill and offer some suggestions on where the government can go even further, because it is going to be really important in the days ahead. I also want to compliment the work on this bill in that it is a really important start, and it is important that we advance this through the House.

First of all, under the Seeds Act and the Feeds Act, for the CFIA, there is an ability for mutual recognition of products that may be deemed novel to Canada but have had approval elsewhere, in other jurisdictions with similar processes to ours, to be able to expedite approvals. Traditionally, the CFIA did not have that tool, where there was an ability to grant mutual recognition. What an opportunity this is to be able to expedite processes.

In a world where we are dealing with a global competitive marketplace, time matters. Having the ability to get these approvals and making sure the tools are available to the agriculture sector and to farmers are important steps. We do not have to compromise our public policy and public values around making sure there is due diligence, because we can rely on sound science and processes from other jurisdictions that we trust. I just want to highlight that.

*Government Orders*

I have had the opportunity to talk at quite considerable length about the idea that we should expand that pathway and create a presumptive approval. There is an opportunity for the CFIA and the Pest Management Regulatory Agency to be able to have an expedited pathway where an applicant can present evidence and the science that was used in a jurisdiction with similar practices and standards to Canada to expedite those pathways. I have encouraged the Minister of Health to look at this. I know the government is contemplating it, but I hope the bill could be a catalyst for driving this forward in the days ahead.

I also want to talk about the idea of trying to make some changes around how we meter and target electricity. This is a conversation that will become even more important in the days ahead, as we start to make really important moves to decarbonize our economy and talk about some of the standards. I have not gone through all of these in depth.

I want to compliment Senator Colin Deacon, who is in the other place. He has done tremendous work in stewarding Bill S-6 to us here in the House, and I want to make sure that is on the record in Hansard. He has also done tremendous work to help advance this in the days ahead.

Why is this important? It really matters in terms of getting efficiencies in how the government deals not only with large businesses but also with small businesses. Every member of Parliament has small businesses in their ridings that deal with the Government of Canada, whether it is through incorporation under the CBCA or other types of measures. We have to be mindful of that in the days ahead. There are opportunities for the government to go even further.

● (1850)

Canada actually ranks relatively poorly in the command and control regulations. What I mean is that we set out a legislative process whereby an applicant has to follow every single step that we determine necessary to get regulatory approval, versus an approach where we identify what outcome we need so that we can determine an approval, whether it is through government agencies or civil servants.

I have heard an analogy before, Madam Speaker, and I will use it for you. Maybe there is a good bakery in your riding. You do not walk into that bakery and say, "This is the exact recipe", give it to the baker and tell them to bake the cake. There is trust in the baker, and they are told that the cake you want is round, delicious and chocolate. You would want to go in and describe that cake, as opposed to going in with a prescribed notion and saying, "Bake this exact cake." The cake would be described to meet satisfaction, and the baker would be allowed to go and illustrate how they made that cake. Hopefully, there would be approval.

We need to be able to do that moving forward. The Speaker might have high standards of what her cake is, but she needs to describe it. That is the difference between command and control. She is not saying, "Here is the recipe; go bake this cake." She is describing what type of cake she wants and then letting the baker be creative in delivering that cake. That is the best example. I look forward to the Hansard record of us talking about baked cakes and people asking how the heck this is important to Canadians.

It matters. We need a little more freedom in how we regulate. We have seen instances of regulatory approvals recently, including in my own backyard. I want to make sure it is very clear on the record that I think this is somewhere we have to go in the days ahead.

I can say this: I think the Liberal government is doing the right thing on Bill S-6. Let us look at important major projects that have to get done in this country. The Minister of Natural Resources has highlighted this. In our critical minerals sector, an extremely important question is this: How do we find a way to create efficiencies in the permitting process without compromising our public policy values?

There is a lot of room for us, as parliamentarians, to dig in on this question. Whether it is our decarbonized future, and how we reduce emissions and fight climate change, or whether it is our economic competitiveness, the economy is strong right now. Frankly, employment numbers are really good in this country. There are a lot of good indicators, but we could do even better.

How do we find ways on non-cost measures to be able to drive the initiatives that matter to Canadians? In this way, how can we reach the public policy goals that we are setting for ourselves, not only the government but, indeed, every member of this House that wants to see the best for Canada? How can we look at a formalized mechanism?

I want to compliment my predecessor, the hon. Scott Brison, who represented my riding. He served as the president of the Treasury Board. Let me recognize the current Acting President of the Treasury Board for her work in helping to steward and drive this thing forward.

In the past, in the 42nd Parliament, the government had regulatory review processes that were successful. How do we build on that success? How do we create a formalized mechanism that would allow the government to actually look at strategic growth areas; work with the business sector; work with organized labour, as one of my hon. colleagues mentioned earlier in a question; and work with stakeholders to identify ways that we could expedite process? This matters for the business community, for our competitiveness and for good jobs, whether in unionized or non-unionized contexts. This is how we have to move forward.

I am very proud of what the government has produced. Leading into the fall economic statement, I hope the government continues to build on that success by creating mechanisms that could do exactly that. It could focus on Canada's competitiveness and on non-cost measures that could help drive our public policy outcomes. Surely, everyone in this House would be able to agree that this is an important pathway that will make a difference in the days ahead.

It was a pleasure to get to speak to Bill S-6. I look forward to questions from my hon. colleagues.



*Government Orders*

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the member briefly mentioned the PMRA.

We are having a lot of issues with the PMRA regulatory regime right now. There are many products that have been arbitrarily banned or pulled from the shelves because of uncertainty around the PMRA. Would the member support making some changes to regulations that would actually provide more certainty for our producers, so that companies are not arbitrarily pulling products off the shelves because of regulatory uncertainty?

• (1855)

**Mr. Kody Blois:** Madam Speaker, it is an important question. I represent an agricultural riding, as I know the hon. colleague across the way does as well; as such, I will say that the PMRA is a really important agency for agricultural competitiveness. Obviously, its decisions always have to be based on science and the evidence that is before it. I am not fit to make those decisions, and I would respectfully say, neither is the member opposite.

I said in my speech, and I want to reiterate in my answer here, that if there are ways that the PMRA can create expedited pathways based on the sound science of other trusted jurisdictions, that is extremely important. It could increase Canada's competitiveness by reducing the lag time before an applicant applies and when they can actually get approval. Therefore, I would agree with the member opposite that where we can use regulatory reform to help drive processes without compromising values, we absolutely should be doing that.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech and for speaking French. It was excellent.

The bill would repeal section 15 of the Canada Oil and Gas Operations Act. As a result, regulatory changes to oil and gas operations would essentially no longer have to be published in Part I of the Canada Gazette.

The Senate debates revealed that many regulations are irrelevant, no longer used and no longer managed, and that changes could facilitate the process. As it stands, however, Bill S-6 does not distinguish between minor regulatory changes and changes that would be much more consequential.

I am wondering if my colleague believes that this matter could be studied in committee to ensure that there is still a certain obligation to publish substantive regulatory changes that do not simply seek to simplify the process.

**Mr. Kody Blois:** Madam Speaker, I absolutely agree with the proposal to study this bill in committee. In my view, it is very important to publish major regulatory changes.

At the same time, I believe that, with respect to the Atlantic provinces, the bill is very important as a means of identifying a way to adopt regulations for offshore wind power for the hydrogen sector.

I believe that measures for Atlantic Canada are very important, but that it is also important to be transparent in the future. I would be pleased to continue the work on this bill in committee.

[*English*]

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to my colleague's speech. While my riding is not fully agricultural, we have a lot of small producers in my riding. They are concerned about food security and about quality of food. I know that my colleague, the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, is busy consulting in the agricultural community on this bill.

The member's speech raised a significant concern for me when he talked about presumptive approvals of things in agriculture, using countries with what he would call similar standards. However, in agriculture, that usually means the United States, which has significantly lower standards in most agricultural and food products. We know that in things like milk and cheese, there are extra additives allowed in the U.S. that are not allowed in Canada. Does the member share that concern, and does he think there are adequate protections in these presumptive approval processes?

**Mr. Kody Blois:** Madam Speaker, absolutely, I will address the presumptive approval. This is something I am pushing as a member of Parliament and saying that this is something the government should take on. What this bill actually does is outline a process where the CFIA could find mutual recognition between other jurisdictions. The member opposite points to the United States, but this is one example. There are multiple jurisdictions around the world, I would submit to him, that we would share similar principles and values with.

In terms of the idea of a presumptive approval, it is not that there simply would be no review. We would look at the process and the science that was used in other jurisdictions and actually have an ability to see whether there is an expedited pathway on the strength and the resolution of that science. Therefore, I do not want the member to suggest that somehow there is no protocol in place. However, I hope he would agree that there is an ability to expedite this, where there are other jurisdictions with scientific processes that are very similar to those of Canada and that have demonstrably been proven safe. How do we find a way to make sure those small farmers the member talked about have the same access to the competitive tools as other farmers in other parts of the world?

• (1900)

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in the House and speak on behalf of the constituents of Calgary Midnapore. Of course, as the shadow minister for the Treasury Board, I am responsible for critiquing this bill and overseeing the debate for the official opposition this evening, and it is a pleasure to do so.

I am sure members are aware that Bill S-6 is the second piece of regulatory legislation aiming to clean up small pieces of legislation throughout a series of departments and ministries that have required these small pieces of legislation to be cleaned up for some time. I will add that the first was completed before the pandemic. This one, the second, is unfortunately a little behind schedule as a result of the pandemic, but the government expects to conduct this exercise on a yearly basis.

*Government Orders*

What I think is very interesting is that in the third round, the government will start to consult with outside stakeholders. Of course, as the official opposition, we are always for consultation and transparency with Canadians, for Canadians working for themselves and for Canadians making decisions for themselves, so I certainly encourage the government to pursue this route of consultation and stakeholder talks in its next round before it proceeds to it.

In respect of the Bill S-6 document we have before us today, one thing is evident to me, and it is seen, I would say, throughout all of the correspondence I have received at my house, all of the conversations I have had with my hon. colleagues and all of the debate we have had in the House: Canadians are defeated and exhausted. With this bill, it is easy to see why.

First of all, as members know, the cost of living has skyrocketed in this country at a time when Canadians need measures to reduce their cost of living. I need not remind members that both rents and mortgages have doubled since 2015, since the government has been in power. Also, food inflation has increased at the fastest pace in 40 years, up by 10.8%. Butter is by 16.9%; eggs are up 10.9%; breads, rolls and buns are up 17.6%; lettuce is up by 12.4%; and apples are up by 11.8%.

Really, this is a time when Canadians need cost of living reductions. It means we need a government committed to balancing the budget, lowering deficits and working toward getting rid of our national debt. I really do not see this bill working toward that.

I am sure members are aware that over a million Canadians are using food banks at this time. In fact, it is 1.5 million, I believe. I am sure everyone saw the social media post, which was very unfortunate, of the Fort York Food Bank about the lineup there. Again, at a time when we need a government to be thinking about reducing waste instead of having red tape and additional measures that will cost more for government and more for Canadians, the government simply does not have that on its mind.

With that, I will make reference again to some of the numbers we see from the government.

As shadow minister for the Treasury Board, I can tell members that the cost of the public service has increased by over 50%. It is 53%, in fact, and it is crazy. If members can believe it, that is an additional \$21 billion spent on our public service. We have this cost of living crisis, yet we have these incredible increases in the public service and in spending.

• (1905)

As I know everyone is well aware through conversations we have had in the House, in addition to that \$21 billion spent on public servants, \$22 billion was spent on outside consultants. Of course, one of them was McKinsey, a firm that was studied in depth at the committee on which I sit, government operations. I hope the transport committee will finally get an opportunity to discuss that after some back-and-forth among its members relating to the motion they passed to consider it.

The different types of waste evident in Bill S-6 come at a time when we need to be thinking about saving money for Canadians and not having these incredible expenses. The federal debt, as I am

sure members are aware, reached \$1.22 trillion. That is \$81,000 of debt per household. This is the type of thing we need to focus on. The deficit for this fiscal year is projected to be \$43 billion, and that is something we need to really think about. Also, the deficit for next year is projected to be \$40.1 billion. That is really something.

If we look at these incredible numbers, our debt-to-GDP ratio is projected to increase from 42.4% in this fiscal year to 43.5% in the next fiscal year. The finance minister indicated prior to the budget that she was going to consider fiscal restraint, but we do not see anything like this. The result is that we end up with a bill like Bill S-6, with more—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Kings—Hants has a point of order.

**Mr. Kody Blois:** Madam Speaker, I do not mean to take away from my hon. colleague's time, but this is about Bill S-6. I have been listening intently for the last few minutes. I do not know what your ruling may be, but she seems to be quite off the mark from the piece of legislation before the House. If you could ask the member how her remarks today relate to Bill S-6, I would certainly appreciate that.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I think the hon. member has been making references to the bill, from my understanding of the bill.

The hon. member for Edmonton Riverbend is rising on the same point of order.

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux:** Madam Speaker, I listened intently to the speech by the member for Kings—Hants and he talked a lot about cake. He talked a lot about how he would reference cake—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** That is getting into debate.

I am going to give the hon. member for Calgary Midnapore the opportunity to continue her speech and make her case and points for Bill S-6.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleagues for ensuring that the debate stays relevant.

Certainly the amount of money the Liberal government is spending is critical to every bill, so thank you, Madam Speaker, for overseeing the discussion as I continue my interaction here today.

*Government Orders*

As I was saying, the finance minister indicated that she would use fiscal restraint. I do not believe she did so. If I could go even further back to when Bill S-6 was first being discussed, which was last spring before we broke for the summer recess, it was at that time and even into the fall that the finance minister indicated she was going to implement an idea that our leader has committed to: the “pay as you go” system. She said she would have fiscal restraint, but I do not believe she has that. Last year, at the end of the spring session, Bill S-6 was being discussed, as well as the “pay as you go” system, but both of these things did not happen.

In relation to our economy, I talked about Canadians being frustrated, defeated and exhausted. I am sure members saw the article in *The Globe and Mail* today indicating that this point in Canadian history is the worst time for new small business start-ups. This touches my heart very much. I know members have heard me speak before about how I come from a small business family in Calgary Midnapore. For me, growing up, small business was always front of mind. This included regulations, and I believe small businesses will struggle with the changing regulations indicated in Bill S-6. Again, if we look across the different departments, we can see how this can happen. Those are a couple of points in relation to Bill S-6.

I will also point out that in Bill S-6, with the way the government legislates and operates in general, the language is consistently filled with jargon, with words and phrases that are difficult for Canadians to interpret. I started out this speech by talking about how legislation should be for Canadians. It is the common Canadian we should be legislating for. When we have phrases that are too complex for Canadians to understand, it does not help them. It does not empower them. We need to do that.

With that, I would like to take a moment to talk about the plain language law that we would implement once we are in government, again in an effort to get government working for Canadians instead of having Canadians work for the government, as we are seeing in this case. I thought that was a very important point to mention.

As shadow minister for the Treasury Board, another place where I see this take place is with the public accounts. There needs to be much revision to the public accounts and how they are presented. I do not believe Canadians understand them in the format they are in presently. I always share the story that in my home growing up, like the concept we have in our home, a budget was like this: We bring in this much money as a household, we spend this much money as a household and we save this much money as a household. I do not believe the public accounts reflect a simple concept such as this, a concept that many Canadian households and many Canadians sitting around the dinner table have to follow. Again, this is in relation to the jargon, the lack of plain language and the complexity we see in regulations and legislation from the government, which is relevant to Bill S-6.

We also talk about Bill S-6 being indicative of another concept, which is very dear to the official opposition and the heart of our leader: getting rid of the gatekeepers. That essentially means making it easier for Canadians to live, to conduct business and to have the quality of life they deserve, which the government is not delivering to them, as evidenced by some of the earlier indicators I gave.

We as the official opposition have provided some constructive ideas for getting rid of the gatekeepers.

• (1910)

For example, our opposition day motion that was presented yesterday talked about getting rid of the municipal gatekeepers, which, coming from Calgary, I have had an opportunity to see first-hand at Calgary City Council. Having done some advocacy work at the civic level, I can say that all governments must be working together, pulling in the same direction in an effort to provide Canadians with the best standard of living, and that includes housing.

Especially when we consider the ambitious immigration targets of the current government, we need to seriously and sincerely consider how we are going to accommodate all of these newcomers. Again, I say this as an Albertan. Alberta is a place of incredible growth and we are so happy that so many new Canadians and so many Canadians who have abided in other places are making the choice to come to Alberta, but we need to seriously consider how we are going to support our citizens.

In his opposition day motion speech yesterday, my leader talked about how we will incentivize those municipalities that make the decision to build more homes for Canadians, and we will not reward those that do not. This is an excellent example of where we have to think about the gatekeepers. Bill S-6 is just an indicator that there are so many gatekeepers across government, when we have to make these minute changes to legislation which seems applicable to ages ago, including things as simple as removing stickers from liquid vending machines. It is astounding to me that these types of things are coming to light now.

Another example I will give of the official opposition's desire to get rid of the gatekeepers is our unique idea to bring home doctors and nurses and to allow for a Blue Seal in the same way that we have the Red Seal in the trade professions. That is wonderful. It is just fantastic how we have more young people joining the trades. I am especially excited about more young women joining the trades. I am certainly glad to see some of the legislation, even if it is at a provincial level, allowing young women to feel comfortable in joining the trades. Whether it is providing safe and clean restrooms for them or whether it is providing equipment that is suitable for their size and stature, whatever that may be, that is just excellent.

*Government Orders*

Our leader and the official opposition have found that the licensing bodies create endless barriers and red tape, which again is a topic that is talked about much in Bill S-6, resulting in an unnecessary, even greater shortage of doctors and nurses. I would like to quote this sentence from my leader. He said, “The Blue Seal will mean that it won’t matter where someone comes from, it matters what they can do.” That is just fantastic. If these doctors and nurses meet our Blue Seal standards, they will be able to work in our health care system. Again, this is just another example of the Conservative Party, the official opposition, looking for true efficiencies.

Bill S-6 addresses these tiny things. Really our energies could be spent on addressing much larger problems and finding efficiencies in larger problems rather than, in many cases of Bill S-6, providing opportunities for even more legislation through regulation.

I will add that legislation by regulation has not always resulted in the best outcomes for Canadians. I know that as we discuss Bill C-290 in the government operations committee right now, we are discussing, for example, the role of the public service integrity commissioner. A big discussion around these debates on Bill C-290 is really to decide how much leeway we will give the public service integrity commissioner in terms of regulation.

• (1915)

These are significant things that touch upon workers and will gravely determine whether a public servant decides to file a grievance and if they feel comfortable in doing so. This is something that is very important.

Another situation where we saw regulation was not sufficiently applied, for this official opposition, was the order in council regarding firearms. My goodness, that was before the pandemic, so three or four years ago now. That is a time when it most probably should have been legislation. Of course, we are going through the Bill C-21 process right now, which the Conservatives oppose. No matter what the wolf in sheep’s clothing looks like, we will oppose Bill C-21. That is an example where regulation was used and perhaps should not have been. Perhaps it should have been left to legislation. This is most definitely another example.

I look through these different examples. There are other examples that my colleagues will talk about this evening, things they are very concerned about, interpretations of endangered species, for example. Again, there are more topics filled with jargon, but members will give their comments as well as to what interpretation of this legislation will mean through regulation.

It is something important to keep in mind, because, as I indicated, legislation should be made by the people for the people. This is something the official opposition, the Conservatives, are committed to. I think about how we are going to deal with the complex issues ahead of us, such as artificial intelligence, if we are talking about liquids coming out of vending machines.

Bill S-6 brings back the complexity, the jargon and the gatekeepers of this legislation. We on this side of the House want to have legislation that works for every Canadian in every single home, my home, all our homes, so let us bring it home and let us re-evaluate Bill S-6.

• (1920)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am so glad the member brought up yesterday’s opposition day motion, because I was not here so I was not able to contribute. Now I have the opportunity to ask her a question given she spent some time talking about it.

The Conservatives are talking about municipal gatekeepers, which is an interesting way to reflect on and appreciate municipal councils and mayors throughout the country who are elected and trying to represent their constituents. Nonetheless, what the Conservatives are doing is basically suggesting the federal government can somehow affect the direct policies in neighbourhoods about zoning, intensification and increasing density.

I know she says and the Conservatives say that this is about incentivizing municipalities to build more housing and tying, I guess, money to that incentivizing process. Can she explain to this House exactly how they would incentivize that, but more importantly, how it is different from the current existing housing accelerator fund that does exactly that?

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Madam Speaker, I am glad my colleague from Kingston and the Islands had an opportunity to weigh in on this conversation today.

First of all, I have the utmost respect for our civic politicians. I want to give a special shout-out to Dan McLean, who represents Ward 13 on Calgary City Council. I thank Dan for all the work he does and ask him to please keep fighting for the constituents and for all Calgarians.

It is very clear the housing plan of the current government is not working, as is indicated by the results. Providing incentives to Canadian cities, Canadian municipalities, is simply looking at the results, so how many homes they built and incentivizing that. There is a saying that if what one is doing is not working, one has to try something different. This is something different and I think it is going to work.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ):** Madam Speaker, Bill S-6 contains a series of regulatory changes that could make life simpler for companies and the business community in Quebec and Canada.

Not to make any assumptions, Madam Speaker, but you do not look like someone who would want to file two tax returns, because your time is valuable and you do not want to waste it doing the same thing twice. I know you do not want to file two tax returns, and neither do Quebec businesses. This was confirmed by a motion passed unanimously by the Quebec National Assembly calling for a single tax return.

Until Quebec becomes a country and we are independent, does my colleague not think that it would be a good idea to make life simpler for our business owners by allowing them to file a single tax return?

*Government Orders*

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Mirabel for his question. I also want to thank him again for his bill, Bill C-290.

The idea he just mentioned was part of our platform in the last two election campaigns. I am pretty sure about that with respect to individual tax returns. I am not 100% sure about it when it comes to businesses, but certainly with respect to individuals.

I know that the Quebec members of our caucus, but really all members of our caucus, agree that Canadians should be able to report their income in the simplest and easiest way possible.

I therefore agree with my colleague. We support the idea of collecting taxes as he has suggested.

• (1925)

[*English*]

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I think the hilarious thing about being a Conservative is that they get a slogan, and they get use it again and again.

There is this whole thing about gatekeepers. Everybody is a gatekeeper now. The leader of the Conservative Party has never had a job and he lives in a 19-room mansion, so the only thing he has ever come up with are groundskeepers who are paid for by the taxpayers.

I listened to my hon. colleague, and she is upset that firearms legislation may be dealt with by order in council, when it should be dealt with by legislation. That is based on political amnesia. The Harper government used an order in council to stop the gatekeepers, the RCMP, from designating what were dangerous weapons.

The Harper government brought in the use of the order in council on firearms. The Harper government did not want it to go through legislation, and it did not want police involvement. Now we are in a situation where the Conservatives are crying and outraged. Now they are defending trying to stop changes to the legislation that would stop ghost guns. I do not know what they figure in terms of gatekeepers who are running around with ghost guns, but we have to deal with these issues, and it was the Harper government that used an order in council to exploit the ability of the gun lobby and to circumvent legislation for the Canadian people.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Madam Speaker, I am certainly not going to let any member in this House, be they from that part of the government or the part of the government back there, deter me from a future that I believe is better for Canadians, and that is a Conservative government. These individuals can belittle me, belittle my ideas and belittle the ideas from my party, but they will not deter me, my colleagues or my leader from fighting for a government that is better for Canadians.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, with all due respect, the member never answered my question, and I really want her to bring it home on this so that I can get a straight answer to my question.

What I asked was how the proposal by the Conservatives about incentivizing municipalities is any different from the current housing accelerator fund that exists. If she is saying that we are unsuccessful and are not producing results, what she is effectively saying is that their plan would do the same.

Can she explain to me how the Conservatives' plan to incentivize building housing is different from the current housing accelerator fund that exists?

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Madam Speaker, the government is not getting results. It is absolutely evident. We have had individuals from other parties talk about the necessity of providing housing at all different scales of the housing continuum. Our platform has done this in the past as well.

I do not know what I could even say to the member to bring to light just what a failure the Liberals' plan has been. We have to try something different and some new ideas. I believe this is a different idea and a new idea to incentivize, because I have not seen anything change in my municipality, and I have not seen—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Edmonton Manning.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the RMB is supposed to be instituted annually, as per the government. The last one was done four years ago. I cannot believe how bad the government is at math. Something that has to be done every year is being done once every four years.

Could my hon. colleague elaborate on that failure in dealing with something such as this, which is supposed to be very important?

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Madam Speaker, my wonderful colleague from Edmonton Manning is absolutely correct. I indicated this concern in my speech. I am very concerned what this glacial pace of re-evaluating regulations and policies means for the economic future and security future of our nation. On a daily basis in the House, we are seeing it being compromised.

I would say to my colleague that I am really looking forward to the third edition of Bill S-6 having some clauses on VCRs, beta tapes and compact discs.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon:** Madam Speaker, I would like to follow up on the question from the member for Kingston and the Islands.

Clearly, the national housing strategy has been a failure. The Conservative strategy is to get back on track and attack our elected municipal officials by judging their work and telling them that they are not capable of making the right decisions. I would like to point out that the elected officials of the Union des municipalités du Québec are in Gatineau right now. I want to say hello and let them know that we appreciate their work and their skills, and we are happy that they are here.

*Government Orders*

The member and her party say they will respect provincial jurisdictions and stop imposing conditions on them. At the same time, in their opposition motion, they said they would impose conditions on municipalities and, if they do not listen to what know-it-all Ottawa says, they would take away their funding.

How is that possible?

• (1930)

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Madam Speaker, it warms my heart to see that we both care about our counterparts at the municipal level. We both have hope for more housing in Quebec and Alberta—

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

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I seek the consent of the House to share my time with my unique and extraordinary colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Does the hon. member have consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Madam Speaker, over the past few days, my area has had significant rainfall. As a result, numerous rivers are overflowing and there is major flooding, damage and all sorts of issues. Many houses are flooded. People in my riding have lost a lot. Many roads were cut off and are still not passable. A number of communities are isolated. It is a sad state of affairs, and I am deeply distressed. My thoughts go out to the people of Saint-Côme as well as Sainte-Émélie-de-l'Énergie, Chertsey, Saint-Alphonse-Rodriguez, Entrelacs, Rawdon, Saint-Michel-des-Saints and Saint-Zénon, and of course the Atikamekw community in Manawan. I am also thinking of the people of Saint-Donat, Notre-Dame-de-la-Merci and Sainte-Béatrix.

Everyone is hoping that the rain will stop soon and that we can carry on with the repair work. I would like to thank the municipal elected officials, their teams on the ground and the many volunteers who are doing an incredible job under the circumstances. I would also like to thank Quebec for its involvement. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the personal commitment of the Minister of Emergency Preparedness. I had the opportunity to speak with him and he, too, offers his full co-operation and is very saddened by the situation.

Obviously, we also stand in solidarity with the people of other municipalities in Lanaudière, as well as in the Laurentians and the Outaouais, and of course those in the Charlevoix region and Baie-Saint-Paul in particular. Our thoughts are with them. We are terribly saddened by the tragic accident involving the two firefighters who were on a rescue mission.

As we can see, climate change is generating more extreme weather events. We need to start adapting to this new reality now. Clearly, infrastructure upgrades are now urgent. Ottawa must contribute. I also invite this government to listen to the needs of municipalities to bring all small dams up to standard.

Let us get back to Bill S-6.

As members know, this regulatory modernization bill is introduced annually. It includes minor changes to ease the administra-

tive burden on businesses, facilitate digital interactions with the government, streamline regulatory processes, provide exemptions from certain regulatory requirements for testing new products and facilitate cross-border trade. It updates 29 laws with 46 amendments and affects 12 government departments and agencies. I did say minor changes.

Bill S-6 helps ensure that the regulatory environment evolves in step with technologies and takes into account the realities of businesses. That is a very good thing, even though it is a bit late. The government announced its intention to introduce this bill in 2018, or five years ago. We know that there was a pandemic, but we also know that this government does not move very quickly.

In short, we are studying a bill to modernize regulations. The amendments are minor and we find most of them to be pertinent.

However, as long as we will be doing that, I would have liked the bill to go much further. For example, it could have addressed the regulations buried in the Income Tax Act, which legalize the use of tax havens to avoid paying what is owed. We have recognized that for many years. It is high time we withdrew them. I am referring here to section 5907 of the Income Tax Regulations, which allow banks, web giants and multinationals to report their profits made here in a tax haven to avoid paying tax. It is about time to make illegal what is immoral. This is an opportunity to withdraw regulations that contravene the very spirit of the law.

The use of tax havens is a scourge that undermines our public services. Globally, it is estimated that \$12 trillion in assets are hidden in tax havens. This situation is only possible because of the hypocrisy of western governments, starting with England and the United States. In Canada, the examples of Paul Martin and Bill Morneau speak for themselves. While Ottawa was legalizing using Barbados as a tax haven, Paul Martin, the then minister of finance, was registering his company there to avoid paying taxes. The Morneau Shepell family business publicly offered its services to retirement funds and insurance companies to help them use tax havens, even though he was serving as finance minister for the current government.

According to expert Renaud Van Ruymbeke, despite the efforts of the OECD and the G20, tax havens have never been used more often.

A world of shell companies, trusts, front men and straw men, financial advisors and legal experts, also known as “trustees”, is protecting the perpetrators of massive fraud, certainly tax fraud, but often also criminal fraud. There is a mix of drug traffickers, CEOs of multinational corporations looking to evade taxes, oligarchs, of course, mobsters, greedy and corrupt dictators...

• (1935)

Let us not forget that Mr. Van Ruymbeke was an investigative judge in the financial division of the Paris court. In a recent book, he explains how tax havens are used to hide assets and evade taxes.

*Government Orders*

Based on his investigative experience, he describes the complex techniques implemented by banks, firms and specialized offices. He also lists the main offshore financial centres, such as Delaware, the City of London, the British Isles, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Cyprus, Hong Kong, Singapore, Dubai, and so on.

According to this expert, international agreements yield almost no results. As he explained, and I quote, “these reforms have a flaw: They assume that bankers, trustees and consulting firms under the jurisdiction of tax havens will co-operate, under threat of sanctions. However, they live off this hidden money. Why would they report their clients, which would make them flee to other jurisdictions?”

In fact, he explains that these managers are continually adapting to new rules to continue protecting their clients' identities and assets, which makes it difficult to make any real changes.

Fortunately, there have been many leaks from whistle-blowers. They have shown just how widespread the use of tax havens is and they have mobilized us to take collective action. I want to once again quote Mr. Van Ruymbeke, who said, “The papers have thus become recurring global scandals. No financial centre is immune to these continuous revelations. I find that reassuring. There are cracks in even the thickest armour. Dubai, which never responded to my requests, is at the mercy of computer leaks and the Papers whistle-blowers, just like all of the financial centres.”

Names of the beneficiaries can be revealed and some evaded taxes can be recovered, but the judge reminded us that this is the exception. To really eliminate those privileges, we need to put an end to the complacency that currently exists. That takes political will. To accomplish this, every government needs to implement a centralized registry of all the accounts on its territory and create a list of the real beneficiaries.

Again according to Mr. Van Ruymbeke, “Every country also needs to create a registry of all of the corporations and make it accessible to everyone. We need to eradicate the fake Liechtenstein foundations and other shell companies.” He goes on to say, “Every country must ensure that the banks do not just go through the formalities but actually verify their clients' assets, particularly those of any front men whose personal resources do not justify the tens of millions of euros flowing into their accounts.”

Banks must be required to report suspicious transactions or face real penalties. The government needs to stop being soft on trustees and legal advisers who help arrange fraud. Banks that participate in tax evasion must be severely punished.

Shell companies should be prohibited altogether. If the sole purpose of a company is to conceal the identity of its owner, it should be illegal. This must be the case for shell companies in the Bahamas, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Panama and Delaware. Their sole purpose is to be used in offshore arrangements. This should also apply to Liechtenstein foundations, Anglo-Saxon trusts, and so on.

All countries that allow multinationals, banks and individuals with personal fortunes to escape taxation by using tax havens have an elephant in the room. How can we legitimately impose austerity policies, cutting public services or raising the retirement age, when

we allow the wealthy to evade taxes? It is high time we addressed this, including the regulations in section 5907 of the Income Tax Regulations.

● (1940)

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I know that my colleague from Joliette is very passionate about the issue of tax evasion. I understand, because we are constantly told that there is not enough money for health transfers. We are told that there is not enough money for the provinces. However, at the same time, we are depriving ourselves of important sources of revenue.

That said, with respect to tax evasion, there is always one country saying that it cannot be the first to make changes, because it must wait for the others to do so. Ultimately, no one ever does anything.

I would like to ask my colleague the following question: In this matter, why is Canada not showing any international leadership?

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Madam Speaker, Canada is lagging behind when it comes to dealing with tax evasion and tax avoidance. In the United States, the equivalent of the Canada Revenue Agency, or the IRS, has taken legal action. There have been criminal judgments and sentences have been imposed. This has never been done in Canada for tax evasion. More needs to be done.

The government says it has more means. Now, we are going to have better laws, but it also takes political will. We are still far from seeing results.

In the latest leaked “papers”, Radio-Canada reported that Revenu Québec had recovered more money than the Canada Revenue Agency, which had recovered 20 or 30 times less than its friends in Europe such as England, France and Germany.

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have a question for my colleague. Many businesses tell me that there is too much red tape in Canada. The administration is cumbersome. There are often delays at the municipal and federal levels. There are forms to fill out to participate in programs. It is onerous and complicated. A person almost needs a doctorate in administration to be able to fill out those forms.

Does my colleague think there might be a way to improve the situation?

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Lévis—Lotbinière. I completely agree with him. There is far too much paperwork. The departments do not communicate with each other. We need to do a lot more than what is set out in Bill S-6. Bill S-6 helps a little bit, but there is still a lot of work to be done after that.

*Government Orders*

One thing that the Bloc Québécois keeps bringing up and that I think the Conservative Party supports is the single tax return. We are asking that Quebecers only be required to fill out one tax return rather than two, and that that single tax return be administered by Quebec. There is a consensus on that in Quebec. That would mean a lot less paperwork for businesses. We are therefore once again asking the government to listen to us.

Of course, the government does not like that idea and wants to maintain control. Sharing power is not something the federal government likes to do. It prefers the idea of a legislative union where know-it-all Ottawa controls and oversees everything.

That is not our vision. We want to reduce the paperwork for businesses with a single tax return.

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon:** Madam Speaker, Bill S-6 contains a lot of little regulatory changes that we are told can make a big difference for the business community.

It seems to me that some big changes, like Quebec's independence, could eliminate some major duplication and simplify the lives of Canadians, Quebecers and businesses.

I am wondering whether my colleague can give us a few more examples on this lovely evening.

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Madam Speaker, again, I thank my colleague from Mirabel for his comments. Yes, indeed, we have two levels of government.

Because the decisions made here in Ottawa are not consistent with the values held by our distinct society, we have developed a sort of half-state that is more responsive to our needs. Meanwhile, half the taxes we pay come here. Sometimes these funds are spent in useful ways, but sometimes they are used for projects that we do not care about or that actually harm our interests and values.

Because we love Quebecers and want the best for them, our party is of the opinion that we had better make decisions ourselves in order to be fully accountable. Let us stay good neighbours instead of bad roommates.

I would obviously have a host of examples to give; however, since my time is limited, I will provide examples in a future speech.

● (1945)

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to a bill that responds to repeated requests from small and medium-sized businesses. It also contains provisions that affect large corporations, which will have to be examined more carefully.

I would like to begin by thanking my colleague from Joliette who has been strong and agile, just like Matthew Tkachuk in his fight against Toronto. That is what is sometimes missing from the Canadian economy and Canadian laws: strength and agility.

Like my colleagues, I do not have the luxury of holding the House at rapt attention while I talk about each of the amendments. I simply do not have enough time. That is why I think that a more detailed study of this bill in the various committees is quite warranted. I will, however, take a few moments to talk about some of those amendments.

Bill S-6 has many interesting provisions and will certainly make it easier to do business in Canada by eliminating outdated regulatory requirements and authorizing the use of modern means of communication. Believe it or not, there are government organizations that still use paper and fax machines. Worse yet, they force us to use paper and fax machines too. We even have a fax machine in each of our offices, I would remind everyone. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency is one such organization. There is something for everyone in this bill.

The bill proposes roughly 46 changes to 29 acts that are administered by the following organizations: the Canadian Food Inspection Agency; Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada; Natural Resources Canada; Environment and Climate Change Canada; Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. It might be a good idea to include Air Canada, in order to ensure that it provides quality service in the regions. That is another story.

On a more serious note, before I get to the heart of the matter, I would like to say a few words about a loss that is affecting our community and the Ukrainian community in Abitibi—Témiscamingue. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the contribution of Jim Slobodian, a resident with Ukrainian roots who did a lot for the Ukrainian community. He was instrumental in preserving his community's history in Abitibi—Témiscamingue, whether by sharing the history of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Rouyn-Noranda or by establishing the Camp Spirit Lake Interpretation Centre as a reminder of this internment camp, which was built near Amos in 1914 and closed in 1917.

Jim Slobodian was also a committed volunteer. He was involved in amateur sports and, along with Jean-Paul Charlebois, he negotiated the famous boxer Muhammad Ali's visit to Rouyn-Noranda in 1983, an historic event for the region that was documented in the film *Voir Ali*, by Martin Guérin. My father, Guy Lemire, and my uncle, Jean-Pierre Lemire, were also part of it. I invite everyone to watch it.

In short, Jim Slobodian was one of the many immigrants from eastern Europe who helped build Rouyn-Noranda. He later helped welcome Ukrainian nationals who moved to our area. His work in preserving the Ukrainian history of Rouyn-Noranda has helped ease the transition for the Ukrainian nationals that our region has recently welcomed. I salute Jim and thank him for everything.

Let us now get back to Bill S-6. It is precisely these types of outdated and, quite frankly, slow regulatory actions and processes that undermine the competitiveness of Canadian businesses and our confidence in the system. It also makes things more difficult for foreign companies that want to invest here. We were just talking about this today at the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology.



*Government Orders*

Without a doubt, the business world is constantly changing. Emerging technologies, new regulations and changing consumer preferences are among the many factors contributing to the rapid transformation of the business environment. Keeping pace with these changes is essential for companies to remain relevant and competitive.

There are many arguments in favour of this kind of annual exercise. This government initiative is interesting, provided that it takes into account the many reports that have addressed the importance of regulation or that have identified indicators affected by our economy's lack of efficiency and agility. Perhaps too much is being asked of entrepreneurs. Of course, the bureaucracy has become quite heavy on the federal side. It is essential to take stock.

I am thinking of the Deloitte report published in 2019 on the state of regulation, entitled "Making regulation a competitive advantage", which referred to Canada's regulatory environment as a core weakness.

I am also thinking of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology's study on the same subject and the report we produced, entitled "Small and Medium Enterprises in Canada: Charting a Competitive Future". This report talked about the labour shortage and all the regulatory paperwork required to hire foreign workers, especially in an agricultural or rural context.

Canada is a poor performer when it comes to regulating business activity, and the costs involved in meeting all government requirements are high, which affects competitiveness.

Three themes seem to have provided inspiration for Bill S-6: the ease of doing business, regulatory flexibility and agility, and the integrity of the regulatory system.

- (1950)

With regard to the ease of doing business and amendments 1 and 2 in particular, Bill S-6 proposes amendments to the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act so that businesses can more easily restructure their debt and continue to operate during periods of restructuring. The bill will also allow businesses to reach agreements with creditors without having to get approval from the court.

Right now, there is no mechanism to allow for the withdrawal of a request for mediation, even if both parties reach an agreement, which means that they often have to go through an unnecessary mediation process. That can result in higher costs and delay the completion of the bankruptcy process. What is more, given the growing use of digital and social media, local newspapers are not always the best way to keep creditors and other interested parties informed of the bankruptcy, even though that is one way to fund those newspapers. The funding of our local and regional media is very important. The amendment would allow the superintendent of bankruptcy to issue directives specifying the manner in which the notice should be published.

There is amendment 4 on trademarks, which authorizes the disclosure of certain information to the public. Bill S-6 would allow the Canadian Intellectual Property Office to disclose certain information about applications for trademark registration, including the

names and addresses of trademark holders and the trademark filing and registration dates.

Currently, the Trademarks Act prohibits the disclosure of this information except under certain limited circumstances, such as legal proceedings and criminal investigations. The purpose of this proposed amendment is to improve transparency, a key word in this debate, in the trademarks system and to make it easier to access information on trademark holders. This could be useful for businesses, consumers and intellectual property professionals. This is an essential issue.

I commend Jim Balsillie, whom we heard this week at the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology. I think everyone has a duty to reflect on how we regulate our intellectual property. This is an important part of our economy, but we are leaving it vulnerable.

This clause takes effect on the day Bill S-6 receives royal assent.

Regarding amendment 8, when Bill S-6 is studied in committee, it will be important to ask public servants to ensure that this does not exempt corporations from publishing their financial statements, particularly for non-profit organizations that benefit from more advantageous tax provisions. We must be careful not to open a governance and transparency loophole that we are trying to close.

For instance, the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage is examining the records of national sports organizations. They are not in compliance at the moment. Hockey Canada, for example, was not compliant until recently. The Canadian Hockey League is non-compliant, and Canada Soccer just recently filed the information that was missing. The work we have done in committee is what is bringing transparency to these charities. There may be other regulatory changes to be made in this area.

With respect to regulatory flexibility and agility, we noted that clauses 15 and 17, the amendments to the Canada Oil and Gas Operations Act and the Canada Petroleum Resources Act, could potentially pose a problem. The bill proposes to drop the obligation to publish amendments to regulations under these laws in the *Canada Gazette*. The government says that the purpose is to cut red tape, but we fear that this would make it possible to amend the regulations to benefit oil companies without informing the general public. In short, it is imperative to ask the government about these amendments. The past often foretells the future. I do not believe in green oil.

The amendments concerning immigration should not pose a problem if they seek to ensure that information is shared within a department or with other departments, whether provincial or federal, in order to uphold provincial or federal laws.

With respect to the integrity of the regulatory system, there is a whole range of amendments affecting agriculture. That is the responsibility of my colleague, the member for Berthier—Maskinongé, who is an expert on this subject. He is our party's critic for agriculture, agri-food and supply management.

*Government Orders*

What I would really like to see is an amendment that responds to a repeated request from boards of trade in every riding across Canada.

The Fédération des Chambres de commerce du Québec sent me its recommendation, which reads as follows:

That the Government of Canada:

Work with the impacted regulated entities and related associations to amend and modernize the Boards of Commerce Act to reflect current and future business and governance models and needs. Specific areas could include the following amendments:

1. Amend part 1, section 3(1) to replace the specific references with more current business language regarding who is eligible to form a board of trade;
2. Amend part 1, section 11 to allow at least two additional members to serve on the council of the corporation, in addition to the president, vice-president and secretary;
3. Amend part 1, section 12(2) to provide for a term of office of up to two years for members of the council of the corporation;
4. Amend section 17(1) to allow for at least one general meeting to be held per year;
5. Introduce new language in the Act to allow flexibility in the type of financial reports—

● (1955)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Unfortunately, I have to interrupt the hon. member because his time is up.

I do not know whether the interpreters were able to keep up with the member, but I think they did a good job.

The hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands for questions and comments.

[*English*]

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I appreciated the member's speech. He really covered a lot of the aspects of the bill. He touched on many areas there.

I just want him to go back to the portion where he was talking about trademarks. I know the Bloc talk a lot about trying to deal with the issue of planned obsolescence. In the regulations that will be changed around trademarks, does the member think there will be anything to help out in that area as well?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his passion for trademark protection and his interest in creating increasingly modern and robust legislation.

I would remind him that the objective is to ensure that our local industries are as successful as possible. That requires a legal mechanism that will protect our economy. It is not the rest of the world's economy that we need to protect; it is our own, particularly in rural areas.

I commend my colleague for his interest in this issue. We should be able to protect our trademarks, our integrity and our intellectual property properly effectively. Intellectual property theft is too easy right now. If China is doing as well as it is, it may be because we wanted to manufacture all of our stuff there and we gave away all our patents at the same time. Perhaps it is too late to do anything about that, but it is not too late to do a better job of protecting our businesses' interests, particularly in the age of digitalization.

[*English*]

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my neighbour from Abitibi—Témiscamingue for his recognition of the huge contribution of the Ukrainian community in Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

I know well the history of the Ukrainian church in Val-d'Or, in Rouyn. It is the same story in Kirkland Lake with the Ukrainian church that just closed and, of course, the Orthodox and Ukrainian church in Timmins. This is the story of our families who moved back and forth along that line from Val-d'Or to Timmins in the mines. We also know the history of the treatment of the Ukrainians, the mistreatments and incarcerations. My friend, Richard Desjardins, has talked about how Noranda Mines used to bring in the Ukrainians because they would threaten to deport them if they ever tried to strike.

Given the incredible contribution of the Ukrainian community in Abitibi—Témiscamingue and the situation with the war, I would like to ask my hon. colleague how he feels the Ukrainian community has added to the vitality and development of our region.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Timmins-James Bay, my neighbour, for allowing me to speak to this issue.

Barely a century ago, Rouyn-Noranda was the second most cosmopolitan city in Canada. Before Toronto and Vancouver there was Rouyn-Noranda. This was mostly due to the arrival of people from all over the world. At the time, regulations favoured the massive arrival of immigrants who came to work on developing our economy. The situation at the time was very different than it is today.

This paved the way for the emergence of a very engaged community, the Ukrainian community. I did not have the chance to inform my colleague of this, but I recently participated in the Timmins tournament with my hockey team, the Pro-Gaz. We won, by the way. I did notice the presence of this Ukrainian church. Father Chayka was probably also in Timmins-James Bay. Sadly, he died in the early days of the invasion of Ukraine. He would have been very helpful in welcoming the newcomers. In Abitibi—Témiscamingue, we have welcomed more than 60 of them, including five at my place. I would like to say hello to them.

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the discussion we just heard was very moving, and I congratulate both my colleagues.

My question is about the delays. Bill S-6 was announced in 2018, and, in 2023, it has only reached second reading stage.

We know that there was a pandemic and that this government takes its time, but what does my hon. colleague think about that? Are such long delays acceptable?

*Government Orders*

● (2000)

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire:** Madam Speaker, what is happening right now is quite shocking.

I would like to tell my colleague about the report prepared by the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology, which I mentioned earlier. The report shows the economic impact of immigration delays on small and medium-sized businesses.

Madam Speaker, in my riding and yours, we are losing many workers because the agreements are making immigration wait times much longer.

We have to ask ourselves some serious questions, because this ultimately has repercussions on the economic development of every municipality. Land use, a fundamental value, is affected by the delays, which are mainly caused by the federal government. We have to think of our SMEs and support some regulatory relief.

[English]

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP):** Madam Speaker, today I am honoured to rise to speak to Bill S-6. I want to thank the previous speaker for highlighting many of the areas that are contemplated in this bill. I would argue that it was one of the better speeches made today.

I also want to speak to what the bill does. Of course, as was just mentioned, it was originally contemplated in the minister's mandate letter as far back as 2015 that the economic viability of our regulatory processes be looked at to ensure increased innovation and competitiveness. This version of Bill S-6 removes the existing negative barriers to imperative regulation processes, as outdated provisions can lead to significant errors and impact essential work within government departments.

This is one of the greatest tests of our time. Between the tabling of the previous iteration of this bill and the tabling of this version there was a significant event. COVID-19 impacted our country in ways we never would have expected. We practically went online overnight. In a short period of time, we went from living our regular everyday lives to being almost alone in our homes and relying on digital technology. Federal civil services were also impacted by the requirement of regulations and the burden of ensuring we were able to address those issues via companies and regulators throughout COVID. Therefore, it is a very timely bill in the sense that we can finally address some long-awaited areas. If the government had done a better job, some of these regulations might have already been passed before we experienced COVID-19, this tragic, ongoing, international disease.

I want to speak to the broadness of the bill. It modifies 29 acts through 46 amendments and applies to 12 departments and agencies. Imagine how large and significant that will be. We have seen, through Senate committee hearings, for example, that the amendments are low risk and deal largely with the requirement of modernizing existing processes, for example, the requirement for physical postings versus online postings, so we can see that the nature of these amendments is such that they will make the operations of government more consistent and more appropriate for the processes and regulations to be used.

It is important as well to ensure that, regarding the regulations to be reviewed at committee, other folks, like agriculture, for example, which is one of the departments most affected by this bill, be at the table to speak directly to the issues, particularly those amendments with respect to agriculture. I know the member of Parliament for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford is doing good work with many agriculture representatives across the country and is consulting on this as we speak.

New Democrats will stand in support of the passage of this bill at second reading in order to get it to committee. At committee, I would invite all our colleagues to work diligently to ensure that the vastness and scope of the bill is truly reviewed at committee. If it requires amendments, I hope the government will be willing to table the amendments in earnest and adopt them.

One of the greatest concerns I have with the bill, which has also been referenced by other members of this chamber, is with respect to the vast consultations. When we look at some of the consultation documents that were tabled by the government and reviewed at the Senate hearings, for example, it is clear that the government was consulting businesses, industry and stakeholders, but the one important stakeholder that was absent was labour unions. We know that good, quality work in Canada is one of the most important skills we have. We know that human resources and good skilled labour is truly our best resource in this country, so why would we not invite labour unions to the table when talking about some of the most significant changes these folks will deal with in their industry? Although they are minor in their area and impact, it is regular everyday people who will have to process these regulations, so why not make it easier for all those who process those regulations to do that work, including the labour unions? I believe labour and management can do great things in this country if they work together. At committee we are going to ensure that we invite many labour representatives to speak directly to the impacts of this legislation on labour.

● (2005)

I want to speak about the benefits of improving our regulatory systems on an annual basis, another important piece to this legislation. It speaks about the important work that is required when provisions go out of date. We are not immune to modernity in this place, nor are our laws, meaning that we need to invest in time and processes. Bill S-6 contemplates a process to modernize these things.

Regulations, of course, are important pieces of how the government needs to operate. They are the biggest role of the government. They ensure that consumers are most and best protected, regular everyday folks, folks who need these kinds of protections. New Democrats have always cautioned against outright removal of regulations that would seek to harm consumers for the benefit of big corporations. Although this bill does not contemplate any of these vast changes, the annual process, as a matter of fact, could.

### *Government Orders*

At committee stage, I hope we can find ways to close up and tighten the language of this bill to ensure, when we are speaking about annual regulation changes, that process is defined in area, scope and impact, and we make sure the right stakeholders are at the table. I do agree that the government did a good job in terms of its consultations with businesses, industry and stakeholders, but the important piece of ensuring that labour is there is most critical.

We also see mention of “help cut red tape”. That is a famous Conservative line, that they are going to cut the red tape. We see the Liberals are joining this process of calling for the cutting red tape. As a matter of fact, we heard a speech from a Conservative earlier, who did not mention anything about Bill S-6. I hope the vast debates that they are going to be hosting tonight and the vast number of speeches that they have asked for today speak directly to this aspect, speak directly to the fact that we are going to see a reduction of regulations through this bill. I would imagine the Conservatives are going to be voting in favour in this, but have yet to hear their position.

When we talk about how existing regulations in this bill are going to work, for example, the ones related to agriculture, we need to be careful when we talk about fairness in competition and innovation that we protect Canadian producers. I am a bit nervous with some of the language presented in the agriculture amendments that look at other jurisdictions. It was mentioned by a Liberal member earlier today that some of these regulations could impact the competitiveness of Canadian farmers and producers by looking at other jurisdictions and equalizing, for example, the requirements they have. I think of dairy products, for example. Canada has some of the best laws protecting our dairy industry, but if we were to reduce those regulations in favour of other jurisdictions' regulations and “scientific processes reviews”, they could in fact harm producers. That is why New Democrats are consulting at this time with the agriculture sector and we hope to invite their amendments to this bill at committee.

As well, we know that during the hard time during COVID-19 when so many Canadians had to all of a sudden deal with the reality of going online, we found that many Canadians were unequipped to do that. We found that many Canadians did not have some of the services that the country is moving forward with, and that is an important piece to this. As much as we are in favour of ensuring that we are going to be operating in the 21st century by eliminating fax machines, for example, and ensuring that people can apply online, we have to remember those in northern, rural and remote communities.

There has to be a way to ensure that those who are not yet connected, those who lack ability and connectivity, have a chance to access these services, too. That means ensuring that rural and remote communities continue to access their services the way they know how. Should there be a barrier, like being unable to apply for a service online because of a lack of technology, Internet or availability, the government needs to take special consideration of those realities.

We also want to ensure that environmental groups are consulted on the impacts of much of this work. We know that environmental groups are some of the most passionate, hard-working and decent

people who are looking at the very environment we live in, the conditions we live in.

● (2010)

It is important that they are invited to the table because the ministry of environment has a proposed amendment. Why not invite more people into the room? Come committee stage, we hope that environmental groups will also be invited to have their testimony heard in relation to the bill.

The external advisory committee on regulatory competitiveness, made up of business, academic and consumer stakeholders, has also recommended that there be continued efforts to reduce the administrative burden on regulations and to ensure that they are future-proof, which means keeping pace with changing technologies and business realities. We agree with this. New Democrats believe that the government must continue to keep pace with modernity, such as Canadians are. However, it is important that the government acts on Canadians' best interests and, in particular, act in the interest of protecting consumers.

For example, we live in an age when many members of the House have probably heard of ChatGPT, which is artificial intelligence, or AI, so part of the regulations that contemplate an annual renewal of regulations should take special consideration of AI technology. My colleague, the member for Windsor West, has spoken to this and has done good work to ensure that the science and technology is well regulated and that the processes are there to protect regular Canadians. We need to ensure that annual regulation reviews take special consideration of that level of changing technology.

AI will dramatically change the landscape on how regular, everyday people interact with our government, with one another and online. We need to ensure that our regulatory systems, in particular, the continued annual regulatory systems, take into special consideration these facts. We may not even know what kind of future innovation is out there yet.

To contemplate a process that looks at the future renewal of regulations means that we have to take special consideration with a special eye on science and technology. We need to ensure that, as it exponentially grows, the regulations are put in place to better protect them. I am saying that we should not only see regulation review and the modernity of regulation review as a process to remove regulations, but we should also consider what regulations could be put in place that are common sense and good for Canadians. For example, common sense in access, equitability and applicability.

*Government Orders*

We have the power in this place to ensure that the processes are in place so that everyday, regular Canadians, or the companies that our country is proud to host, can interact in a fair system in a way that does not take advantage of their time and where they can actually see their products and innovative work produced and put onto the market without hindrance. I agree with that principle, and that is the nature of the bill before us.

However, by no means should we take my airing this caution as a way to diminish the innovation that is happening, but we need to have a balance. Regulation and the processes that government creates to ensure that these regulations are put in place are there to protect Canadians from ulterior motives that could otherwise take from them more than we had ever anticipated. This is because of the unique relationship between science and technology, regulation and the future. When the committee asks for something to be future-proof, we have to contemplate what that really means. When the committee asks how we can create a future-proof system to deal with regulations that are cumbersome, we need to consider the balance of facts and the risk that could be present to Canadians.

We know, for example, that banks and big corporations often look at the letter of the law to find ways to get around it. Why would a company do something like? Well, oftentimes we find that these companies are seeking to get around those laws to get around the protections that we have put in place for consumers so they can maximize their own interests. If it is our job in this place to ensure that the interests of Canadians, regular folks and consumers, are heard, then it is in the interest of all members in this chamber to put in place good regulations. Those regulations should be for the betterment of understanding, whether it is in agriculture, technology and science, and we truly future-proof that process by taking an earnest consideration of the power of regulations.

● (2015)

Therefore, a red tape reduction act like this, the one being contemplated here, does have some areas that we have to hear about in committee. It does not mean that we are opposed to the vast number of amendments in here. It means that we have to do more work.

New Democrats stand ready and firm to work with all members of the House to ensure that we get to a place where we strike the balance I spoke about between what is future-proof and what is in the public good of Canadians. How do we strike a balance between these two in a way that encourages innovation and science, but keeps the protection of Canadians at heart? That is the role of the government. That is the role of bills such as Bill S-6.

We need to find ways to ensure that, while we future-proof this process, we take those lessons learned to ensure that we continually build on the good work of regulation review and that it does not become a process for governments, whether it is this one or the next one, to abuse. We do not want to see a vast abuse of the power found within Bill S-6 to have an annual review of regulations to toss out regulations a government may not like. That would hurt, for example, regular everyday people. That would hurt innovation in our country. These are two important aspects of how our country should be governed, by balancing those two interests.

From the testimony from the committee related to Bill S-6, we heard that it proposes 46 amendments to 29 acts under 12 depart-

ments and agencies. This may seem like a huge and cumbersome amount, but I want to remind members of the chamber that these are minor and, according to the independent committee, low risk. However, it is our job to ensure that, during a line-by-line review in committee, those interests of business, of consumers, and of labour and environmental groups are heard. It is important to do that because we can ensure the future-proofing process. That is the part I am most concerned about. How can we have an annual review with a good and well-established scope, so we cannot go so far outside those boundaries, so who knows how many governments in the future would be utilizing this process.

In addition to regulations that are being amended within Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, we also see some amendments within Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. Let us consider the problems there.

One of the greatest problems in Canada right now is the lack of an ability to ensure that travel documents are in the hands of those who need them most. Every single MP in this chamber, I know for a fact, has had to deal with immigration in their office. When they deal with that immigration work, they find out that the processes are delayed. Every MP, whether Liberal, Bloc, New Democrat or Conservative, finds out that the processes are not working. Even the members across the way on the Liberal bench know it is broken.

Therefore, I was really pleased to see that there is an amendment within Bill S-6 to make that easier. It is a process that looks at ensuring that people can apply some of these processes online, in particular allowing for applications within existing visa applications to be used and duplicated in the PR system of applications. That is a common sense amendment. Why were we doing it differently before? These are the kinds of problems that contribute to these backlogs.

It is important that we pass a bill such as this to ensure an amendment like this works, and so that IRCC has more and better tools to process the information it already has, rather than asking regular folks to do the same application twice. Why would we make them do that?

It is important that these regulations are passed, that we ensure consultation during the committee phase and, finally, that we ensure the future annual amendments and review of regulations process is one that takes into consideration the unique factors of balancing the need to protect regular Canadians and consumers with the need of ensuring that businesses can continue to innovate and make our country great.

*Government Orders*

• (2020)

**Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I noticed my colleague was talking about future-proofing Canada. The member spoke a bit about agriculture, and we see a lot of regulations and burdens on our farmers in Canada. Whether it is added burdens at the PMRA, whether it is the clean fuel standards or adding carbon tax to farmers, the costs keep going up, and regulations and red tape keep happening. It is going to put our farmers out of business, especially those in fresh food production.

I am worried about the future of our fruit and vegetable farmers in Canada. Nobody wants to get in the business anymore because of the burdens and regulations they are facing every day. I wonder if the member would like to comment on what he would like to see happen to get rid of some of these regulations so we can protect our future food production in this country, and protect our fruit and vegetable farmers in Canada.

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her advocacy and her good work in relation to protecting our farmers.

As a rancher myself, we have had to deal with these kinds of issues, particularly when mad cow disease was an outbreak in Canada. Cattle ranchers, like my family and I, had to deal with those regulations. It was a really difficult time for producers, particularly cattle producers. We saw some of the lowest prices per pound of beef across the country. It was almost in the negative. It was a terrible time, but we understood why those regulations existed.

As a matter of fact, we had to ensure that regulations were improved after that crisis so we could become more competitive. There needs to be a balance between the public safety of Canadians and competitiveness.

I know, as someone who has had to go through some of these regulations with cattle, the regulations are difficult and hard, but we also have to remember that they are good for consumers. It makes our businesses stronger when we can demonstrate we are the best in the business and we are going to do the best for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Madam Speaker, one thing that stood out from my colleague's speech was the part specifically related to Bill C-27 and the importance of regulating artificial intelligence.

He mentioned the great work done by the member for Windsor West. Perhaps that member's most concrete contribution to this issue so far was to divide the debate, until the NDP eventually asked for two votes on the same issue, which meant that we arrived 15 minutes late in committee. I will spare my colleagues all the details.

Nevertheless, considering that this bill should have been passed in 2018-19, we get the sense that some members have tried to delay and stall. Could the NDP not be part of the solution to speed things up with the government, especially when it comes to paperwork done by our administrators and agricultural producers?

[*English*]

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais:** Madam Speaker, I believe it the responsibility of all members in the House to ensure that the benefits for Canadians and Québécois are there.

It is important that we work together on all aspects that advance the interests of Canadians. Partisanship is often one of those things we may have to make a sacrifice for. We have to define, in our own minds, what is worth our time and what is worth our position.

On the issue of AI, I hope that all members of the House will stand to defend the interests of Canadians. It is no secret that we are on the frontier of AI, and it is a kind of frontier that will change our lives forever. We are living in a whole other world right now, and it is about to change. AI will transform the world. It will transform Canada. It will transform our economy.

We need all members of the House to take it seriously. We need to expedite a framework to ensure that AI is regulated in this country for the protection of Canadians and Québécois.

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to pick up on the theme of regulations and agriculture. I grew up on an apple orchard. My father sprayed those apples with DDT. We had a big bag of DDT under the sink that my brother and I used to play with. Then we found out that DDT was destroying the environment. It was driving bird populations to extinction.

We then brought in regulations and those regulations are there, not to be a barrier or a gatekeeper for farmers, but to protect all of us in this country from the adverse effects of these chemicals. We had to shift to different pesticides, and that process continues. These regulations are there for a reason. They are not there just because someone thinks it is an idea that would harm farmers. They are there to protect the public and the environment. Could my colleague comment on that?

• (2025)

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais:** Madam Speaker, as the world continues to change, and as Canada continues to define our greater role in the world, not only as an innovator of products with innovation across many industries, but also as a producer of good food and high-quality products, we need to ensure that we remain a country that has the best products, the best orchards, the best beef and the best producers in the world.

The way to do that is to not just let anyone do anything they want, such as, for example, spraying chemicals that harm the environment or getting around regulations to get beef to market that has not been properly inspected. It is important. These regulations protect the quality of our Canadian producers.

When people say there are gatekeepers in the way, they damage the reputation of producers. They damage the reputation of farmers when things go wrong. It is not a matter of when things go wrong, it is a matter of if they go wrong. Why not bring in regulations that prevent the likelihood of that and keep our products on top?

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Madam Speaker, there is a lot of regulatory uncertainty and burdens that are put onto our producers, and there is one issue that has come up multiple times from constituents of mine. It is the issue of trying to get a federally regulated vet to go down to the border to do something as simple as scan an ear tag so a rancher can bring his bull back across the border.

It seems at times we have unnecessary regulations in place, especially when we have a big shortage of federally regulated vets in this country. There are other vets who are also licensed and regulated to a very high standard who could probably do the work just as well as the vet who goes down to the border to do it, but there seems to be unnecessary regulations that get in the way. However, we do not see the government moving to address some of those kinds of regulations.

I am wondering if the member has any comments on that.

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais:** Madam Speaker, I grew up not too far from Cypress Hills—Grasslands, and I know how strong the economy is for producers there. In fact, we have traded many bulls and different kinds of animals with many of the producers there.

The member is right when he talks about the issue of the labour shortages we are seeing at border crossings when it comes to the enforcement of regulations. As a matter of fact, I think the member hit the nail on the head, in the fact that we need to see more veterinarians and more folks who actually have the ability to regulate the implementation and enforcement of regulations.

I agree that if we have regulations and lack the enforcement, why do we have regulations? I disagree, however, that we should just get rid of the regulations. I think the actual solution is to ensure we keep the regulation and, as a matter of fact, we should modernize that regulation and ensure we actually have the labour to enforce it. That is one of the pieces that is missing. Maybe AI could play a part in this. That is one of the areas where we have to make certain that we actually put in the AI framework.

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, I know that this is a difficult bill, because it covers so many regulations in so many different acts. I am sure the member has also been exposed to many issues and barriers that are caused by regulations, being an indigenous person himself. I wonder if he can speak to why he has made the determination that he has and whether he does or does not support Bill S-6, and speak to what it means for indigenous peoples.

**Mr. Blake Desjarlais:** Madam Speaker, the member for Nunavut is one of the strongest advocates for indigenous rights in this place, and without her we would be absent a kind of justice and a kind of dignity for indigenous people.

Now I will speak directly on the question. Yes, as a matter of fact, indigenous people need to be at the table, and although New Democrats are recommending a yes vote on this, we are sincere about our request to invite members of Parliament across party

### *Government Orders*

lines to the committee stage to invite groups that have not been better heard. We know that business and industry have been heard through an independent process already, but the groups that are missing from that consultation are labour, environmental and indigenous groups. We need to see these three important and incredible groups come to the table at the committee stage and have the willing ear of the government to actually make those amendments credible and enforceable.

• (2030)

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time this evening.

I am going to use a lot of my time to talk about something that is really important in my riding, so much so that it is even included in the name of my riding, which, of course, is Cypress Hills—Grasslands.

In southern Saskatchewan, we are blessed to have one of the most ecologically sensitive areas in the entire world, and that is Grasslands National Park. If people are wondering how it all relates to a government bill on federal regulations, I can assure them that it does.

In part 3, clause 85 of Bill S-6, it deals specifically with the issue of species at risk. That is where the bill makes reference to an organization named COSEWIC, which the government has identified as the only organization to be used for determining whether a species belongs on a list and to determine what level of concern there should be. This is the type of issue facing Grasslands National Park. For the moment I will try my best to fill everyone in on the background story that is involved in this.

To say the relationship with local stakeholders and producers has been rocky at best would be an understatement. During the park's early days, in classic big government fashion, the government boot-ed the local ranchers out of the park and refused to let them graze the grasslands, stating that they were doing so to protect species at risk but also to protect the native prairie grass.

However, over time, the number of species in the park dwindled and declined, and the quality of the grass deteriorated. Researchers began to notice that all of the species at risk had relocated themselves out of the park to the other side of the fence and into the private ranchers' pastures. Why would that happen? Well, without a true keystone species to graze the grass, many of the smaller species became easy targets for their predators to eat.

Of course, it used to be the case that buffalo were the keystone species for that area. When that changed, it was possible, in their absence, for cattle to replace them as the main grazers and managers of the land in the park. That is what happened until the government decided to put a stop to it.

### *Government Orders*

Once all of the bureaucratic interference was removed and the ranchers were allowed to graze in the park once again, the grasslands began to flourish and the vibrant species all returned to the park along with the cattle. It showed that there is a very delicate balance to be maintained between nature and human activity. They can work together and they can benefit each other.

There was a good balance in the grasslands until some people from the government decided they knew better and needed to fix something that was not broken. It sounds very familiar to many issues that we face today. Let us fast-forward to present day and see what is happening in the park.

As I mentioned earlier, the government has appointed a group named COSEWIC, which stands for the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada, through the Species at Risk Act, as the official designator of species at risk by making recommendations to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

At the time, there seems to be no accountability mechanisms for the actions of COSEWIC, and Bill S-6 is not changing that. To add to this, the adversarial role the government has taken toward the local stewards of the land has become a growing disaster once again in Grasslands National Park.

The difference is that the ranchers have a built-in incentive for taking the absolute best care not only of the grasslands, but also the species that exist within and around the fences of their pastures.

COSEWIC has identified the black-tailed prairie dog as a threatened species. It is not yet listed as a schedule 3 species at risk but the fact that it is even on such a list makes one wonder why that is.

The black-tailed prairie dog is a species that thrives not only in Saskatchewan but all the way down through the United States to the Mexican border and probably even further into Mexico itself. A quick Google search would actually verify that all the way through the United States there is a very vibrant population of this prairie dog.

Despite the readily available information, does COSEWIC take that into consideration? Does the minister even bother to check into it himself?

Again, we have the issue of human interference with nature by COSEWIC and other scientists.

For example, anyone who has ever lived in Saskatchewan knows that when there is a drought or dryer conditions, gophers and these prairie dogs thrive and can rapidly overtake an area. I have seen entire quarter sections of crop and hay land completely disappear within two years or even less. However, this is what COSEWIC's website states:

The Black-tailed Prairie Dog is a burrowing and colony-forming member of the squirrel family and is confined to only 12 square kilometres of grassland habitat in southern Saskatchewan. Initially assessed as Special Concern by COSEWIC in 2000, increasing threats posed by droughts and a bacterial disease could rapidly eradicate this species.

This is where local knowledge is vitally important, yet COSEWIC refuses to utilize it. The prairie dog is not confined to 13 kilometres. Ask any rancher around the park. The species has

spread and is continuing to spread in the regions the researchers apparently have missed.

Those involved on the agricultural side are more aware of what is going on. This is something one has to get right if one wants to properly manage the local wildlife.

• (2035)

Remember what I said earlier about the effects of grazing on species on the park. I will now bring up another more recent example. The prairie dog and the sage grouse are intertwined with each other. The prairie dog eats the roots of sagebrush as they are tunnelling in the ground, but the sage grouse needs the same plant for shelter and to protect itself from other species that would be looking to eat it. If the prairie dogs overtake the park, it is going to eliminate their shelter and chase the sage grouse out of the park.

The problem can turn out to be different depending on whether there are too few prairie dogs or we are at risk of having too many. How does nature control populations of mammals in the animal kingdom? There are two main ways. There are others, but the two that are most important are predators and diseases.

However, COSEWIC is interfering in nature's natural course, everything from dusting for fleas to hand feeding prairie dogs, which is causing them to not gather food and get themselves ready for winter as they become reliant on humans to feed them. With all this, it seems like history may be repeating itself with Grasslands National Park. If we do not act with accurate information and if we do not try to maintain the right balance, this organization will mess with and continue to ruin a delicate ecosystem.

The most frustrating part is we have seen this kind of thing happen before. I heard many people share their concerns about it for a very long time. The government's own website admits local stakeholders have a difference of opinion, but the department and its activists do not care.

The people of southern Saskatchewan demand accountability and they demand respect from the government. These are multi-generational ranchers who have seen to the sustainable development of grasslands for over a century, and this rogue organization with no government oversight is causing problems. There is no need to get in the way of ranchers' way of life, especially when doing so will put more species at risk onto the list.

The park is important both environmentally and economically, and those interests go together. If it is not maintained well enough due to errors made by the government, the local municipalities will also suffer from the lost revenue. We are dealing with an imbalanced approach to the environment that is showing signs of failure.



*Government Orders*

In many ways it is similar to the problems we are seeing with developing our natural resources, which is also mentioned in Bill S-6. It is nice for a change to have a government bill that wants to reduce regulatory burdens instead of expand them, but the changes are too small compared to what is really needed.

When one thinks about the bigger picture, we are not yet seeing a full-scale reduction of over-regulation when it comes to our energy or agricultural producers. Right now, there are still farmers who are afraid that at any moment the government will restrict their use of fertilizer even though they are doing the best they can to use less of it while growing more food to feed the world. At the same time, if the government is going to do that, it is also pushing ahead with a fuel standard that creates more demand for the same crops required for food and for biofuels. The last thing those farmers will need is higher demand while being able to grow less of their product because of government regulations.

There are also some incoming electricity regulations which the Premier of Saskatchewan is deeply concerned about. These new regulations keep coming along while the Liberals want to pretend they care about efficiency with Bill S-6.

I will also say time and time again the Liberal government's signature policy of impact assessment has been stopping resource development across the board. This has definitely been the case for pipelines in the oil and gas sector, but it is a lot more than that too.

In my work on the Standing Committee on Natural Resources or in meeting with energy stakeholders, I keep hearing about different projects left in jeopardy because the impact assessment is unnecessarily burdensome. We are talking about not getting ahead with critical minerals, which the Liberals always try to boast about. For example, we are not on track to source enough lithium for EV batteries in terms of our trade agreements. They have been ignoring this problem for years.

Impact assessment prevents mining projects from getting started because they will take too long. It can create problems with forestry. More recently, there has been talk of potential problems coming up for nuclear energy as well. This is about investment coming into our country and over-regulation in a lot of these areas, which a bill like this should be addressing but is not.

Our Canadian prosperity was built on natural resources. That will remain true for the future. At the moment, the Liberal government's policies are getting in everyone's way. It is managing to destroy our successful industries while also getting in the way of any future industries it says we need to support.

Sadly, Bill S-6 is yet another missed opportunity on the part of the Liberal government. It does not go far enough with removing gatekeepers or improving the lives of Canadians.

• (2040)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Madam Speaker, my colleague's speech made me reflect on the importance of decentralization and local governments. One of the notable examples he gave involving the prairie dog is a result of super-centralization. Making decisions that apply from coast to coast

to coast has serious repercussions in areas that are really crucial to the development of our towns and our lands.

My question is pretty straightforward. Should we rely more on our local governments to put in place regulations, since that is the purpose of this bill? These are often minor regulations, but they can make a difference in the development of our farmlands and our towns.

[*English*]

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer:** Madam Speaker, in a lot of ways, the hon. member is right. The closer a level of government is to the people, the more effective and more pointed its regulations are going to be. We have seen the example with the regulation of the park. We have the local rural municipality, which knows this. These are people who have been ranching and farming in the area for multiple generations, for over a century. They have been good stewards of the land for a very long period of time. They know what the important species are. They know how to properly take care of the land.

There are other areas, like natural resources, for example. I think the member opposite would agree that natural resources are the sole jurisdiction of the provinces. However, the federal government likes to wade into it all the time. We do not see the government addressing those concerns by removing regulations in this bill.

I think we need to focus a bit more on jurisdiction, respecting jurisdiction where jurisdiction needs to be respected.

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, I would like to thank the member for including provisions in this bill regarding species at risk, because this act actually has a lot of detrimental impact in my region. There are two specific species, one of which is the barren-ground caribou. On the marine side, it is the Atlantic walrus. Those populations are known to be quite dramatic. It is hard to determine if they are at the time a species at risk.

I see that in this bill, Bill S-6, there are regulations talking about the importance of creating a recovery strategy, but I wonder if the member would agree that whatever plans are being created about species at risk, indigenous peoples must be at the forefront of the decision-making.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer:** Madam Speaker, the point that the hon. member raised is actually a very important one. If we are going to implement recovery strategies, local knowledge is of utmost importance, and there is no more important local knowledge than that of the indigenous people, whether it is up in Nunavut, or in the northern part of the Prairies, or even in the southern part of the Prairies. They have been on the land for centuries, for a very long period of time. Again, getting back to that local knowledge, people who have been there and have a long history of being there have seen how species change, how species can adapt, how the land has transformed and changed over the years, and what the delicate balance is there.

I think it is extremely important that we rely on local knowledge. The member has that part of it right, absolutely.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it really feels like I just read an issue of National Geographic.

As Bill S-6 goes into its third rendition, I would like to ask my colleague if he would prefer more of a stakeholder consultation approach or a hands-off government approach, and what he thinks the citizens and stakeholders in his riding would prefer.

• (2045)

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer:** Madam Speaker, that is a great question because, too often, big government comes in and ruins it. It consults with the wrong stakeholders. When consultations were being done, the government website said that there was a lot of emphasis put on online participants. We do not even know where those online participants were from. They could have been from Europe, for all we know. Would they have the best interests at heart for the land, for the ranchers, for the producers, but also for the species at risk there in the park? Absolutely not.

The local people know what the balance is there. In this particular instance and many other instances, a hands-off approach by the government would be preferred. It would be way more beneficial, both to the species and to the producers.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill S-6. I think we are all pleased to speak to a bill that seeks to cut red tape, reduce delays and increase efficiency.

When it comes to increased flexibility and efficiency, the answer is yes. We are there to support that. That is what we want to do. When it comes to reducing delays, the answer is yes. The member for Joliette said earlier that this bill was introduced in 2018 and that we are debating it in 2023. Someone asked why that was. I am tempted to tell them that this bill is moving through the House at a speed that is directly proportional to the speed at which this government takes action. We spend our time waiting for things to happen.

I want to make a little aside about what is going on in the news. For months now, information has been coming out in dribs and drabs about potential foreign interference in our democratic process, and nothing is being done. The much-talked-about public inquiry will probably happen, but likely not before next year, because that is how slowly things move in the House. Fortunately, we are

here. The opposition is here to pressure this government into taking action. We will do that today for that reason. Yes, we are here to support efficiency, but we will not support a lack of transparency.

What we like is transparency. Some parts of Bill S-6 have me concerned a bit. Others are obvious. There are, for example, changes to Innovation, Science and Economic Development to make it easier to withdraw a mediation application if a settlement is reached. I hope this will happen, as it seems obvious and is only normal. The best part is that it would clear the court backlogs. There is also the matter of having meters read through other means instead of getting a person to read them. I hope this will happen. There are other things, such as allowing interim authorizations under trade conditions. Earlier my colleagues were talking about trademarks and having greater efficiency and fluidity. I am okay with that. The details of this bill still need to be studied and that is where the committee comes in. There is less confusion for business corporations, co-operatives and not-for-profit organizations when it comes to the distinction between annual reports and annual statements. As we know, our good government asks people for so much paperwork that they get all mixed up.

There is also the immigration issue. I would like to tell a story about someone from my riding. It is the story of a foreign worker who applied to renew her work permit. She had applied for permanent residency and was waiting. This Spanish-speaking woman was buried under paperwork, sometimes in English and other times in French, and she became very confused. In the meantime, she received her Quebec selection certificate, and, naively, she did not apply to renew her work permit. Let us put ourselves in her shoes. It is starting to become the norm to receive all kinds of paperwork, to have to deal with different levels of government, and to have different deadlines at each level. Sometimes, the second government is so slow that the first application has to be resubmitted. This will again cost money, because it is the fault of the second government. Of course that does not matter to the second government. The person must pay. Everyone knows that the second government I am referring to is obviously the federal government. The Bloc will have only one government, and it will be the right one.

I was saying that because she had received her Quebec selection certificate, she did not apply to renew her work permit. A few days later, when she went to see her employer to celebrate, her employer realized that it was the wrong document and told her that she had to apply to renew her work permit. Unfortunately, the deadline for the renewal application was the day before. We are not talking six months prior. I do not want to get angry here, but it is hard not to. These people we are talking about, here in this disconnected Parliament, we met them in person and we saw them crying, sitting at our desk. It was not six months later, it was the next day, yet we could not get the renewal application accepted. If someone applies for a renewal while their permit is active, they can continue to work until they get the new one. It does not matter because the application has been submitted.

*Government Orders*

• (2050)

However, if an individual applies after the deadline, too bad. They have to wait three months to get a new work permit. The person I am talking about had to live on charity for several weeks, in a G7 country.

I will end my digression by saying that it is good to reduce wait times.

My time is running out, and I still have lots I want to talk about. I have to talk about agriculture, but before I do, I must express my doubts about the part that deals with oil and gas. I am not sure why. Perhaps it is because of Bay du Nord, or because of the new offshore oil and gas exploration licenses. When I see the words “natural resources” and “oil” together, and that the requirement to publish information is being lifted, I have some serious doubts. There will be a lot of work to do. Is it because they want to sneak things past us?

I will stop talking about oil now. I could talk about it for another 10 minutes, but I only have three and a half minutes left.

With regard to the agricultural industry, when I hear that the government wants to facilitate the recognition of international standards, there are a few things that come to mind. I have had some traumatic experiences with the federal government since I became an MP three and a half years ago. One of them was the review of the thresholds for glyphosate, fungicide and herbicide residues, which the government tried to quietly sneak past us during the construction holiday one summer when the weather was hot and sunny. The Liberals thought that it would go unnoticed. I remember that we were dumbfounded. It was done without any kind of announcement or anything. What was even more shocking was that our farmers told us that they did not know where that measure came from, that they had never asked for it and that they were respecting the thresholds. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency told us that it was to align with international standards.

I am pleased to see that my colleague from Beauce is here because he will be happy that I am talking about this. When I hear that we are going to align with international standards and increase the thresholds for pesticide and fungicide residue, the message that I am getting is that we are going to bring in poor quality products from other countries, as is too often the case.

There is talk of reciprocity of standards. I am all for streamlining and adopting international standards to make trade easier, but I do not want us to lower these standards. I do not want us to fail to meet the expectations of our constituents, our consumers. People are expecting us to ensure quality. Our producers are proud, strong and efficient. They deliver quality. I do not want to undermine that because all of sudden someone decides to accept international standards. Carrots from Mexico may contain more pesticides than carrots that grow in Quebec. There is nonsense that does not appear in the official speeches, but exists on the ground daily. This is important.

Aligning our standards can be useful, but we have to do so effectively and quickly, by relying on science and using the precautionary principle. I do not often hear anyone talk about the precautionary principle.

Today, the Minister of Agriculture announced assurances that seeds created with gene editing would be monitored. That is good. We are pleased, but the monitoring will be done by the private sector with subsequent supervision by the state. I am less keen on that. I think that is the government's responsibility. I think we are capable of doing this effectively.

We are in a situation where the state is not moving quickly enough, and we are going to let the public sector take action. I do not think that is the right thing to do. Last year, we had a problem with the approval of linuron, a product used when growing carrots. There was a small change in the formulation, and since Canada's study and review processes are so slow, the product was not approved. Our producers contacted us in a panic, told us they would not be able to grow their crop and that Quebecers would be eating carrots from the United States, which uses the same product. Sometimes, we have to use common sense with regulations.

• (2055)

I could probably keep talking about this for two or three hours, but I will stop now as my time has expired.

[*English*]

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to follow up with my colleague on the issue of glyphosate spraying. I know that Quebec has banned it in the forests. In my region in northern Ontario, there is something terribly eerie about walking through a forest that is dead, where there are no sounds of bugs or birds. Driving up through the Temagami region, on Highway 11 and Highway 17, we hardly ever use bug spray for our windows anymore, because there are not that many bugs.

The idea that glyphosate could be used to kill off everything in a forest after a cutover and said to be safe is deeply concerning. Given the release of “The Monsanto Papers” and international studies that have been done on the dangers, what does it mean when our forests in the north, in New Brunswick and in other regions are being subject to massive aerial spraying of glyphosate over our cutover areas?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Madam Speaker, we would have to determine who is responsible for that spraying, but certainly, if what the member for Timmins—James Bay is reporting is true, it is very unfortunate. It means that things moved too fast and too much of the product was used. I am glad he asked me that question, because it enables me to talk about something I have not had time to address.

In some places, we are being told that the minister will be allowed to enact practices from the private sector or from abroad by way of regulation and have them recognized. That may be fine, but it depends on how it is done. It must be properly studied. We cannot be careless.

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I want to ask a question based on a classic speech by my colleague from Joliette. I hope I am giving proper attribution to this speech. We are going to play Jeopardy! I will read a quote, and my colleague will try to guess who said it and how it relates to Bill S-6.

*Government Orders*

The quote says that consumers, the Union des producteurs agricoles and the Quebec government are asking for transparency. Organic farmers need to know the sources of their supply, and citizens have a right to know what is on their plates, including gene-edited products. We do not want to ban this technology. We want to regulate it, ensure that the public and farmers have that information and thus contribute to a better future for everyone.

Who said that?

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Madam Speaker, it is nice that we can have a little fun on an evening like this when we are working until midnight.

I think the answer is the member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ):** Madam Speaker, there is the matter of the intergenerational transfer of businesses. That is a very important issue in agriculture. Some legislative amendments were made to change the way capital gains are treated, which makes intergenerational transfers more equitable.

Now, many businesses are saying that this transfer has been done gradually. Sometimes, the parents let their children buy shares in the company or family farm bit by bit. That is something that many businesses asked for, but unfortunately, the law does not allow for that practice right now.

I am wondering whether the member would like comment on improving the business climate, particularly for family farms.

• (2100)

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Madam Speaker, succession planning is very important. I thank my colleague for raising this subject.

Yes, some latitude must be given. It is not all black and white. There are grey areas. The bill allows for a certain transition, but the deadlines are indeed restricted. I think there could be more flexibility in that regard.

The government was worried about tax evasion. I would like to say to the members of this government that if they want to prevent tax evasion, they should go back and listen to the speech given tonight by my colleague from Joliette. They will learn a lot, and they will find out where the money is and how tax evasion is really happening.

[*English*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Resuming debate, the hon. member for York—Simcoe.

I would remind members that if they plan to speak, they need to stand to be recognized.

**Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I was stuck to the floor with red tape. I do not know who sat here before me. It is everywhere here in Ottawa.

I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Dufferin—Caledon.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I would remind the member about the red tape. That is a prop and I would ask him not to use that.

The hon. member for York—Simcoe.

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** Madam Speaker, I do not know who sat here before me, but it is everywhere. They were doing their best to cut through it.

These days, we would need a chainsaw to cut through the red tape in Ottawa. With Bill S-6, the Liberals have brought nail clip-pers. As Canada's shadow minister for red-tape reduction, I am pleased to contribute to this important debate tonight.

Bill S-6 proposes to make 46 modest changes to update and modernize 29 acts, affecting 12 different federal departments and agencies. They are minor at best and, unfortunately, do practically nothing to address the burden of red tape facing Canadians. At its core, reducing red tape is about making government work well for our country's citizens. It is not about deregulation for its own sake. It is about making sure that Canada's regulations do not hamper our citizens' ability to innovate and improve.

It is also about ensuring that our country is globally competitive and that we are positioned to increase the prosperity of future generations of Canadians. Fundamentally, Canadians just want to go about their lives and conduct their business without complicated processes and roadblocks put in place by government departments, bureaucrats and consultants. These are the people who act as gatekeepers to stop anything from getting done in this country and prevent anything from being built.

Red tape overseen by these government gatekeepers is stifling Canadians. It cripples innovation and competitiveness and limits productivity and economic growth. This is not some niche issue. Any Canadian who has ever had to fill out a government form knows how hard and frustrating red tape can be. Sadly, under the Liberals, red tape has gotten worse. The insignificant changes proposed in Bill S-6 amount to just a drop in the ocean when we consider how onerous the Liberals' red-tape regime has become.

Over the past eight years, the Liberal government has increased public service spending by 53%, costing taxpayers an additional \$21 billion. Of course, this has not resulted in better outcomes or better service delivery for Canadians. Instead, Canadians continue to face endless delays, a greater regulation burden and more red tape.

According to the Federation of Independent Business, red tape costs Canadians nearly \$11 billion a year. It is unbelievable. There is also a great social cost. The amount of time Canadians spend on regulatory compliance continues to be significant. This causes great stress, especially for small businesses and vulnerable Canadians. This year, the CFIB awarded the Liberals a C, which is a failing grade. It noted that the government does not accurately measure the impact of federal regulations on individuals or properly report on what progress has been made to reduce red tape. This has consequences for our citizens and for our economy.

Canada is ranked 53rd out of 140 countries in terms of the burden of government regulations. Canada performs far worse than comparable countries. We are predicted to be the worst-performing advanced economy to 2030 and for decades afterward. The ease of doing business index, which measures regulatory efficiencies, has seen Canada continue to decline, going from fourth in 2007 to 23rd in 2020. These metrics all tell the same story. As a result of Canada's onerous red tape, our country's economic reputation has been tarnished. Delays and red tape continue to drive away foreign investment.

• (2105)

The global index measuring foreign investment considers Canada as a whole to be more restrictive when it comes to foreign investment than all other OECD countries, except for Iceland, Mexico and New Zealand. The amount of foreign direct investment into Canada as a percentage of the GDP remains well below that of such countries as Sweden, Germany and Spain.

Unfortunately, addressing red tape, improving economic growth and promoting foreign investment have not been priorities for the federal Liberal government. According to research conducted by the Library of Parliament, the government has never sought to count the total number of federal regulations. However, there are at least 4,883 in the consolidated regulations of Canada alone. With only 46 slight changes, the measures proposed in Bill S-6 barely scratch the surface of the regulatory reform we need in Canada.

The lack of action also applies to the overall approach of the government. It is telling that I do not have a direct counterpart in the Liberal cabinet. There are ministers responsible for red-tape reduction in British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario, as well as across many other jurisdictions around the world, but this is not the case federally. Instead, the task of reducing red tape remains a footnote and an afterthought to the many other responsibilities of the Treasury Board president.

Again, this is a recurring theme. As a member of the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations, I routinely see the lack of attention red tape receives from the government. It has become commonplace for Liberal ministers to ignore repeated requests by the committee to address problematic or outdated regulations and red tape within their portfolios. I think my hon. colleague from Mirabel spoke to this tonight. In many cases, these requests have been outstanding for years, with no attempt to fix the regulations, even when they continue to affect and impact Canadians. This is unacceptable.

Reducing red tape should not be a partisan issue, yet the Liberals seem to think that it is the goal to have more regulations and that a

### *Government Orders*

bigger, more bloated government is always better. They do this without any regard for the negative consequences of red tape for Canadians or whether objectives or outcomes are being met.

The Conservative approach to reducing red tape could not be more different. It involves chainsaws, not nail clippers. We believe there is a better way than token measures and insignificant actions, such as those we see in Bill S-6. Canada's Conservatives are committed to cutting red tape. We will prioritize plain-language laws that will eliminate bureaucratic mumbo-jumbo and make it easier for Canadians to fill out government forms and access government services. We will simplify the tax system, cap government spending and introduce a pay-as-you-go law requiring an equal amount of savings for any new government expenditures.

We will also address the housing crisis and support businesses looking to expand by removing big city gatekeepers and NIMBY politicians. These are the people who put up red tape and barriers to block any expansion of our housing supply. These are concrete measures that will make life more affordable and put Canadians back in control of their lives. After all, it is the government that is supposed to serve the people, not the other way around.

There is no doubt that many regulations need to be addressed far beyond the scope of Bill S-6. Much more needs to be done to cut red tape in this country to support Canadians and encourage economic growth.

• (2110)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, and I would also take this opportunity to thank him for his bill about financial protections for vegetable producers, which we will be happy to consider soon.

My colleague talked about regulations and small cosmetic changes that are inadequate. We need to be more thorough. I would like to give him the opportunity to talk about regulations that apply to temporary foreign workers, which we talk about all the time. At the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, we must have raised this issue six times in reports. There has been so much talk and so little action that it has become a joke.

*Government Orders*

I would like my colleague to comment on that. Can he mention one or two quick and easy changes that could be made to improve the lives of people and producers?

[*English*]

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** Madam Speaker, I am so happy that my hon. colleague is supporting my bill for the financial protection of fresh fruit and vegetable farmers. As the hon. member knows, I represent the soup and salad bowl of Canada, so farming issues are important. I can think of two or three farms in my riding that have now had to hire full-time people just to navigate the paperwork that the temporary foreign worker program has.

People talk about cutting regulations. This is not about that. This is about making this country more efficient. I can think of a cucumber farmer in my riding, for example, who has had three different labels in the last three years. Why does this matter to Canadians? It increases the cost of the product, it costs farmers and it costs the country. We have to become more efficient.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Madam Speaker, one of the concerns I have with Bill S-6 is that a lot of the amendments focus on eliminating paper. I agree with this to some degree, but I also recognize, as a person who represents a more rural and remote riding, that not all people have digital access. As the seniors critic for the NDP, I also recognize that a lot of seniors contact my office requesting paper copies of information or forms from different federal departments.

I am wondering if the member has any thoughts on that. Does he agree that we need to work with our systems to ensure there is access to information for people who do not have digital access?

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** Madam Speaker, yes, I do. This is about common sense. I have seniors in my riding as well who are not well versed in emailing, and they do require paper copies of things. I think we can become efficient to give those people what they require and have an and/or part to it. We still require some things to be done via fax and some things to be done via paper, and some things are done electronically. We have to have a system where there is compromise so that it works for the people, works for Canadians and becomes more efficient.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Madam Speaker, as my colleague indicated, there is no counterpart for a minister of reducing red tape on the government side. One initiative I am impressed with that the shadow minister has undertaken is a website where Canadians can submit their ideas for reducing red tape. It is [www.cutredtape.ca](http://www.cutredtape.ca). Can he share one or two good ideas he has seen as a result of this initiative?

• (2115)

**Mr. Scot Davidson:** Madam Speaker, if anyone is watching tonight, they can go to [www.cutredtape.ca](http://www.cutredtape.ca) if they have experienced red tape.

I think this is about the frustration people have. A business owner reached out to me just last week and said they own a chain of duty-free stores. The government came in and said they had to put all kinds of different labels with ingredients and nutritional facts on all their products in the store to comply with Canadian laws.

The funny thing is that everything is for export. None of it is being consumed in Canada or being taken into Canada. It is all leaving the country. Why would we have these label requirements for those outlets? These are common-sense things we need to address.

**Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Madam Speaker, when I first thought I wanted to get into politics I was about 14 years old, and it was always my dream to speak to regulatory modernization. I was one of those kids who said that if I could make it to Parliament to talk about regulatory modernization, I would know I really succeeded in life. I want to talk about this, because I think it is an important issue for Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

When I meet with farmers in my riding of Dufferin—Caledon, which is the number one producer of economic growth for our GDP, and when I speak to small businesses, I ask them, “What things make your lives more difficult?” Members would think the farmers might say they have to get up at 5 a.m. and have to do this and that, and that there are always more things for them to do than they have time for. However, what the farmer will say is that the regulatory and tax burdens in this country keep them up at night and take up so much of their time. The same thing is said when we talk to small businesses.

I think the real disconnect is that when regulations get passed by the Liberals, they assume that somehow, much like in a minister's office, 1,000 people will be there to make sure someone checks box A, circles things in the right direction and does all these kinds of things. However, most small businesses, which are the driver of economic activity in this country and truly the lifeblood of the Canadian economy, are very small organizations. It is often one or two people working hard to understand what the regulatory burden is for their business, on top of trying to make their business successful and profitable. That is the challenge we have all across this country.

I want to divert momentarily, because the other big thing they talk about besides regulations is the carbon tax. The carbon tax is such a punishing thing for Canadian businesses, especially in the farming sector.

I had the opportunity to visit farms on our last break week. I met with a number of farmers and I asked them, “How much carbon tax did you end up paying in the last year?” The first farm I went to said they paid \$17,000 in carbon taxes. Can members imagine how much this impacts that family's bottom line? That is \$17,000 that they do not have for investing in a new combine, for investing in more sustainable agricultural practices or for putting food on the table.

*Government Orders*

These are the kinds of difficult things being experienced. However, when we add to that the difficulty of complying with regulations from across this country, it is a burden wearing down Canadians. That is why it was so great to hear my colleague talk about the plan to cut red tape. It is something a Conservative government would absolutely do.

One interesting thing is that the bill would make 46 slight changes to regulations. I had the opportunity to look at the Government of Canada's forward regulatory plan for 2021-23. While the bill is going to nibble around the edges of 46 slight changes, the plan is to bring in 270 new regulations. This is exactly the problem: We are going to nibble around these 46 things and then bring in 270 new ones.

Now, I am not very good math, but I would say that is approximately 234 more regulations going in than are potentially coming out, and that is how this government works. Somehow it thinks that adding to regulatory burden, making things more complex and more difficult for small and medium-sized businesses to understand and implement, is the way forward for economic success. However, we know it is not, and we see that in projections for Canada's economic growth going forward. We are continuously moving down.

We are moving down on the productivity scale as well. We are becoming less and less productive. I suggest that people are less productive because they are spending more time in the office trying to navigate through the myriad of red tape regulations than they are in putting productive effort into their businesses. This is the challenge we have after eight years of the Liberal government: more regulations, more all the time.

● (2120)

The other problem with the regulatory process from the government is that it is regulate first and ask questions after. It does not do the hard work of seeing whether there is a way to promulgate regulations that would not be so burdensome and that would not be so hard for businesses to comply with.

I am going to speak very briefly to one example of that: film plastic regulations. The Government of Canada just said it thinks we should get to 60% recyclable content there. However, the technology does not exist. It is not even close to existing. The government is therefore bringing forward a regulation, which may be well-intentioned, to add recycled content into plastic film, but it has not taken the time to figure out whether or not it is actually possible. What does that do? Imagine being in a business and finding out that the business now has to comply with this regulation, but its own scientists and its own R and D are saying they have no idea how this is possible. This is just one tiny example going on across the country from coast to coast to coast.

Why is it so hard for the government, if it is going to bring in a new regulation, to consult with businesses that are going to be affected before it brings in the regulation? That is how to find a path forward if it is going to bring in a new regulation. Instead, what the government does is it decides the path forward, and businesses need to comply whether they can or cannot. If they cannot, that is too bad; they will just leave the country. This is incredibly disturbing to me as a way to move forward with regulatory reform.

Another thing I want to talk about is giving the Minister of Transport the ability to make interim orders. This is a very broad discretion being granted to the Minister of Transport. We know the Minister of Transport. He is the jolly fellow who has been governing the country with the chaos at our airports over the last two years. I do not know about other people in this chamber, but air travel in this country is not an enjoyable experience anymore. If our flight is on time, which is rare, there is some kind of chaos at the airport where we are landing, and we are sitting for an extended period of time.

In my own recent experience when flying from Toronto to Ottawa, I showed up at the airport, got to the gate when it was time to board and then was told the pilots did not show up. Did they only know that 15 minutes before? Then there was a problem with the plane. Then the crew timed out. Then the flight was delayed even more. This is happening all over the place, and the number of complaints being filed with respect to this is astronomical.

My submission is that the last minister who should be getting any authority to make new regulations on anything is the minister who has governed during the chaos at our airports. It is all across the transportation sector too. This affects our supply chains. We know that part of the cost of living crisis in this country is a result of challenges with our supply chain. Who could fix these things? Maybe the Minister of Transport could, but clearly he cannot. Why are we going to give the Minister of Transport any more authority to make things worse than they already are in this country?

There is a bright future, though. The Conservative Party has promised that if any new regulation comes in, a regulation has to go out. This would not be 46 minor changes while bringing in 270 new regulations. It is going to be a bright new future. We are going to consult with businesses. We are going to reduce red tape and get the economy of Canada moving.

● (2125)

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, first of all, I do not know what the education system is like in the member's riding of Dufferin—Caledon, but simple mathematics is what should be expected in Bill S-6.

I know that this legislation covers about 30 pieces of legislation to try to help reduce red tape. I wonder if the member agrees that, because the bill covers at least 30 pieces of legislation and the summary says, "repeal or amend provisions that have, over time, become barriers to innovation and economic growth", the bill is actually a good way to make sure we reduce red tape.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** Madam Speaker, it is a good question. It would actually make some difference, and I did say that. The challenge is that it is not ambitious enough. As I pointed out, the Government of Canada's forward regulatory plan from 2021 to 2023 is to actually bring in 270 new regulations. Therefore, if it is going to take out 30, as the member said, or 46, as I said, and then bring in 270 new regulations, it is defeating the purpose. The government should be more ambitious. The government should be working harder to reduce red tape, and that is the real problem with this piece of legislation.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, to build on the comment that the member made toward the end of his speech, I will say that I found it interesting that he was complaining that there are too many regulations in the country, but then said that the Conservative approach would be that, for every new regulation the Conservatives added, they would eliminate one. Would that not just result in the same number as already exist, which he is complaining is too high?

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** Madam Speaker, I feel like I am preparing for the LSATs and this is a logic games test.

If we are bringing in a new regulation, we actually have to eliminate one. However, if we are just eliminating regulations, which is the plan, we take out a whole bunch. That is the difference. That is the trick that the member did not pick up on. We would actually take a whole bunch out, but if we do have to bring in a new one, we would also take one out. Regulation in this country would always shrink under a Conservative government.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I did actually put forward, in a previous Parliament, a private member's bill called "think small first", but have not been able to get it back through the legislative drafting. It was designed for small businesses, to ensure that there would be a regulatory review of any new regulation and to consider specifically how it would affect small businesses. It is based on a similar bill that was brought forward by the Green Party in the European Union. Therefore, I have a lot of sympathy, but not for cutting deeply without figuring out where we need regulations, because they help protect health and safety.

I just met with representatives of the College of Family Physicians, and they pointed out that there is a federal regulatory burden that costs our health care system because of forms that doctors have to fill out for the federal government. I wonder why that is not in this bill, and whether the member has any thoughts.

**Mr. Kyle Seeback:** Madam Speaker, I would suggest that that is exactly why I have said the bill is not ambitious enough. That is a great example. We should not just randomly cut regulations. We have to streamline regulations in a way that protects consumers and protects the environment but also protects those small and medium-sized businesses so they can grow and add to the economic prosperity of the country.

• (2130)

**Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour to be in the chamber once again, and I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill S-6.

The stated purpose of the bill is to "reduce administrative burden for business, facilitate digital interactions with government, simplify regulatory processes, make exemptions from certain regulatory requirements to test new products, and make cross-border trade easier through more consistent and coherent rules across governments." The proposed measures were a result, I am told, of a public consultation by the Treasury Board Secretariat as well as a call-out to federal departments on what changes they required in order to further streamline the regulatory process.

The regulatory modernization bill would be instituted, I believe for the first time this year, to optimize regulatory processes between departments. This is the second regulatory modernization bill, with the first instance of this legislation having been introduced in 2019, under the Budget Implementation Act. The stated purpose of this legislation is to "reduce administrative burden for business, facilitate digital interactions with government, simplify regulatory processes, make exemptions from certain regulatory requirements to test new products, and make cross-border trade easier".

In all, Bill S-6 proposes 46 minor changes to 29 acts that are administered by the following 12 organizations: the Canadian Food Inspection Agency; Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada; Natural Resources Canada; Environment and Climate Change Canada; Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada; Fisheries and Oceans Canada; the Canada Border Services Agency; Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada; Health Canada; Transport Canada; and Parks Canada.

The first part of Bill S-6 would remove the requirement that a notice of bankruptcy be published in a local newspaper and allow the superintendent of bankruptcy to issue directives regarding how the notice will be published. That is actually a pretty interesting regulation. I cannot remember the last time I saw an advertisement in *The Abbotsford News*, the *Mission City Record* or *The Ashcroft-Cache Creek Journal* outlining that someone was bankrupt. I think I might even follow up with a question to the Library of Parliament to find out the last time this regulation was used. Perhaps in the 21st century economy we can outline people's bankruptcy over Facebook.

The second regulation that Bill S-6 seeks to amend is to allow the application for mediation to be withdrawn, and for the trustee to proceed with an automatic discharge of the bankrupt, where an agreement had been breached between the trustee and the bankrupt before a scheduled mediation.



*Government Orders*

The third change that the bill would bring into effect is to make changes to the Weights and Measures Act to provide a temporary permission mechanism allowing the minister to permit temporary permissions for devices for use in trade, set terms and conditions, and allow the minister to revoke such permission.

The next regulation that the bill would deal with is to repeal the regulation regarding authority related to the requirement for contact information on vending machines that dispense liquids. The next one is to repeal the requirement for dealers and traders to notify Measurement Canada when they import a measuring device for use in their business. I guess that, with the onset of Amazon and the ease with which we can find a scale these days, it is probably a good regulation to repeal.

● (2135)

The next regulation would be to revise the coming-into-force date for recent amendments to the act in 2018's budget implementation act. The next one would be to change the term "annual return" to a term that is less confusing for stakeholders. I am not quite sure exactly what bill that would refer to.

Bill S-6 would update language pertaining to the handling of hazardous products in the workplace to ensure alignment with the Hazardous Products Act. I would be remiss if I did not mention another government bill, coming from the independent Senate on CEPA, and how changes to the Hazardous Products Act may intertwine with the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

The next area of regulation this bill seeks to change is to amend the Agricultural Products Marketing Act to simplify the regulatory system for provincial agricultural marketing boards. I look forward to hearing from government members as to how, by simplifying the regulatory system for provincial agricultural marketing boards, we might see more local produce in our grocery stores. I come from a riding with the highest farm gate sales per capita in Canada and there is broad unanimity among the constituents in my riding that we need to see more local produce on the shelves. After the floods last year, this was of particular concern. Many of the prime blueberry fields in the province were flooded out when the Nooksack River in Washington state washed away the agricultural lands on Sumas Prairie. I look forward to seeing how the minister would enact such regulations to improve the way local produce is marketed in Canada.

The next regulation is to amend the Health of Animals Act to enable the minister to approve a program elaborated by a third party for the purposes of preventing the introduction of any vector, disease or toxic substance or for controlling, eradicating or preventing the spread of vectors, diseases and toxic substances. Similarly, earlier this week in Parliament, we debated the private member's bill of the member for Foothills, which also talked about the Health of Animals Act in the context of biosecurity on farms and the challenges that many agricultural producers are facing with respect to the avian flu and other diseases that are impacting agricultural sectors.

I will note that, in the United States, perhaps because its biosecurity provisions on agricultural properties and its health of animals act were not as robust as the ones we have in Canada, the avian flu led to a massive increase in poultry prices and the destruction of

hundreds of thousands of birds meant for consumption. Therefore, I am happy to see this amendment, to ensure that we do the best to protect our farmers and the consumers of their food.

Another amendment in Bill S-6 also touches upon the Health of Animals Act, to enable the minister to make an interim order that may be used when immediate action is required to deal with significant risks to protect animal and human health and the environment. This is a good-sense regulation that speaks to my previous point that we need to give the Canadian Food Inspection Agency the tools it needs when there is another outbreak of avian flu or another disease impacting our agricultural products, like foot-and-mouth disease, which has also impacted production in the Fraser Valley in previous times.

The next amendment in Bill S-6 would make changes to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency Act that "would allow the agency to deliver services and businesses to interact with CFIA through electronic means rather than having to rely solely on paper-based transactions. This change would reduce administrative burden for businesses and allow them greater flexibility in their interactions with government."

● (2140)

Any time any government agency is taking a step forward to digitize its interactions with Canadians, it is a positive step.

A member from Kingston and I had a debate a few months ago about the immigration services MPs provide in our constituency offices. We both agreed that sometimes we take on too much of this work on behalf of public servants. In many cases, the constituents who come to my office and talk about their interactions with Citizenship and Immigration decry the fact that so much of what they need to do is still based on paper forms that are anachronistic.

I am happy the Canadian Food Inspection Agency is making the relevant regulatory changes to allow people to communicate by email in the 21st century. That is a good change.

The next regulation in Bill S-6 I would like to discuss is the proposed amendment to the Safe Foods for Canadians Act to amend the definition of "food commodity" to align it with the definition of food in the Food and Drugs Act, as amended in 2019.

The next change would provide authority to make regulations as a result of Canada entering into a free trade agreement. We would not know the context of this specific regulation until it is enacted and put into practice by the Minister of International Trade upon this bill hopefully receiving royal assent.

*Government Orders*

There are a number of amendments related to the Canada Transportation Act that would enable new mechanisms to be used to integrate regulatory changes stemming more quickly from updates to international transportation safety standards. This would ensure our transportation sectors meet the most up-to-date safety standards and keep pace with changes in technology and innovation.

Abbotsford is home to Cascade Aerospace. I was able to speak on a concurrence motion to a regulatory change that might be covered in Bill S-6, and that is the fact that when students are taking the test to be an airplane mechanic or to work in the aviation sector, the training manuals still require students, in the 21st century, to go through a module on cloth wings. I do not think there are many planes in Canada made with cloth any longer.

Cascade Aerospace specifically said that the aerospace industry at large has asked for many years that Canada's regulatory process be more in line with the FAA in the United States to stay competitive and allow for companies like Cascade to bid on contracts with American companies to provide the types of manufacturing and high-tech jobs we are looking for in Canada. Hopefully this amendment to the Transportation Act will help us get there.

The next regulation would revise the Electricity and Gas Inspection Act to broaden the type of sampling that could be used as the basis for verification or reverification of meters beyond only statistical sampling.

The next one would make changes to the Canada Petroleum Resources Act and the Canada Oil and Gas Operations Act to provide flexibilities to update regulations for miscellaneous technical or administrative changes.

The next regulation would make changes to the Canada Land Surveyors Act to modernize the legislative framework that regulates the Canada land surveyors profession.

On this side of the House, we have been speaking a lot about the designation of skilled workers in Canada. Hopefully, this is a positive change that would allow more immigrants, for example, to work as surveyors in our communities. Like many professions, we are seeing a shortage of workers, especially in skilled fields such as this one. Hopefully, this regulation would encourage more people to become surveyors in Canada and do the necessary work to build our roads and prepare neighbourhoods for development as we look to see more housing construction in Canada.

● (2145)

In fact, I had to hire a surveyor recently in Abbotsford for my own house. I was very pleased with the service they provided, but, due to the shortage of workers I could not believe the bill I had to pay at the end. However, that is a debate for another time.

Let me just conclude by looking over some of the remarks made by Senator Woo, who sponsored this bill on behalf of the government. Senator Woo is one of five senators from the province of B.C. When he sponsored this bill, it almost felt to me that he was a member of the Liberal government. He talked about looking ahead and that the Treasury Board Secretariat would be considering more proposals for another regulatory modernization bill. He talked about his close working relationship with the Treasury Board Sec-

retariat, as if he were a member of the Liberal government and not an independent.

This is particularly challenging for me, because I actually think this bill is really important and would do a lot of things that stakeholders and deputy ministers across the Government of Canada have been asking for, for a long time. That is to clean up the balance sheet, so to speak, so government can function more effectively on behalf of Canadians and provide the services that we collectively need and the regulation that is required to run different sectors of our economy and our consumption of goods and produce. However, I would be remiss if I did not mention that it was hard for me to see that it was the government not tabling this directly in the House of Commons but instead it went through the Senate.

British Columbia right now has a population of just over five million. That means every senator we have represents, effectively, one million people. In Ontario, it is not much better. It is at 592,000. On Prince Edward Island, it is 38,000. The government should not be doing its important work through its Liberal senators in the other chamber. It should be doing the important work here in this chamber.

With respect to the Senate, as a British Columbian, I hope one day we will have a more effective voice in the Canadian Confederation. When I go door knocking during elections, almost every day someone raises the fact that Ottawa does not adequately represent the interests of my province. This is largely due to the fact that we only have six senators allotted to us, with five in place right now. We pay equalization payments to other provinces and we have the third-highest population.

In the years ahead, indigenous people are going to take more control of their lives through natural resources development. There are a number of amazing companies that are partnering with indigenous people in the natural resources sector. I am very optimistic about trade and commerce on Canada's west coast in the years ahead. I hope, by the economic growth that we are going to see that is going to drive the Canadian economic growth in the 21st century, and that one day we are going to have a sufficient number of senators or equal representation in Ottawa. British Columbians deserve it.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, if the member wants to understand why certain provinces such as P.E.I. have very different representation in the Senate, he should probably pick up the Constitution and have a look at it. Perhaps that will help to inform him on that.

To be honest, the last 30 or 45 seconds of his discussion were probably the most passionate of his entire 20-minute speech. He seemed to speak a lot about how much he is in favour of the bill and rhetorically speak about the need or lack of need for a lot of the regulations.

*Government Orders*

Conservative after Conservative have indicated their support for this. I wonder if the member can inform the House as to when we might be able to get on with the vote on it. If he could do that and at the same time spare me the rhetoric of needing every Conservative to represent their constituents and speak to this specific bill, that would be great too.

• (2150)

**Mr. Brad Vis:** Madam Speaker, in response to the member opposite's good-faith question, the reality is that it is the Liberal House leader who will ultimately make the decision when each of the bills before Parliament is brought to a vote. It is a negotiation with the Liberals' coalition partners, the NDP, and the official opposition, the Conservatives.

I spoke in good faith to Bill S-6. Many of the regulations related to the Health of Animals Act on biosecurity, I think, are really relevant. It is a good bill, but ultimately, in terms of its passage and when we come to a vote on it will be determined by whether or not the Liberal House leader is willing to work with the official opposition to make sure that bills are properly scrutinized and debated accordingly.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I still find it rather ironic to hear my colleague say that he is prepared to move to a vote on the bill when he feels so inclined, while also making a rather convincing plea for public servants to be more efficient when it comes to bureaucracy. There is a bit of a contradiction there.

How does my colleague feel about that? Does he not think we could move on to the next item on the agenda and move forward to set an example for our government with regard to improving bureaucracy?

**Mr. Brad Vis:** Madam Speaker, that is right, we need to streamline regulations where necessary and strengthen regulations to protect our food here in Canada. We have a lot of work to do.

Sometimes we need to streamline regulations. Other times, we need to strengthen them to meet demands and bring our economy into the 21st century.

[*English*]

**Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I rise just to give recognition to the hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon. He seems to have a certain *je ne sais quoi*, a certain flair that the hon. member for Lévis—Lotbinière seems to have. I have appreciated that in his delivery of petitions.

It seems to me, based on his speech, that he has a newfound passion for an elected Senate, one that has mixed member proportional representation, one that allows for true democracy to happen. I would love to hear the member talk about ways in which we can make the Senate more accountable, beyond the patronage appointments of the past Conservative and Liberal governments.

**Mr. Brad Vis:** Madam Speaker, let me just say equal, elected and effective.

The first action I ever took as a Canadian in a democratic process was to put a wonderful reform party of Canada sign on my dad's

front lawn. From that day on I learned about how the Senate has under-represented my province since its inception into Confederation and that one day, through economic reconciliation with first nations, we might see British Columbia gain its proper place in this federation. However, we cannot do it without working with indigenous Canadians so they can take control of their lives. Get the Indian Act out of the way. Let them flourish through resource development and partnering with businesses to create a new life and new opportunity for young people, especially young indigenous peoples across our great country.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I think we are all astonished by the turn this debate has taken on modernizing regulations.

I just wanted to express to the member some degree of sympathy that the electoral boundary redistribution will deprive him of representing the town of Ashcroft and the extraordinarily vital and engaged citizenry. As well, I think he is losing Lytton, which we already lost in action. It has not moved. I am not being facetious about losing Lytton. We shall never lose Lytton. It must be rebuilt.

Does the hon. member think it is inevitable that his boundaries are redrawn in that fashion?

• (2155)

**Mr. Brad Vis:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands for the good-faith question. On the redistribution process, the member knows that Fraser Canyon and all of those communities have a special place in my heart, as they do for her.

I think Ashcroft is like the Sedona of Canada. It has such a bright future. There are so many amazing things going on there. It is one of the few ecological zones in Canada that are actually a desert. It is beautiful and I encourage everyone to visit the village of Ashcroft.

I would be remiss if I did not mention Cache Creek. There is flooding going on in Cache Creek, which has increased every year since the 2017 Elephant Hill fire. In fact, since that time, we have lost the fire chief to a previous flood. It just goes to show how much work we have to do on climate mitigation and adaptation for small communities like Cache Creek in order to give them a future, so they are not subject to these annual floods, which tear apart businesses and people's homes.

My staff will continue working hard to support Lytton. We have made progress. We are working in good faith with all parties. Building permits can be issued now, but we have so much more to get done.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Madam Speaker, seeing that my hon. colleague is so enthusiastic, I would like to ask him if he is ready to entertain the idea of separatists being appointed to a reformed Senate. I am not saying that we would go there.

*Privilege*

I am curious if he would be ready to entertain even that idea. It does represent the opinion of a significant number of Quebeckers.

**Mr. Brad Vis:** Madam Speaker, every Canadian, even Quebecers who do not believe in Canada, has the right to vote according to their conscience, and to even vote for an elected Senate.

[*English*]

**Mr. Matthew Green:** Madam Speaker, I do appreciate the turn this has taken. I am learning so much about the hon. member. In his passionate remarks, he used a phrase that Conservatives like to use, which, quite frankly, is made up. It is this idea of “economic reconciliation”. If the member wants to have true reconciliation, I would love for him to put on the record the ways in which his government, if elected, would remove the red tape in its entirety by just giving land back. That would be true reconciliation with first nations on all the legal fictions that were made under the treaties.

**Mr. Brad Vis:** Madam Speaker, I think my hon. colleague forgot to point out that we need to abolish the Indian Act. I also said that in my debate tonight. We have so much work to do.

It is not me stating that they want economic reconciliation. It is the Stó:lō Nation pushing to have more control over forestry tenure so that it can take control of its own resources.

That is why I am pleased to outline again that the Conservative Party is taking an indigenous-led process to develop a new way to reconceive how we develop natural resources in Canada. Many of the first nations constituents I represent, like those in Lytton, benefit a lot from some of the economic development already taking place and receive large sums of money. One member was telling me that the Lytton tribal council receives over \$1 million a year in remittances. It entered that agreement in good faith with Teck Resources.

We have so much to do, but ultimately, we are not going to get there until, as the member pointed out, the indigenous people of Canada have more control over their lands.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**PRIVILEGE**

FOREIGN INTERFERENCE AND ALLEGED INTIMIDATION OF A MEMBER

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am speaking to the question of privilege raised yesterday by the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

As my colleague from Ontario mentioned, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, states the following at pages 107 to 108:

In order to fulfill their parliamentary duties, Members should be able to go about their parliamentary business undisturbed.... Any form of intimidation of a Member with respect to the Member's actions during a proceeding in Parliament could amount to contempt.

This is long-standing and well-established procedure and principle of the law of parliamentary privilege, tracing its roots back to an April 12, 1733, resolution of the British House of Commons, which states:

That the assaulting, insulting, or menacing of any member of this House in his coming to or going from the House or upon the account of his behaviour in Parlia-

ment is a high infringement of the privilege of this House, a most outrageous and dangerous violation of the rights of Parliament and an high crime and misdemeanour.

Of course, there is a difference between exercising the fundamental democratic right to enter into political debate and criticizing elected members of the House for the stands they take. As members know, Joseph Maingot, at page 235 of his work *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, second edition, articulates the appropriate balance between free debate and intimidation and coercion.

...all interferences with Members' privileges of freedom of speech, such as editorials and other public comment, are not breaches of privilege even though they influence the conduct of Members in their parliamentary work. Accordingly, not every action by an outside body that may influence the conduct of a Member of Parliament as such could now be regarded as a breach of privilege, even if it were calculated and intended to bring pressure on the Member to take or to refrain from taking a particular course. But any attempt by improper means to influence or obstruct a Member in his parliamentary work may constitute contempt. What constitutes an improper means of interfering with Members' parliamentary work is always a question depending on the facts of each case.

Bosc and Gagnon, at page 109, observe that:

In order to find a prima facie breach of privilege, the Speaker must be satisfied that there is evidence to support the Member's claim that he or she has been impeded in the performance of his or her parliamentary functions and that the matter is directly related to a proceeding in Parliament.

In our opinion, that is definitely the case here. A “proceeding in Parliament” is a technical term for which Bosc and Gagnon, at page 90, refer to two definitions. The first is from Erskine May, and the second is from Australia's Parliamentary Privileges Act 1987.

Erskine May's definition at page 235 of the 24th edition of *Treatise on the Law, Privileges, Proceedings and Usage of Parliament* states the following:

An individual Member takes part in a proceeding usually by speech, but also by various recognised forms of formal action, such as voting, giving notice of a motion, or presenting a petition or report from a committee, most of such actions being time-saving substitutes for speaking.

The Australian statutory definition, meanwhile, contains the expression “all words spoken and acts done in the course of, or for purposes of or incidental to, the transacting of the business of a House”.

● (2200)

Speaker Lamoureux, on September 19, 1973, said, at page 6709 of the Debates, that he had “no hesitation in reaffirming the principle that parliamentary privilege includes the right of a member to discharge his responsibilities as a member of the House free from threats or attempts at intimidation.”

This is quite obviously an attempt at intimidation.

On May 1, 1986, Speaker Bosley held, at page 12847 of the Debates, “If an Hon. Member is impeded or obstructed in the performance of his or her parliamentary duties through threats, intimidation, bribery attempts or other improper behaviour, such a case would fall within the limits of parliamentary privilege.”

*Government Orders*

Subsequently, Speaker Parent, on March 24, 1994, commented, at page 2706 of the Debates, “Threats of blackmail or intimidation of a member of Parliament should never be taken lightly. When such occurs, the very essence of free speech is undermined. Without the guarantee of freedom of speech, no member of Parliament can do his duty as is expected.”

More recently, on March 6, 2012, a prima facie contempt was found, arising from an intimidation campaign of YouTube videos from the Internet, by hacking collective Anonymous, largely targeting a former colleague and his family members as a consequence of legislation this colleague tabled in the House.

In so ruling, the Speaker said, at page 5834 of the Debates: “Those who enter political life fully expect to be able to be held accountable for their actions to their constituents and to those who are concerned with the issues and initiatives they may advocate. In a healthy democracy, vigorous debate on issues is encouraged. In fact, the rules and procedures of this House are drafted to allow for proponents and opponents to discuss, in a respectful manner, even the most difficult and sensitive of matters. However, when duly elected members are personally threatened for their work in Parliament, whether introducing a bill, making a statement or casting a vote, this House must take the matter very seriously.”

I would echo those words, “this House must take the matter very seriously.” Just as it is a novel concern in this recently surfaced story, which is still unravelling, that is not a procedural impediment to the Speaker finding a prima facie case of contempt here.

On this particular point, Bosc and Gagnon comment, at page 81: “The House of Commons enjoys very wide latitude in maintaining its dignity and authority through the exercise of its contempt power. In other words, the House may consider any misconduct to be contempt and may deal with it accordingly.... This area of parliamentary law is therefore extremely fluid and most valuable for the Commons to be able to meet novel situations.”

I therefore support the question of privilege raised by the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. I hope the Chair will make a ruling on this important matter soon.

• (2205)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The matter has already been taken under advisement by the Chair. We thank the hon. member for his contribution.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### **AN ACT RESPECTING REGULATORY MODERNIZATION**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill S-6, An Act respecting regulatory modernization, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I know that many of us are not used to being here this late in the evening, but maybe we are not really here and this is all a dream, because I have difficulty believing that the government is actually doing something about this mountain of red tape that Canadians face. While it is true that Bill S-6 would not do much, at least we are doing something.

Before the people of Edmonton Manning asked me to represent them here, I was a business owner. For over 20 years, I worked to build a company that had not only domestic but international sales. I have first-hand experience in how the excessive regulations and red tape this government imposes on business hurt Canadian companies and prevent them from being competitive—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I would ask the hon. members who want to have conversations to please go to the lobbies.

The hon. member for Edmonton Manning.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Madam Speaker, this is the second interruption from the other side for some reason.

I am splitting my time today with the member for Mirabel.

It is good to see a bill that reduces the administrative burden government places on business, facilitates digital interactions with government and simplifies regulatory processes. All our legislation should be aimed at making government smaller and simpler, in order to serve the Canadian people rather than handicap them. This is a new idea from the Liberals, one I hope they stick with.

I am encouraged to discover that this bill makes exemptions from certain regulatory requirements to test new products without sacrificing safety. It will also make cross-border trade easier through more consistent and coherent rules across governments. If we ask those in business, they will tell us that all too often the rules applied by one government department are not consistent with those applied by another department.

It was also encouraging to hear that the measures proposed in Bill S-6 are the result of a public consultation process by the Treasury Board Secretariat, as well as asking federal departments what changes are required to further streamline the regulatory process. Consultation makes sense and I would encourage the government to try it in other areas as well.

I would also encourage the Liberals to speed up the process for eliminating unnecessary government red tape. The regulatory modernization bill, the RMB, is supposed to be instituted annually to optimize regulatory processes between government departments. By doing this every year, the hope is the bureaucratic hill of red tape will not be allowed to grow into a mountain.

*Government Orders*

If we look at the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's website, we will in fact see that the legislation is referred to as an annual regulatory modernization bill. Admittedly, English is not my first language, but I was led to understand that "annual" describes something that happens every year. This is the second RMB the current government has offered us. The first was only four years ago. This one was introduced last year, but obviously has not been a priority for the Liberals. Simple math says that they need to introduce four more RMBs this year to bring us up to date, but as we have seen with the budget and the government's financial plan, simple math is not their strong suit.

The 2019 RMB made changes to 12 pieces of legislation in the areas of transportation, pest control, electricity and gas inspections.

For example, the Canada Transportation Act and the Food and Drugs Act were amended to allow for innovation, permitting limited exemptions from regulatory requirements for regulatory sandboxes to test the new products that would benefit Canadians, such as tissues developed through 3D printing.

The Electricity and Gas Inspection Act was amended to support the use of new technologies, including zero-emission vehicles, light-emitting diodes, LEDs, and hydrogen-fuelled vehicles.

The Canada Transportation Act was amended to allow for digital and electronic processes and documents in addition to in-person or paper-based ones.

Changes to the Pest Control Products Act removed a redundant review requirement when another review was already considering the issue or could be modified to include the issue.

Amendments to the Food and Drugs Act provided more clarity to industry about which regulations apply to their products.

Now we have Bill S-6, which proposes 46 minor changes to 29 acts that are administered by the following 12 government organizations: Canadian Food Inspection Agency; Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada; Natural Resources Canada; Environment and Climate Change Canada; Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada; Fisheries and Oceans Canada; Canada Border Services Agency; Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada; Health Canada; Transport Canada; and Parks Canada.

● (2210)

It is good to see that the bill has a larger scope than the previous RMB and that the Liberals are discovering more places where the government needs to get out of the way. It is the least they can do.

Ask any business person and they will tell us that Canada has a red tape and productivity crisis, which is why, to me, this bill is both encouraging and disappointing.

It is encouraging because at least the Liberals are beginning to understand that there is a problem. It is disappointing because there is so much more that needs to be done; an annual bill that is, in reality, brought to the House once every three or four years is not enough to solve the problem.

The items addressed in this bill are minor at best and do little to address the onerous red tape regime that is slowing economic

growth in Canada. It is the barest of the bare minimums the Liberals could make in reducing red tape and bureaucratic overreach.

It does nothing to substantively address the bureaucracy and red tape stifling economic growth. It is a Liberal bill heavy on announcement and light on delivery.

Certainly, no one would object to the changes proposed, which includes amending the Health of Animals Act to enable the minister to make an interim order that may be used when immediate action is required to deal with a significant risk, to protect animal health, human health and the environment. This is just basic common sense.

It includes making changes to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency Act, which would allow the agency to deliver services and allow businesses to interact with CFIA through electronic means rather than having to rely solely on paper-based transactions. This change would reduce administrative burdens for businesses and allow them greater flexibility in their interactions with the government. Paper-based transactions are usually slower than electronic ones. This is also a matter of common sense.

It includes making changes to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Act, to enable information sharing to help administer any federal or provincial law for permanent and temporary residents.

This bill has three main purposes: first, to make doing business easier, especially when government is involved; second, to provide flexibility and agility in government regulatory systems; and, third, to improve the integrity of the regulatory system. It is good to start but it is only a start. As the mountain of red tape grows, we need to do better. Given the track record of the Liberal government, though, maybe I am dreaming.

● (2215)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Madam Speaker, in a bill on modernization and regulations, I feel compelled to pay tribute to a woman from my region, Jocelyne Trudel, who has to retire from her job at the Caisse Desjardins because her term is up, in line with regulations.

*Government Orders*

I want to pay tribute to her because, first of all, I was a member of the board of directors of the credit union. I had to resign when I was elected. This woman did everything very thoroughly and rigorously. She is a very generous woman. I really wanted to pay tribute to her today.

I have a question for my colleague. How can we help our administrators simplify all the paperwork for our businesses? Is there any way to do this?

[*English*]

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Madam Speaker, this is a business case, basically. When one does business, one structures it properly and one puts the proper steps that are streamlined by nature. One does not put the processes that start adding red tape over and over to thicken the bureaucratic process so that business cannot be done. That is one way of doing this. It has to start in the roots and it has to be a culture of any government running this country.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague did, sort of, reference his life before entering the House of Commons. We are so fortunate to have him here. He has a very strong background in business.

As the government goes on to do the third iteration of Bill S-6, from a completely business perspective, and as we did see in *The Globe and Mail* today that this is a time when fewer Canadians than ever are considering starting a small business, what are some considerations for business or even small business?

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Madam Speaker, I know so many friends who are trying to start a business or are already in business, and the amount of red tape that they are facing is incredible.

It is so risky nowadays to think about starting a business. Those regulations start with the government. The government has to understand the common sense of doing business for businesses to be competitive, for their ability to survive in the long term, and to be productive enough so that they can continue to do business and be encouraged to do so.

The current environment of doing business in this country is not encouraging whatsoever. The government needs to act very quickly.

• (2220)

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, considering the title of this bill is an act respecting regulatory modernization, in this time of reconciliation, a lot of legislation is quite outdated when it comes to indigenous peoples. A lot of regulations are quite outdated when it comes to indigenous peoples.

Specifically I would like to ask about the Species at Risk Act, because it does point to some species that impact my riding as I talked about to another member of Parliament, regarding barren-ground caribou, the Atlantic walrus and the Atlantic cod. I think the Species at Risk Act would make significant improvements about how these species at risk would be dealt with.

Does the member agree that, in terms of modernizing regulations, modernization must include regulations to ensure that indigenous engagement always happens when it is going to impact indigenous well-being?

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Madam Speaker, I believe the indigenous community, as well as other communities in Canada, and business communities are the victims of red tape and regulations.

The red tape and the bureaucratic processes are so thick that they are basically stopping oxygen from getting into the body. That is how I describe it.

We need to open up. We need to realize that we cannot continue doing what we are doing, because the longer this takes, the more risk we have of killing the body. I hope that is not going to be case, but we need to do better and we need to do it faster.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ):** Madam Speaker, it is 10:20 p.m. on a Wednesday night. I know that members have been looking forward to the highlight of the evening, obviously my speech. I just want to take a moment to recognize the hard-working employees of the House who are with us this evening. I want to thank the pages in particular. We often forget about them, but they are here for us and they work with us. They are our work colleagues. I saw some of them studying earlier. I even tried to help one of them solve integrals, but without success. I will have to review my math. In short, I want to thank them. I want them to know that we know that they work hard and that we think highly of them.

Let us look at the bill for what it is. In the description I have here, it talks about minor regulatory amendments to “reduce administrative burden for business, facilitate digital interactions with government, simplify regulatory processes” and so on. Let us be honest. This is a routine bill. Once in a while, the government adjusts the regulations and updates laws and standards. We should not be debating this for six hours, which is what we are doing until midnight tonight. This is a waste of time. It does not make any sense. It is the very embodiment of parliamentary inefficiency. This bill has no principle or even spirit. These are regulatory changes. The bill should be sent directly to committee for study. It amends a whole pile of legislation. That requires expertise. I think it is a shameful waste of the House's resources and members' time to be messing around with this bill until midnight.

*Government Orders*

Still, it contains some important and interesting elements. It is true that it will make life easier for businesses and that it will simplify many things. There is a little bit of everything and a whole lot of nothing in there. There are bits about electricity, gas, the use of new technologies. We want to encourage international harmonization of standards. I know everyone is passionate about that; I can see it in their faces. People are as passionate as I am about this. We are talking about gas standards, weights and measures. We are talking about allowing more flexibility for new technologies, another one of my biggest passions. We are also going to amend the Canada Business Corporations Act to ensure that there is no more confusion between the annual report and the annual declaration, so that some companies do not get delisted without their knowledge, as Jean Perron said.

There are a bunch of changes like that. Some are more substantial. The Canada Oil and Gas Operations Act is being amended, for example. Essentially, when there are changes to standards and regulations, that needs to be published in the Canada Gazette. Members, parliamentarians, the public and experts in the field need to be kept abreast through the Canada Gazette. What we are doing here is repealing section 15 of the Canada Oil and Gas Operations Act, which requires these publications.

We understand the spirit of the bill because the Standards Council of Canada conducted an analysis of 19 Natural Resources Canada regulations. It became apparent that there were artefacts and old stock, that 167 of the 367 standards were removed, replaced, were no longer managed or no longer served any purpose.

What we are saying here is that we are going to facilitate the process of regulatory changes. There are essentially a few little problems because in the bill as written, there is no distinction between minor, cosmetic, functional changes and changes that might be more substantial. Regulations and standards in the oil sector are important, as members know.

There are a bunch of standards like that. I referred to them earlier when I was asking questions of some of my colleagues, particularly the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board. This serves to remind us that the government has legislative tools available to adjust regulations or minor pieces of legislation that are ill-suited, contain errors or have aged poorly, and that it can do so routinely, as we are doing today.

I am a member of the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations. Not many people know a lot about that committee, but essentially, we assess problems that may exist in regulations.

● (2225)

There are legal advisers who tell us, for example, that the French version does not say the same thing as the English version, or that there is an issue because the interpretation of certain regulations may be ambiguous for the courts and could cause problems. There have even been cases where there were potential charter violations. The way the regulations were written could have caused major concerns.

This week, this committee issued a notice of disallowance for an order. The problem went back 25 years. It is not uncommon for us to write to ministers one, two, three, four or five times and not get a

response or a visit. Some of our correspondence is as old as Methuselah. We go back and forth with the department but do not get any answers. I would urge the government to think about that and think about the importance of correcting these errors in current laws.

My colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé was saying that this legislation had been written five years ago and was only now being debated. There have been issues in some laws for a long time. They never get resolved, and we are being kept waiting. I am appealing to the sensitivity of the government members.

Beyond that, if we want to simplify matters, if we want to make things better for businesses, the business community and taxpayers, there are solutions that we could debate. One of them is Quebec's independence.

I know how much everybody loves filing two tax returns. We spoke about that earlier. However, do we really want two finance departments? That results in two tax rates, two finance ministers, two finance departments, two sets of public servants who draw up budgets and study estimates. That is inefficient. It might be worthwhile eliminating one of them.

We have two revenue agencies, one in Ottawa and one in Quebec City. We could fix that. In addition, if we had a single tax return, we could reassign the CRA employees working in Quebec offices to other tasks for which they are qualified, without cutting any jobs. This would result in greater productivity and savings for our businesses. That would be a good thing.

It would also be a good thing if we no longer had two environment ministers with two sets of standards. That would be pretty good. It would be a good thing if we did not have two governments bickering over who will have first crack at the tax base, who will be the first to claim a GST point or a QST point. We could eliminate all these inefficiencies.

I can guess what my colleagues are thinking. I know that the two health ministers are on their minds. The first minister manages hospitals and provides services. The second imposes conditions. The first is not sure whether they want the transfer because they are wondering whether it costs more to submit all the reports in order to meet the conditions. It is almost not worth taking the money.

That is not even to mention the fact that the tax rules for the capital allowance are inconsistent between Quebec and Ottawa, which causes confusion for businesses and takes up more resources. There is also the matter of diplomacy, international relations, and Canadian embassies and Quebec offices around the world. How inefficient is that?

It is no less inefficient than having two departments of transport or duplicating environmental assessments because Ottawa insists on having its own, thereby violating Quebec's environmental sovereignty. Quebec is also being told what to do in the area of infrastructure because Ottawa wants to impose standards.



*Government Orders*

It has even gotten to the point where the Conservatives want housing standards. There is also duplication of work and conditions imposed for post-secondary education. The federal government is even interfering in the hiring of university professors and research chairs.

I am not talking about immigration mix-ups. Why not hand that over to Quebec City? Why not do the same with housing, the French language and labour law? There is a federal labour law and a provincial labour law, two innovation departments, two natural resources departments, two departments that deal with climate change. Here, there is heritage, which is supposed to take care of the French language, yet does not care what Quebec's department of culture wants.

When things are light, life is good. Everyone likes that. Therefore, in order to make things lighter, we should leave Canada. We should leave. I am certain the other nine provinces can have a lot of fun without us.

• (2230)

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, that is not true. I would miss Quebec if it were to leave Canada, as the member spoke about towards the end of his speech. I would even suggest that a good portion of Quebecers, if not a majority, would feel the same way.

At the beginning of the member's intervention, he spoke about whether there is even a need for having this discussion right now, and I could not agree more. We are literally talking about something right now that everybody is in agreement with. It has primarily just been Conservatives getting up to speak to this. I am baffled as to why that is when everybody is in agreement, notwithstanding the fact that I know people stand up and use the excuse of making sure they represent their constituents by talking about it.

Can the member try to shed some light on why we are not moving along? All it takes is for everybody to stop talking; then, by default, we would just go to a vote. Could he give his thoughts on why we are not able to do that?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon:** Madam Speaker, I am not privy to the conversations and dealings that led to this situation. I will repeat what I said earlier. This is nonsense. When a bill is given second reading, we accept the principle and decide whether to refer it to committee for study, because we agree with the spirit of the bill, because it is a great idea.

We are talking about small regulatory changes that affect a lot of statutes and that require a very technical evaluation. It is by definition committee work. Those who think it is a good idea to debate this for hours, until midnight, have not been following the debates. The quality of the content of the speeches is proof that the House of Commons is not the place to go into great detail. This is committee work.

I am disappointed, because there is plenty of work to be done. We have plenty of legislation to study. There is no shortage of de-

bates to be had. We are missing out on good opportunities to work intelligently.

• (2235)

[*English*]

**Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his intervention, and I want to compliment him on both the rapidity and the simplicity of his speech. Because I do not understand the French language well enough, I also want to compliment our interpreter services for providing a very simple way for me to understand.

I actually have a two-part question for the member. First of all, given the plainness he used so that I was able to understand, I would expect the member would be able to support our Conservative initiatives, when we form government, for plain-language laws, which would reduce a lot of bureaucratic language.

Second, I was a bit confused by the member's constant points about removing duplicity in terms of having two departments looking at different things. Would he then want 10 departments or 13 departments looking after the various aspects of provincial law, or would it be better to have just one federal aspect?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon:** Madam Speaker, I hope the interpretation services are paying attention because I will say this slowly.

What I would do is take Quebec, leave Canada and there would no longer be a federal government. We would get rid of half the departments and we would be none the worse for it.

[*English*]

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Mirabel for his speech, and from it, I take the irony of us talking about efficiencies in a bill that is about efficiencies.

I am interested in the comments around reduction and duplicity, but I wonder if there are some other in-house efficiencies that the member could share. I sometimes think about whether we could have shorter speeches to get more business done in the House. Does he have other ideas on how we can be more efficient in the House?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon:** Madam Speaker, it is not necessarily that the parliamentary rules are poorly written. I certainly do not think that we should be muzzling members, shortening their speeches. I think that here in the House there are 338 intelligent people who are capable of mastering their content, who are willing to work for their constituents. If I did not have the highest regard for each and every member of the House, I would not be so upset about the use of our precious resource, our time.

*Government Orders**[English]*

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to address the House this evening, as well as the various people who are watching at home. I know my kids are watching. They wanted to watch the hockey game, but I told them no, as it was important for them to be watching their dad on CPAC instead. Given the score, though, they will be glad of the choice that has been made for them.

I want to assure members I will not be splitting my time, by the way.

The bill we are debating tonight is Bill S-6. This is a bill dealing with the issue of regulatory modernization. I have to say we have heard some complaints from the member for Kingston and the Islands, who does a lot of speaking and does a lot of complaining about other people speaking in this place. He has been asking why people are interested in speaking to this bill. Why are people interested in speaking on behalf of their constituents about the important policy issues that are raised by this bill?

It is clear in the substantive, important speeches that have been given by various members that there is a lot to say. To distill the essence of why this debate is important is that, on so many fronts, there is the government's failure to take seriously the need to modernize regulations; consider the competitiveness of our economy; and consider, broadly speaking, the environment in which businesses operate. The failure of the government to understand what is important for our businesses to succeed is at the heart of so many challenges facing this country.

It is important to remind people of something that I think Conservatives understand. That is that we want to have strong social programs and those strong social programs must be built on a foundation of economic prosperity. If we ignore the economic prosperity side of the equation and then talk about how we want to be giving more money to people, that is not going to add up at a certain point. That is why we need to have a strong economy driven by a strong private sector that is able to create jobs and deliver opportunity.

A strong economy provides the platform on which we can then do more for each other and more for the most vulnerable. It has to be on that foundation of prosperity. It is something that the government and the parties of the left in general, I think, very much fail to understand. We need to have a strong economy built on a strong private sector, and that requires the kind of regulatory modernization we are talking about.

We have had various bills over the last number of weeks that have dealt, broadly speaking, with questions of the economy. We have had regulatory modernization proposals, and we have this bill, Bill S-6. We also had the budget implementation act. I have to say that, in the midst of all of it, and I would never refer to the presence or absence of members in this place, but let us just say that, in terms of the statements that are on the record, the questions that are answered, we have heard very little from the finance minister.

We now have a discussion going on at the finance committee about the budget implementation act and there is a simple ask from Conservative. On issues around the state of our regulations, the

state of our economy and what is in the budget, it is a reasonable ask to say that Canada's finance minister should come to speak to the budget for, let us say, at least two hours. Not only has the finance minister not answered questions in the House very frequently for quite some time, but also the government is not willing to agree to a simple amendment to the programming motion from Conservatives saying that the finance minister should come for two hours to answer questions on the budget implementation act because the finance minister is the person setting the economic agenda in this country. I know that Bill Morneau, the previous finance minister, has said since leaving office that most of the decisions about the economic direction of the country are made in the Prime Minister's office, but if we believe that it is the finance minister who is setting the tone, surely we should expect that the finance minister would be available to answer questions on these important topics.

As it relates to the strength of our economy, and as it relates to regulatory modernization, I think there are many questions to be answered. Here is what I see in the approach of the government. The approach of the government is kind of a retreat of this old left-wing, government-knows-best idea of the economy, but it expresses itself now in a very different way.

● (2240)

At one time, parties of the left were more explicit in calling for draconian state regulations, state control, picking winners and losers, interfering in the economy, and controlling the means of production, as at least perhaps one member is still willing to say. That is the kind of explicit interventionist language we used to hear from parties of the left in this place and elsewhere.

Now the government is taking a new approach to the justification of its agenda, but it is still a retreat of the same basic philosophical idea, which is that, fundamentally, the government knows best which sectors are going to succeed in the future, where new technologies are going to come from and which sectors are no longer required. Therefore, its budget has this policy of significant subsidies toward certain sectors, piling regulatory burdens on other sectors and saying which kinds of things are going to be the sectors, the companies and the investments of the future, while these other things are just not.

The government is still trying to make these decisions, but it is trying to implement these decisions with a greater level of subtlety. It is the long arm of the state trying to mask itself in velvet gloves, but the interventionism inherent in the government's industrial policy is still very evident.

The government's efforts to undertake regulatory reform are actually very selective. It would like to talk about regulatory reform but be selective in its implementation of it for selective subsidies and tax advantages to certain kinds of companies, certain companies in certain regions, and leave in place a significant regulatory burden in other areas.

*Government Orders*

Conservatives will support Bill S-6 because it is better than nothing, but we also see it as lacking in ambition. It is lacking in ambition for truly making this the kind of country where, as I think we used to be, we are a great magnet for investment, not just in particular sectors where the government is trying to subsidize what it thinks the winners of the future will be, but to be the kind of country where anybody with a good and profitable idea can come here to invest, and those regulatory burdens would be removed.

By the way, one area where we really need regulatory reform is in the area of getting critical natural resource projects, especially in the oil and gas sector, approved. The need for this was put in sharp focus by the horrific genocidal Russian invasion of Ukraine.

In the context of this invasion, it became clear what a mistake it had been for various European countries to become so dependent on gas imports from Russia. The need for a rapid transition away from that dependency became very clear. There was an opportunity for Canada to say we have a unique vocation in the democratic world and that is to supply the world with secure and stable access to energy.

At the time, Conservatives were saying that. If we look at the democratic world, most of the world's democracies are geographically small, densely populated nations. In Europe, but also in east Asia, there are many democracies that look like that, geographically small and densely populated.

Canada is relatively unique in the democratic world as being a geographically vast, sparsely populated nation that is very rich in natural resources. We could be that critical source of energy security for our friends, allies and partners throughout the democratic world so they do not need to be reliant on hostile powers that do not share our values and do not have the same security interests.

I would like to see Canada step up to fill that vital need. To do that, we will need to modernize, update and improve our regulations when it comes to getting projects approved. It is clear Liberals do not want us to fulfill that role. They talk a good talk sometimes about supporting Ukraine, but they do not see this vital strategic opportunity for Canada stepping up to fill this gap and be a supplier of the energy security our allies need.

• (2245)

The gas association was saying, right away, that we need to improve the regulatory environment to make it easier for projects to move forward. I think there were mixed messages sent on that, from various members of the Liberal cabinet, but no action on it. The Prime Minister said that there was no business case for these projects. Then European countries have gone and signed deals, and found sources of energy elsewhere.

Canada still has such immense potential. Why would we not seize that opportunity to now expand the development of oil and gas, creating wealth here in Canada, and supplying our allies and partners with energy security?

I know some members would say that the regulatory burdens that are imposed on energy companies are in service of the environment. However, if we look globally, if we look at the alternatives, we could see that that is not at all the case. In fact, in so many cas-

es, in particular, gas exports from Canada, it could displace not only the conflict energy sources and save lives by reducing European dependence on Russia, but also the less environmentally friendly sources of energy. Some countries in Europe made the mistake of being reliant on Russian gas. Other countries in Europe are still using coal, because their response to the threat posed by the Putin regime has been to say that they do not want to be reliant on Russian gas so they will take whatever alternatives they have available to them, which may mean coal.

Canadian energy exports, the fact that we are a free democracy exporting energy and that we could displace coal with Canadian gas, could be good for global security and good for the environment. However, that requires regulatory modernization. That requires a willingness to go much further than Bill S-6 has done, to have a greater level of ambition, in terms of what we could be as a country and what we could accomplish. That would require us to broaden the range of the kind of regulatory changes that we are prepared to make. I think this would be the right approach, and it is the one that Conservatives have been championing.

In general, I will say, in terms of the gaps and the need for regulatory modernization, we have bureaucracy out of control in this country. We have a government that has massively expanded the public service, but at the same time has dramatically increased its spending on outside consultants. Go figure that one out. The government is spending more on the public service and substantially more on contracting out. One would expect that if it is spending more on the public service, it would contract out less, or if there was a smaller public service then it would contract out more. Aside from the sort of underlying arguments about contracting out or not, one would expect those things to be somewhat inversely proportional.

However, the Liberal government is spending more on bureaucracy, is spending more on contracting out and, in the midst of all this, is not actually able to achieve any kind of labour peace. We have this strike, right in the midst of the time when Canadians are filing their taxes, so they cannot get answers. Talking about the regulatory burden, the red tape people face, it is hard enough trying to figure out how to file taxes, and then when we do not have the people there who are supposed to be available to answer questions, it underlines the impression that so many Canadians have, that everything is broken, that the government just is not working.

Again, Bill S-6 does a little but it does not solve the fundamental problem. What is the alternative? What could we propose as an alternative in terms of regulatory modernization?

We have seen that the previous Conservative government, and other Conservative parties around the world, have taken the one-for-one approach, that if a new regulation is brought in, an old regulation has to be repealed. That recognizes the fact that there are likely plenty of regulations out there that are outdated, that no longer apply. It creates an impetus for government to always be looking to repeal old regulations that are no longer necessary, if a particular minister or department wants to bring in a new regulation.

*Government Orders*

• (2250)

This approach has been used successfully in the past and has created an impetus for government to go further when it comes to removing gatekeepers, streamlining processes and making this the kind of country where it is easy to invest and create jobs and opportunity.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** That was the best part of his speech.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, the member for Kingston and the Islands enjoyed the pause, so I will take another drink and let him reflect on the things being said.

I would never suggest there are very few Liberals here in the House to hear my speech, but I know many will be watching at home and some might be online as well.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** I think your kids are asleep.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, the member suggests my kids might be asleep. If my kids have trouble sleeping, we usually find clips of the member for Kingston and the Islands and play them. It is true. Actually, that is the punishment. When the kids are misbehaving, we tell them, "If you don't stop fighting, you have to watch Mark Gerretsen's speech."

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

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, pardon me. I apologize and withdraw that. What I meant to say—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** It is late in the day, but we do have to be cautious in how we use our words, starting with the names of fellow members.

• (2255)

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, I meant to say that when my kids misbehave, I play speeches from the member for Kingston and the Islands as a punishment. I did not mean to say his name in this place.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** It sounds like a reward to me.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, we will see about that.

I want to return to one issue that has been in the news lately and is in another area where I would challenge the government to do more when it comes to modernizing processes. This is about how our institutions respond to the issue of foreign state-backed interference. Many Canadians are deeply concerned about foreign state-backed interference, as they should be.

We are dealing with an instance here in the House where, as we found out, a member of the House of Commons had his family threatened by a foreign government, and those threats involved the actions of an accredited diplomat here in Canada. That diplomat continues to be an accredited diplomat, and the government has not dealt with this. The government did not, for a number of years, inform the member about these threats to his family.

These are issues we are raising in question period and elsewhere. The Conservatives have been calling on the government to take action to expel diplomats involved in foreign interference in Canada, and to respond to a broad range of challenges associated with for-

eign interference, including to have a foreign agent registry and other such actions.

When it comes to government structures and processes, one of the challenges we see is that various institutions are charged with keeping Canadians safe in various ways. It is not always clear for Canadian victims of foreign interference, or for institutions that feel they face these kinds of threats, where to engage or how to get support. What I have heard in conversations with those who have been victims of this kind of foreign state-backed interference is that very often they feel they get the runaround. They might go to the RCMP, they might go to the local police, they might go to CSIS or they might go to Foreign Affairs, and then they might be directed between different institutions.

What we now have is a proposal from the government to create an office for foreign interference, or an office against foreign interference. In effect, the proposal from the government is to say it is going to put aside a few million dollars and create another office, which is ostensibly another institution dealing with a problem that has not been dealt with.

I do not really blame these other institutions. The problem has often been political will. I suspect that in many cases, things have been brought to the attention of the government and the government has not been willing to take the appropriate action. That has led to a great deal of frustration on the part of some of these institutions. Clearly, we see a lot of frustration on the part of CSIS.

On this point, the government needs to take a serious look not only at its own failures, but also at how to strengthen our institutions and strengthen our structures in terms of how we respond to these issues of foreign interference. It should make the kind of substantial legislative and other changes that are required to move us forward.

Overall, Bill S-6 is better than nothing. I will be voting for it, but needless to say, the country is still piled in red tape, there are still far too many gatekeepers and there is still much more work required.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, even though I am diametrically opposed to the vision he is proposing.

It was a classic demonstration of neo-liberalism, which demonizes the state, regulations, public services, social programs, the social safety net and environmental protections and portrays them as barriers. It was reminiscent of old Regan- and Thatcher-era speeches. It is all about survival of the fittest and the law of the jungle. If we let the free market reign, all will be well, ladies and gentlemen. There is no reason to be concerned, capitalism will take care of everything.

I would like to put a question to my colleague, who has some pretty serious delusions about the lack of regulations and protection for the poorest and our environment, for example.

*Government Orders*

He said that his party does not want to increase taxes, but wants to cut them. If it will not seek additional money from big companies and billionaires, that means that public services will be cut. That means years of austerity and years of misery for people who are already suffering.

My question is simple: If he does not go looking for more revenue and he cuts public services, what services will he take away from the public?

• (2300)

[*English*]

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, respectfully, the hon. member has completely mis-characterized my view.

If he would indulge me for a moment, there is an important distinction between neo-liberalism and conservatism. Conservatives do not believe that capitalism is the solution to every problem. We believe there are many social problems that require other kinds of solutions, and that strong families, strong communities and resilient, virtuous individuals are much more important to the health and well-being of a society than the nature of its economic system. However, we do believe that capitalism has a much better record than the alternatives, including the alternatives the member champions, at creating wealth. Wealth provides us with some of the tools for solving other kinds of problems. If a society has more wealth, it can use that wealth to uplift the conditions of people, including the most vulnerable, in various ways and indeed to invest in social programs, but we cannot have strong, well-funded social programs if we do not have economic prosperity.

That is why we have made the case that if we have a strong energy sector developing and using Canada's natural resources to create jobs, opportunity and wealth, we have more wealth available. Then we have a bigger pie to support the most vulnerable and ensure we have the resources to solve other problems. That does not even guarantee that those other problems get solved, but it means we have the resources to try to solve them. If we are trying to solve problems of poverty, mental health and other social challenges in a society lacking in prosperity, we have less money to invest in those things.

**Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I too will be supporting this bill, but as my colleague articulated, it does not go far enough. Where will the next government, our government, go to ensure we have more economic prosperity and have the resources for more social programming?

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, some of the memorable phrases from the Conservative leader would say it very well. We are interested in removing gatekeepers. We are interested in smaller government and bigger citizens. We are not talking about an individual's size. We are talking about citizens who are resilient and able to work within communities, within families and within local government structures to solve problems through their own genius and creativity. The Conservatives believe that in every individual is inherent dignity, responsibility and creativity, and that a government that gets out of the way and unleashes individual creativity is not only good for the economy but part of how we solve the social challenges we face. We must not only remove barriers for business-

es but also remove barriers that prevent not-for-profits from moving forward.

We talk a lot about removing red tape for business. I think we need to talk more about removing red tape for not-for-profit organizations. The member, who comes from an international development background, will know about some of the red tape that not-for-profit organizations face. We spent some time championing the need to reform direction and control regulations, for example. There are many areas where gatekeepers are not only impeding private sector for-profit development, but are also impeding good work that could be done by not-for-profit organizations.

This is the vision the Conservatives are bringing forward. It emphasizes freedom and removing gatekeepers not simply because freedom is important in and of itself, but because removing the barriers the state puts in the way of individuals' or not-for-profit organizations' freedom is what unleashes creativity and allows us to solve problems together.

**Mr. Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want the member to further explain the idea of governments first taking either our rights or materials and then giving them back. This means the government never actually creates anything or gives anything to the citizens that it has not taken before. I want to get his thoughts on the concerns I have on that topic.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, that is a great point from my colleague.

With the way government members talk about government spending, we would think it was their own money. They say they are going to give people this for dental care and give people this for groceries. There is no appreciation that this money comes from the people we are giving it back to.

In every case that the government promises new spending, it should provide an explanation of where that money is coming from. It does create money out of thin air, I suppose, but the problem with that is it causes inflation, so somebody is paying for it regardless. The inflation tax is another way of taxing Canadians, but it still has the same effect of a tax.

This is not to say that there is no place for government spending. There is absolutely a place for taxation and government spending. However, every time the government spends money, there is a corresponding cost and the cost is borne by Canadians. The government should acknowledge that when it is going out and defending its proposals.

*Government Orders*

• (2305)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):**

Madam Speaker, I found the exchange a couple minutes ago very interesting. A Conservative asked his colleague, the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, about the bill, and he said he would eliminate red tape in order to create more wealth, which would then apparently be used to lift people out of poverty. I found that exchange to be very interesting. It reminds me a lot of the whole theory behind Reaganomics: Let the wealthy get even more wealthy; then the poor will do better as well. We all know how that experiment panned out.

Can he refer back to one Conservative government in the history of this country that was successful at reducing the poverty rate in Canada?

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, I will start with the example I know best, which is the previous Conservative government. The previous Conservative government brought in targeted tax relief for the lowest-income taxpayers. We lowered the GST, which was a regressive tax. We brought in universal child care supports, which went directly to parents, that emphasized choice in child care. Imagine letting parents decide how they raise their own children and providing them with the support to do so. We raised the base personal exemption, which took a million Canadians off the tax roll. We also lowered the lowest marginal tax rate.

In fact, if we look at all of the taxes we cut, all of the tax cuts were targeting the lowest-income earners with income tax cuts. We also cut business taxes, which stimulated more economic activity and helped to create jobs.

The line we hear from the Liberals sometimes is that the Conservatives are trying to help those at the top. However, if we look at the tax cuts we brought in, we raised the base personal exemption, we lowered the lowest marginal tax rate and we cut the GST. All of these major tax cut changes were giving tax relief to Canadians at the lowest end. They created jobs and opportunity.

Despite bringing Canada through the global financial crisis, we reduced the debt-to-GDP ratio for the country overall. We left the country in a strong position with a balanced budget. The government has added more debt than all of the previous prime ministers combined, making previous Liberal governments look relatively conservative by comparison.

**Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Simcoe North.

With a Liberal government that, by all accounts, thrives on weaving red tape and thick layers of regulations into almost every government process, there is a certain irony in that it is now putting forward a bill that outlines measures, and I will quote from Bill S-6's preamble, that "repeal or amend provisions that have, over time, become barriers to innovation and economic growth [and] to add certain provisions with a view to support innovation and economic growth". The great irony here is the bill's stated goal of supporting innovation and economic growth, which would certainly be better achieved by replacing this worn-out Liberal government with a new Conservative government. Such a government would have respect for the economic fundamentals that create wealth and jobs

in this country and would properly balance regulations with the need to ensure that we have an innovative free market.

Perhaps this bill is an effort by the Liberals to try to burnish their credentials on this front. Those members over there know that their party lacks any credibility on this issue. Remember, it was just this year that, in its red-tape report card, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business gave the Liberals the worst-ever federal government grade for their inaction on reducing red tape.

I can guarantee that every member on that side has heard the outcry from constituents and from business leaders in their own ridings. I am sure members have heard from every income bracket and from every economic sector about their government's destructive penchant for heavy intervention in the economy, for burdensome restrictions and regulations and for ever-increasing taxes. These things are hard to ignore.

The Liberal inclination is to pursue every opportunity to suppress and suffocate businesses. That is among the reasons that Canada has a serious red-tape crisis and a serious productivity crisis.

We see it, for example, in the housing crisis that we examined only yesterday in the House, during our party's opposition motion. We have a housing crisis in the country, one that needs to be urgently addressed. Home ownership and rental affordability continue to pose a crisis for Canadians struggling because of this government's inflationary policies, with monthly mortgage costs more than doubling since the Liberal government took office. With the average cost of rent now at about \$3,000 a month, we simply need more housing in the country. This must address the existing need, not to mention the coming demand as our population continues to grow.

The country needs smart, responsive policy that enables a response to the demand to provide the affordable housing stock that a growing population needs. However, to have that, the market needs the tools to be nimble. It needs the government to stop intervening in processes as a matter of course rather than only when strictly necessary.

Unfortunately, interference seems to be deeply rooted in the culture of the Liberals. Their response to a housing crisis is to stick with the failed policies and the entrenched interests that block construction of new housing. They insist on tying unnecessary red tape and layers of bureaucracy into the process of getting new housing built. It is instinctual for them to use restriction and red tape to complicate problems rather than reasonably streamlining processes in order to find solutions.

As another example, we have a shortage of health care workers in this country. After eight years under the Liberals, more than six million Canadians lack access to a family doctor. One solution to this issue is having more doctors. The obvious first source for more doctors would be those already in the country. We have nearly 20,000 foreign-trained doctors who are already here and could help ease those shortages. However, a great many of them cannot work in Canada because of the red tape and regulations that prevent them from getting licences.

● (2310)

There are ways to streamline the onerous layers of bureaucracy to allow these individuals to more efficiently prove their qualifications to work in Canada and to meet our standards. However, the Liberals will not do it. They prefer to keep failed processes and policies in place rather than responding in an innovative fashion. This is another thing that will change under a soon-to-come Conservative government. We are going to remove the gatekeepers and eliminate the red tape that prevents foreign-trained health care workers who are already here in our country from being able to practise their professions. Our party's blue seal plan to efficiently license professionals who prove they are qualified is going to help ease the shortage that, under the Liberals, has Canada projected to be short 44,000 physicians by 2030.

I want to take a minute now to address what I would say is probably the most significant thing we could do in this area with respect to removing some of the red tape, barriers and burdens that government puts up. This would really help to unlock the potential of our economy, not only in my home province of Alberta but also all across this country of Canada. This is to remove some of the burdensome, ever-changing regulations and restrictions on getting major energy projects built in this country.

I think about the pipeline projects that the current government has effectively killed with the ever-changing restrictions and regulations it has put in place. Northern gateway was ended because of a ban on tanker traffic off our west coast. Energy east finally threw the white flag up because the government kept changing the rules as it went along. Billions of dollars were being spent trying to go through the process. When companies are literally spending hundreds of millions of dollars, into the billions in some cases, to try to go through these processes, and the government just pulls the carpet out from under them, eventually they have to quit throwing good money after bad. That is what happened in the case of the energy east project.

I could go on about that, but I also want to touch on LNG, liquid natural gas. This has been widely talked about in recent years. As Conservatives, we have talked about it for a number of years now, pretty much since the government first took office. There were 15

### *Government Orders*

proposals for LNG projects that sat on the Prime Minister's desk, and not one of those has been built. We could be meeting the needs of Europe and other parts of the world for LNG. We could replace Russian gas, for example, and coal-fired power in such places as China. However, those kinds of opportunities are stifled because of red tape and regulations in this country.

We could be creating billions of dollars in economic activity for this country. We could be creating hundreds of thousands of jobs for Albertans and for all Canadians. We could have an immeasurable and very positive impact on our environment by reducing emissions. We could have a major impact on human rights. We could have a major impact on improving global security and global energy security. This could be major. It could unlock so much potential in this country. We should be seeking ways to do that when we talk about housing, pipelines and major projects.

We could be doing so much if we could just get government interference out of the way. Everyone knows that we need regulations and that we need to ensure we have proper rules. However, we need to make sure that this is being done in a reasonable way. We need a government that understands the real costs of red tape. It makes our country less competitive in the world. It makes our citizens less successful. The government is content to continue to increase the size and the cost of government while creating more regulations that make life even more expensive. However, that failed approach does not bring in more skilled immigrants, doctors and tradespeople, nor does it bring bigger paycheques for the workers we need here in Canada. It is obvious that the real work on tackling red tape and bringing common sense to the regulatory structure will only begin under a new Conservative government.

● (2315)

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, we have been in the House for midnight sessions before, and I guess I understand, in cases where Conservatives are opposed to legislation, that we hear the standard Conservative refrain, which seems to be something about North Korea. Whatever legislation they do not like, turning Canada into North Korea seems to be a recurring refrain that we have heard in the past. However, I am bit perplexed about Conservatives supporting legislation but still refusing to let it come to a vote. It does not seem to make a lot of sense.

*Government Orders*

I think that, given the gravity of what Canadians are facing in so many different ways, we do have a duty as members of Parliament to move legislation forward, to move it to committee. There is no doubt that legislation can be improved, but it is at committee where that normally happens, so I am a bit perplexed by the Conservative strategy.

As I have said before, there are two bloc parties in the House of Commons, the Bloc Québécois and the “block everything” party, which is the Conservative Party.

• (2320)

**Mr. Blake Richards:** Madam Speaker, I guess I could say that there are two Liberal parties in the House as well. There is the Liberal Party and then there is the NDP-Liberal party that is propping it up. If we want to talk about two parties, let us talk about that.

However, in response to the member's question, I would say this. The bill claims that there are three issues being addressed. It talks about ease of doing business, regulatory flexibility and agility, and integrity of the regulatory system. I think everyone here agrees that those are worthwhile goals, but we could say that the bill, at best, is something a little better than nothing.

I think it is really important to get on the record the points that I made tonight and to point out that there is so much more the government could be doing. However, when we talk about incredibly important points that would create billions of dollars in economic activity, that would create hundreds of thousands of jobs in this country, that would improve environmental outcomes, that would be better for human rights and that would be better for global security, for a member to stand up and try to claim that somehow those things are not important just shocks me.

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, I would like to challenge the Conservatives' rhetoric about red tape and the lack of red tape being removed in the bill before us. They have used a lot of words like needing tools to make regulations nimble. I would like to challenge this fictional reality with actual text that is in the bill, and I will read a tiny example of what is in the bill. It reads:

It also amends the Weights and Measures Act to, among other things, enable the Minister of Industry to permit a trader to temporarily use, or have in their possession for use, in trade, any device even if the device has not been approved by the Minister or examined by an inspector.

How is this a form of red tape when it is allowing measures to happen without specific devices, which are even undefined when it comes to the Weights and Measures Act?

**Mr. Blake Richards:** Madam Speaker, I guess I would say that perhaps the member should ask that question of her coalition partner, the Liberal Party. It is their bill.

What I was really struck with listening to the member is this: It is really sad to see what has become of the once principled NDP. At one time, New Democrats were defenders of principles. They were not necessarily principles that I shared, but I had respect for the fact that they had principles they stood up for here in the House of Commons, and now to watch them essentially be defenders of a Liberal government that they are supposed to be in opposition to is really sad and pathetic to see.

**Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise here this evening and share my thoughts on

Bill S-6. Before that, however, I just want to acknowledge that I heard the intervention from the hon. colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby about the point of privilege that was raised earlier. I want to say that I welcome his comments and thoughts on that matter. It is an important issue. I will turn to Bill S-6 in a second, but I just want to say that the number one thing I hear from Canadians who happen to catch any of the proceedings on TV is that nobody answers a question, and for the life of me I cannot understand why the government cannot answer the simple question of when it found out.

Bill S-6 is supposed to modernize the regulatory environment. It would make 46 minor changes to 29 acts across 12 different organizations. Apparently, this is supposed to be an annual bill. It is a little bizarre that it is coming in through the Senate, but that tells us one thing: There is actually no owner within the government's executive branch that is supposed to be in charge of red tape or regulatory reduction, because it has to farm out this work to a member of the Senate. Why is it that the government has to find an owner in the Senate? The government does not have anyone over there who is responsible for regulatory modernization. It had to find an owner who is in a different chamber.

My first instinct when looking at the bill is that I am supportive of it. It seems reasonable, but we have to ask ourselves whether these are really the life-changing regulations that we should be looking to reduce for Canadians.

There are other questions I have for the government. Is it going to accept amendments at committee if we have other really good ideas? We just took another senator's private member's bill and blew it up. We are going to accept a ton of other amendments to that senator's bill, so hopefully we will do that with this one.

Also, the government is not even measuring how many regulations we have. There are over 4,000 regulations in the consolidated regulations of Canada, and we are going to take out 45, but we do not know how many regulations are elsewhere. There is a saying, “What gets measured gets done.” However, we do not even have a baseline, and the government, by its own admission, is thinking about bringing in over 250 regulations over the next couple of years. This year, it would take out only 45, so it seems a little bizarre to claim some great victory that is going to change the lives of Canadians. The regulations seem relatively minor. I look forward to hearing the amazing testimony at committee from officials who are going to say how this is going to revolutionize Canadian lives and make us more innovative, but I am not sure. We should not hold our breath for that.



*Government Orders*

It is important to remember what the government was elected on. Its members said that better is always possible. That sounds really nice, but why does someone not say, “Why can we not make government simpler?” Why can we not make it simpler for Canadians to deal with the government? I will give a great example. The government has an idea of the underused housing tax. If someone does not use their house for their own personal reasons, they would fill out a form and prove that it is an allowable use, for which they do not have to pay this special tax. However, the form is six pages long. If they try to figure out whether they qualify for an exemption, it is confusing to even the most sophisticated accountants, and they would have to do the form every single year. If they are a farmer or a builder and they build multiple homes, it is unclear whether they would qualify for the exemption, so they would have to fill out that paperwork every year.

Why does the government not just say, “Listen, if you fill out the form once, that is all you have to do until you dispose of the property?” Then it would make sense. If there is no change in control of the property, why would they have to fill out the form, the same six pages, just to say to the government that everything is the same as it was last year? This is the approach the government takes to bringing in new regulations.

● (2325)

It was not that long ago that one could only fax documents into the CRA. In fact, my experience is that I got locked out of my CRA account just a few weeks ago. I owed documents to the CRA. I had to provide documents but since I was locked out of my account, I could not get into it. Do members know what the suggestion was? It was to fax in the documents. I asked why I could not just email them in, but was told the CRA could not accept emails. “Well, how about you print off the email and go and put it on the fax machine, like is that not a reasonable solution?” These are the kinds of things that would make Canadians’ lives easier and make it better to deal with the government.

Let us take another example of immigration and some of the delays in the immigration process along with some of the regulatory issues that Canadians are dealing with. There is a young woman who works as a PSW at a retirement home in Midland. This young woman is waiting for her permanent residency card. She has been waiting almost two years. Guess what? This woman is a qualified nurse but she cannot change jobs while she is waiting for her PR card. How incredibly sad is that, to know that we have a health care crisis in this country due to a lack of labour, to know we have a qualified nurse able to do that job but the government, with its policies and its bureaucracy, is preventing that from happening. It is not her fault. It is the government’s fault. We are waiting too long to process applications.

There is another example, and the member for Banff—Airdrie mentioned doctors earlier. There are taxi drivers who are qualified doctors in other countries. I met one of them last week. Waheed is his name. He is from Afghanistan and is an incredible human being. He is a qualified doctor. He has to wait four more years to be able to practise family medicine in Canada. His English is excellent. He seemed like a very competent individual. Surely there is a way we can get this person into the medical profession a lot sooner.

Another great example of some regulations we should change has to do with Transport Canada. It cannot approve medicals quickly enough to make sure that we can get pilots approved to fly. I will give an example. Gary lives in my riding. Gary is recently retired and Gary builds his own planes. That is what he does as a hobby. All he wants to do in his retirement years is fly a couple of planes. His medical has been sitting waiting to be approved at Transport Canada for almost two years. He says, “Adam, all I want to do is fly my planes. How many years do you think I have to wait to get this approved by Transport Canada?”

These are regulations that will actually change people’s lives if we can speed them up. Instead, we have this list that seems like a bit of a list of low-hanging fruit from a bunch of other places. It is unclear to me what the actual impact will be of all these regulations. I hope that we will get a chance to get some evidence at committee and the government will be held accountable for how this is actually going to improve the lives of Canadians.

I will give one example as I close that the government might want to take back to its own people. The Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act provides that governments may allow electronic documents in place of paper documents. It is an opt-in provision for departments. I have a simple solution: departments must have a provision for electronic documents and paper documents. That would be a very simple, easy law to change that would then require each department, where they have a form, to also produce a digital version.

I think there are lots of things we could do. I hope the government is open to suggestions at committee and I look forward to fielding all of its questions right now.

● (2330)

**Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague referenced early in his comments some of the commitments that the present government made when it was elected. The phrases that come to my mind are “Sunny ways” and that “Sunlight is the best disinfectant”.

Could he share his opinion as to the transparency of the present government, given the issues that we are facing tonight?

**Mr. Adam Chambers:** Madam Speaker, I really appreciate the opportunity provided by my hon. colleague to expand on the reasons for which the government believed it was elected in the first place. “Sunny ways” was the refrain we heard. We also heard “better is always possible”.

Those things sound really great, but then eight years later, things get a little tired. It is not so sunny anymore, and there is a bit of a cloud hanging over everything. It is a little less transparent than it was, and better does not really seem to be always possible. It seems to be getting much more difficult for the government.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, since he is on the topic of weighing in on the various slogans, I am wondering if he wants to comment on why he did not once say “bring it home” in his last speech. We know that is the new-found slogan of the day for Conservatives. Maybe he wants to address that.

• (2335)

**Mr. Adam Chambers:** Madam Speaker, let us bring it home.

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, I do, to some extent, agree with some of the member's statements, especially when it comes to the lack of impacts the bill has in engaging indigenous peoples in the various pieces of legislation it would be making amendments to. I wonder if the member would agree that Bill S-6 could be improved by ensuring regulations would require that indigenous peoples are better engaged in any of these pieces of legislation.

**Mr. Adam Chambers:** Madam Speaker, we should be engaging with indigenous communities on how we could better serve them. Some of them, as I understand, still use paper forms, and it is actually very difficult for them to deal with the government.

Let us be also clear that all regulations are not bad regulations. It is like saying unchecked capitalism is not necessarily the best thing. If we look at the 1930s, we had the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission because of tons of fraud. We are not saying to get rid of every single regulation, we are saying to let us just be smart about it, and the suggestion from the hon. member is a very good one.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I loved the personal examples my colleague provided within his speech.

Over the last week, this member has asked questions about not only the CRA deadline but also the implication of still having public servants from the CRA out on strike. I would like to know if he might provide any further suggestions to the government as it considers these important negotiations with this important group at this time, as Canadians want to file their taxes and receive their returns.

**Mr. Adam Chambers:** Madam Speaker, it seems rather unfair for a government to impose a penalty on somebody for filing their taxes late when they are unable to get simple questions answered by CRA.

We said to extend the tax filing deadline, and it did not like that for a bunch of reasons. That is fine, but how about they just not impose penalties or waive penalties for those people who owe money but who file late because they cannot get a reasonable question answered.

The government says not to worry because they can use Charlie the chatbot. Can members guess what? Charlie the chatbot just gives random generic information, and one cannot provide Charlie the chatbot with any personal information. I do not really know how Charlie is going to help replace the 35,000 workers out on strike while they are trying to reach a deal. Let us just not punish Canadians for the government's incompetence.

**Mr. Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to rise and speak to Bill S-6. How I came to this bill is probably like many people. We read the title: “an act respecting regulatory modernization”. It reminds me of going through Netflix when someone wants to watch something new so they look at the title and think that it kind of fits, and maybe they see the trailer or read the bio and a bit of what is going to go on in the video, and they say that it is something they can probably get behind.

We have lots of regulatory issues in Canada and modernizing them is probably a good thing. We know that over these eight long years, the current Liberal government has introduced more legislation that restricts people. It restricts our ability to get the services we need from our government and it restricts our freedoms and our rights in Canada. If any bill talks about “respecting regulatory modernization”, I would be all over it. There is a list of the departments. There are 12 organizations. I am not going to read all of them, but all of these are things that we should modernize, especially on the regulatory side. We have so much red tape. It has been said that we are the most heavily red-taped country in the world, which holds back our freedoms.

All this excess of regulation makes people sick and tired of dealing with government. They throw up their papers and say, “To heck with this, I am not doing this, not applying for that, not going to get into this program, not going to get this grant and not going to apply for this opportunity”, because there is no end to the red tape, the forms and the excess of regulation that Liberals are known for.

It goes back to the philosophy, I believe, of the Liberals, which is that government knows best, that someone knows better than the citizens. We have seen this time after time with respect to different legislation that gets introduced here. There is this feeling that the poor citizens need the government's protection and they need the hands of the all-knowing government to reach into their lives and make them difficult. I just think it is garbage. I think of all the waste we have in government, all the duplication and all the unnecessary things that everyday, common people go through just to interact with their government. The government is supposed to help them, but in a lot of ways it hurts Canadians. It hurts Canadians' productivity. It hurts our potential to grow our country, to expand, and to create opportunities for the next generation.

*Government Orders*

That is where the current government has failed miserably in some of the regulatory changes it did early on. I do question how history is going to look back at these eight long years. Hopefully they are coming to an end here soon. I think of the lost opportunity and of the regulatory change in Bill C-69. This is one bill that is terrible for our country. We have seen the results of the restrictive nature of shutting down everything. This goes from coast to coast. I think of one of the largest missed opportunities for Canada. When we look back on these eight long years, what was the worst missed economic opportunity for this generation and probably the next? I think of the impact on liquefied natural gas.

When the Liberals came to government, they knew better than the industry and the citizens about what we should be doing to hopefully lower our emissions and grow our economy. There were 15 liquefied natural gas plants proposed for Canada. This is not just a mom-and-pop gas station down the road; this is \$10 billion to \$20 billion of economic driving force in those communities, and we had 15 of them proposed. Do members know how many got built? Zero of these plants were built. They were going to be massive economic drivers, and it was all derailed because of Bill C-69 and the Liberal government.

• (2340)

This is the regulatory framework that the Liberals put in. Their end goal was to shut down industry, and they shut it down. They shut down not only the opportunity on the coasts but also the opportunity for well-paying jobs in my province. In Saskatchewan, the drilling rates for natural gas dropped. I shudder to think of how many opportunities and powerful paycheques these families would have had if the Liberals had not brought in this regulation. It would have released so much natural gas out of Canada. That would actually have lowered emissions.

The gas from those plants, for the most part, was headed to Asia and the European market. We are positioned perfectly. Canada can supply the two largest markets with liquefied natural gas. There is no other market that has the known reserves that we have in the ground, positioned in the perfect location in terms of both Europe and Asia.

When we fast forward to what has happened since these plants were cancelled because of the regulatory regime, where the goalposts kept moving, we find that Asia has more coal plants. What the Liberal government does not understand is that we need energy to survive in this climate and to prosper. It is the same in other countries, where our liquefied natural gas could have offset all the tonnage of coal that Asia has been using. What a missed opportunity.

We could have lowered our emissions, provided well-paying jobs for Canadians and collected royalties that could be put back into our society. This is the virtuous circle that we should be encouraging in every industry, but this is an example of the heavy-handed regulatory changes and the red tape that the Liberals have introduced and that have canned so many projects. It is a shame. I think of the missed economic opportunity. There is no larger one that I know of in the history of our country other than the government's change in the regulatory process that killed those 15 plants.

That is on the environmental side. We know that natural gas is a superior source of energy over coal. It lowers emissions and provides good paycheques in Canada. Moreover, it could have saved lives in Europe; this is probably the area that I hope the members on the other side realize most. Energy security is the number one issue in Europe right now. Putin had the control of European countries for natural gas. As we know, unfortunately, what has transpired with the invasion of Ukraine has brought about a real challenge in Europe's energy security. How many lives would have been saved if we had these plants? Putin may not even have invaded Ukraine or, if he did, the war would have been that much shorter because of those countries that rely on natural gas.

It is not going away. As much as there are people who would wish oil and gas away in our lifetime or on our planet, it is always going to be within our mix. I think of how much more Ukraine could have counted on its neighbours in Europe if they were not worried about Putin cutting off their natural gas. That relates exactly to Bill C-69 and why the Liberals changed the goalposts and killed this industry that was just getting on its feet. I cannot think of another regulatory change that has had as much of a negative impact on our planet, be it environmentally or for energy security, as the regulatory change on liquefied natural gas has done.

I forgot to mention that I will be sharing my time.

Going back to the regulatory side of things, any time one puts a break on productivity, it hurts the citizens that one is supposedly there to serve. That is wrong. It has affected my home, the Speaker's home and all our homes. We are going to bring it home.

• (2345)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am curious to know how many of those liquified natural gas plants the former Conservative Harper government was able to build. Just one?

More importantly, is the member sure that the future of our country is so dependent on liquified natural gas? There is no doubt that to some degree it will be used. However, what we are seeing, at least what I am seeing in my own riding, is people who are literally cutting their gas line off at the street because they are converting their heat sources to heat pumps. Heat pumps are the newest thing. They do not require natural gas. There is actually a shift, at least from a home heating perspective, away from natural gas.

I am curious why Conservatives continually put so much of their political capital into fossil fuels.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Corey Tochor:** Madam Speaker, I have an urgent message for Canadians if they heard that Liberal member speak. They should not cut the gas line to their house. Winter is coming back, probably in seven months. The Liberal member thinks that people should be cutting the line to their furnace. We heard it here first, the Liberals would like people to go home and cut their natural gas furnace off. This is ridiculous.

On the facts about liquified natural gas, we approved the only one that is getting built right now. It is not done yet, because the regulatory changes have slowed the process. The United States has built six since then, and they have 20 more in the books. That is jobs and paycheques that should go to Canadians, not Americans, and it is all because of these Liberals.

• (2350)

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the member speaks about cuts, and of course the Conservatives are absolutely great at cutting essential services for Canadians.

We saw that in the dismal decade when the Harper regime was in power. We saw them slashing health care. We saw them forcing seniors to work more years before they could ever get to their pension. They slashed services for veterans. Unbelievable. Imagine, veterans who have given their lives to Canada, who laid their lives on the line, and the Conservative response was to slash all of those services that were provided to veterans.

Of course, the Conservatives did not cut for everybody. They gave unbelievable amounts of money to Canada's big banks for profits. They put in place the Harper network of tax evasion countries so that we ended up losing \$30 billion a year.

The question I would like to ask my colleague is, what are the Conservatives going to cut this time?

**Mr. Corey Tochor:** Madam Speaker, I feel sorry the member. He has been here an awfully long time, and maybe the length of time is shading some of his memories.

The Harper Conservative government increased health transfers every year by 6%. What the member just shared could be viewed as incorrect, but I would not use unparliamentary language to describe the misleading statistics that he put forward because he knows that is wrong.

I would like to add that the member is a coalition partner with the Liberals. The last time the Liberals were in government, before this time, they slashed the transfers to the provincial governments. In my province, what that meant was 52 rural hospitals were closed, because the Liberals cut the health transfers to Saskatchewan. It is on them as a partner in this costly coalition.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I was just recently in Edmonton for Earth Day and toured a home that had just cut the gas line supply to the House. It was in Edmonton, where they get rather cold winters. They have an air source heat pump that was installed. They have also installed solar panels on their roof.

The installer was there to talk about the current demand. They cannot keep up in Edmonton with homes that want air source heat

pumps installed, because they work so well in cold climates and cut the heating bills substantially while also keeping air quality in the home safer.

I just thought the hon. member would be thrilled to know that this is actually something that happens and does not spring from the imagination of the member for Kingston and the Islands.

**Mr. Corey Tochor:** Madam Speaker, the member was in Edmonton last weekend. It has been a long spring, but it was not freezing.

What I would put my faith in, in part, is for homeowners' ability to get insurance. Insurance would not cover the house because they know that it is an inconsistent heat source. They will not get coverage.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, tonight, we are looking at Bill S-6, which would not be cutting regulations; it is about modernizing regulations. We missed some opportunities where we could have improved various aspects of Canadian society by actually cutting some regulations and streamlining some other regulations.

This may just be my own childhood and background working in a small business. We had a restaurant and gift shop on the Cabot Trail. We had a lot of tourists come through. My father, who was rather funny, kept getting notices from the Government of Canada. One day, the notice would be about tariffs on T-shirts made in Bangladesh, and another day it would be about something else. He finally decided to start a wall along where people had to wait to get to the washroom. He posted all the notices that we received from the Government of Canada. He then made a lovely sign so he could keep it up to date. It said, "The Government of Canada never sleeps." Perhaps I have been thinking of it because it is approaching midnight, and I suppose I never sleep, but the truth is that we could use some sense in regulations.

I recently met with a wonderful group that was here meeting with many members of Parliament, The College of Family Physicians of Canada. This is one area in which I wish we would see action. I generally believe we need regulations to protect health and safety, but some regulations simply do not make sense. The ones that generate unnecessary paperwork for doctors hurt our health care system because they tie doctors and their staff up with unnecessary, unproductive work. This includes, for example, having to write a letter every five years to say that a patient still has an amputated leg. There is also paperwork that has to be issued over and over again to help veterans. It takes up a doctor's time to fill out forms and write letters that are completely unnecessary. Often, especially in the case of the CRA, the patient ends up paying for the service separately, and that is the person who is least able to pay. There would be a great deal of sense in trying to figure out how to reduce the regulatory burden, especially where it is impeding our health care system.

We have been talking about this piece of legislation in terms of modernizing. Only one party, the Conservative Party, has put forward speakers tonight. Why am I standing here? It is because I am a bit worried about this bill. It is not necessarily just routine, regulatory modernization. My concern is that this bill, which affects 29 different acts, will go only to the industry committee for review. Most of it is pretty uncontroversial, which is why there has been very little interest in it tonight.

• (2355)

My concern is about what happens with the Species at Risk Act changes. When I read this over, I am not entirely sure they are not substantive. They do not appear to be entirely about modernizing; they appear to be substantial or at least substantive changes to the Species at Risk Act. We do not have a great record with the Species at Risk Act. For instance, the southern resident killer whale was listed as endangered in 2003, and the full recovery plan did not come out until 2018. Any changes to the Species at Risk Act that are more than purely routine must go to the environment committee, not the industry committee. We can send it to committee and study it there, but there are 29 different acts. What if something in there is a mistake and we just go ahead with it because these are just normal changes? What about the change to the Fisheries Act to give a fisheries officer the discretion to not lay charges? What if that is substantive, and what if that is a mistake? It is going to go only to the industry committee.

Wrapping things up, I urge some caution here. This is a missed opportunity to actually reduce regulations, but it is also not modernizing them. In the reading I have done since working on the bill for this evening and since the bill was tabled in the Senate, I have some concerns. I express those concerns now knowing full well this bill will be sent right away to the industry committee and probably promulgated without changes. I hope members of the committee will ensure that they are at least satisfied that changes to the Fisheries Act and changes to the Species at Risk Act would not, in fact, hurt nature in this country any more than we have seen through recent decisions. This includes the Roberts Bank expansion in the Port of Vancouver, which will surely hurt those very same southern resident killer whales.

---

## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (2400)

[English]

### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I rise tonight to pursue a question that was originally asked on February 6, and I have to say that the circumstances have changed substantially since it was asked.

I wear the Ukrainian flag colours every day. I decided to put on this pin on February 24, when Putin launched his brutal and illegal attack on Ukraine. I want to make it very clear that I personally, and the Green Party as a party, fully support the Government of

### Adjournment Proceedings

Canada's actions in supporting Ukraine, both with humanitarian aid and military aid.

It is an unthinkable thing that Russia could invade a country. They have been using drones. They have bombed. They have shelled. Today was a terrible day in Ukraine, particular for the city of Kherson. There was a deadly attack that targeted civilian targets, including a supermarket and a railway station. On this day, as I rise to speak about Ukraine, 21 more innocent civilians were killed and 48 were injured.

The situation in Ukraine is a desperate one. It is very hard for Canadians, with such a large Ukrainian diaspora here, to see friends, neighbours, relatives and family sheltering in air raid shelters and listening to the air raid sirens. Things have gotten much worse within the last week, not that anything has been good since Putin attacked Ukraine.

We need to be thinking about not only winning the war but also winning a peace for the people of Ukraine. Yes, they must win. They must protect all territory. We must be with them as long as it takes, but there is a point where we can also look beyond to see a country that has been fractured and violated through an illegal, brutal war for over a year. The more time it takes to win the war, the more it will be difficult to create a peaceful situation throughout a country that includes some people who identify more with Russia. I hope we will soon be talking about looking back at what has occurred and not looking forward to an endless war.

We have to continue to support those humanitarian efforts. We have to do more, of course, in a postwar period, to think about stability. We have to think about the environmental damage that this war is doing, the reckless dangerous actions of Putin's army in attacking nuclear power stations. We are in a very dangerous time. Supporting Ukraine is essential, and I think virtually every Canadian understands that. We need to also be looking at what the humanitarian needs will be postwar.

Of course, we had a debate in a late night emergency debate on Sudan, and one of the things that became so clear is that, when there was any hope of looking the other way and leaving Sudan, there was a complete failure to invest in civil society, a complete failure to help keep that society whole.

Whatever happens, we must stay with the people of Ukraine, support them, their military, their NGOs and the civil society. Please the Lord, this will be over, with Ukraine victorious, and we will be able to invest in a peace.

**Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, February 24 marks one year since Russia's full-scale invasion began; this event has displaced millions, killed thousands, disrupted the global economy and exacerbated global problems, such as food and energy insecurity. Cities across Ukraine continue to be hit with Russian missiles. These ongoing attacks are on civilian infrastructure, water, heat and electricity that people need to live.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

The serious consequences of President Putin's actions increase every day. Every time Ukraine liberates occupied territory, more Russian atrocities are uncovered. We are seeing appalling human rights violations, conflict-related sexual violence and the discovery of mass graves and torture chambers.

In response, Canada and its allies have mobilized to assist Ukraine. Nearly one year after the invasion, the international community continues to offer assistance to Ukraine in order to achieve a lasting peace. In this process, Canada's commitment is to assist Ukraine in its journey towards peace. However, since it is a sovereign country, only Ukraine has the power to determine its future.

While Russia says it is open to talks, it is asking for the impossible. We call on Russia to cease its invasion and turn to the diplomatic track.

All members of the international community should be concerned about the impacts of Russia's invasion on international security and global food and energy supplies. We need to be resolute in convincing Putin to end this aggression now. In order to facilitate a just and sustainable peace, Ukraine's territory must remain Ukraine's.

Ukraine is taking a proactive approach in its path to peace. President Zelenskyy laid the groundwork for future peace when he launched his 10-point peace formula last November.

Canada is providing military training and equipment to Ukraine, which is necessary to ensure its survival. However, Canada's military support of Ukraine is only part of the total assistance we provide. Since February 2022, the Government of Canada has committed over \$5 billion in multi-faceted support, including financial, development, humanitarian, military, and peace and security assistance to Ukraine, as well as immigration measures for Ukrainians fleeing Russia's invasion. We are providing critical military training and equipment to help Ukraine defend itself.

We have provided \$500 million in loan disbursements to Ukraine through the International Monetary Fund's multi-donor administered account to support Ukraine's economic resilience. We have provided \$320 million in humanitarian assistance to respond to the humanitarian impacts of Russia's invasion in Ukraine and neighbouring countries.

We continue to impose new sanctions against Russian officials, those entities engaged in the war and those guilty of war crimes and human rights abuses. Canada is also working with Ukraine and the international community to hold Russia accountable for its invasion of Ukraine and the atrocities being committed.

Canada and its partners are continuing their diplomatic efforts with the international community to encourage support for Ukraine. Canada has strongly supported UN General Assembly resolutions condemning Russia's actions, and it continues to work with its partners to counter Russian disinformation and actively encourage the international community to increase its support for Ukraine.

This is a war for Ukraine's survival and for the future of the rules-based international system. Canada must and will continue to support Ukraine until a just and sustainable peace can be achieved.

• (2405)

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Madam Speaker, in reflecting on the situation in Ukraine, including on the future of its people, its culture and survival, and the nature of Ukraine, I have been extremely moved by the fact that my colleague and the deputy leader of the Green Party, Jonathan Pedneault, just went to Ukraine on my behalf and on behalf of the party. He used to work at Human Rights Watch, and he visited with his colleagues from there. He was in Ukraine when the war began, and he went back to see the human rights condition and look at how Canada is helping. Even now, during the war, it is clear that more humanitarian help and more connection are needed to support the people, making sure that our aid reaches the people who need it the most.

I thank the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of National Defence for their efforts. We are in this with the people of Ukraine.

**Mr. Maninder Sidhu:** Madam Speaker, I want to be clear: President Putin started this war, and he can back away and end it today.

This is a critical moment in Russia's illegal war. Russia has not been negotiating in good faith, and we see no indication that Putin has changed his objective. On the contrary, he is preparing for new offences. We cannot accept at face value any Russian claim to seek peace, and Russia's actions contradict such claims.

A peace on Russia's terms would be neither just nor sustainable. That is why Ukraine needs our support more than ever. The brave people of Ukraine have inspired us all with their courage, resilience and commitment to fighting for their country and their very existence.

Canada will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Ukrainian people, to strongly condemn the Kremlin's brutal actions and to provide multi-faceted support, including economic, humanitarian, military, stabilization and development assistance.

• (2410)

## GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

**Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Madam Speaker, on March 28 of this year, the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner announced in a Twitter post the appointment of an interim Ethics Commissioner. What Canadians might not have known from that post was that the person appointed was the sister-in-law of a Liberal cabinet minister, but not just any cabinet minister.

When red flags went up about that appointment, I raised my concern and that of many Canadians when I posed a question on March 31. At that time, I stated in this House:

...we should all remember clam scam, when the then fisheries minister was found guilty of an ethics breach for awarding a \$24-million licence to a company to be ran by his wife's cousin. Now the Liberals have appointed the same cabinet minister's sister-in-law as the Ethics Commissioner. Really?

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

The parliamentary secretary responded but did not answer the question. Instead, he danced around it like there was nothing wrong.

After six ethics violations, the Liberals attempted to appoint a family member to the Ethics Commissioner's office to cover for them. Now, as days go by, we are seeing more evidence of why they may have attempted to ensure their friends and family were controlling the Office of the Ethics Commissioner, as more questions of the government's ethics, or lack thereof, continue to emerge.

On Monday, the world learned that the government failed to inform a sitting member of Parliament that it knew of yet more evidence that the Communist regime in Beijing is actively attempting to meddle in our democracy. The government knew about it and chose to do nothing. This is something that should make all Canadians question the Liberal-NDP government's version of ethics.

It is unacceptable that the government has known that an MP and his family had been targeted by the Communist regime in Beijing for two years and did not inform the member about the threats posed to his family. Chinese Canadians across the country deserve to know that the government takes their safety and security seriously, yet Canada still has not shut down Beijing's police stations operating within Canada and has failed to protect members of the community from harassment and intimidation. Is this because the government has no ethical compass?

I will ask this again: Can the Liberals and their NDP partners only find family and insiders willing to work with them, or was this another attempt to censor disclosure of their ongoing ethics breaches? Which is it?

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I find it incredibly rich that the member would take the time to requote his question and then gloss over the answer he received, not bothering to even read it into the record, so I will do that for him now. The response given was, "Madam Speaker, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs recused himself from all deliberations and decisions related to the appointment of the interim Ethics Commissioner."

The member suggested that this was just dancing around answering the question. To me, that sounds like a pretty direct answer to the question. However, what is even more important is to reflect on the fact that the individual who was appointed had a 10-year record

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

in senior roles within the Ethics Commissioner's office, which began when Stephen Harper was the prime minister.

The truth is that the characterization being sought by the member and the Conservatives on this issue, like on so many other issues related to it, undermines the office and undermines the integrity of the work it does. Quite frankly, I find it very concerning that time after time, the Conservatives get up and do the exact same thing. However, it is exactly on brand for what they do.

**Mr. Mel Arnold:** Madam Speaker, the member tried to say that the question had been answered, but it had not. The question really was this: Can the government only find family and insiders willing to work with it or is this another attempt to censor disclosure of its ongoing ethics breaches? Which is it?

That question still has not been answered, not by the parliamentary secretary when he answered, nor tonight by this member.

After six ethics breaches that these government members have been found guilty of, they still do not realize how important ethics are to Canadians. They should have faith that members who have been elected to represent this country do have an ethics compass, which the government and these members seem to have lost somewhere along the way.

Again, will they actually answer the question? Is it family and friends only or he does not—

● (2415)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, what an extremely rhetorical question. That is just based on the trumped-up conspiracy theories that the Conservatives like to put before this House on a daily basis. The manner in which individuals are selected and appointed is through a process and through processes that ensure they meet the qualifications.

I hope that that properly addresses his extremely rhetorical question.

Not at all, except it does—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I think we are done.

The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until later this day at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 12:17 a.m.)





# CONTENTS

Wednesday, May 3, 2023

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

### Canadian Naval Tribute Project

Mr. Vuong ..... 13885

### Youth in Brampton

Ms. Sidhu (Brampton South) ..... 13885

### Firearms

Mr. Williamson ..... 13885

### Multiple Sclerosis

Mr. Casey ..... 13886

### Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month

Ms. Chabot ..... 13886

### Sashbear Foundation

Mrs. Brière ..... 13886

### Edmonton Oilers

Mr. Jeneroux ..... 13886

### Polish Constitution Day

Mr. Kusmierczyk ..... 13886

### Mental Health

Ms. Damoff ..... 13887

### Cost of Living

Mr. Hallan ..... 13887

### Opioids

Mr. Hanley ..... 13887

### Liberal Party of Canada

Mrs. Stubbs ..... 13887

### Liberal Party of Canada

Mr. Kitchen ..... 13888

### World Press Freedom Day

Mr. MacKinnon ..... 13888

### My Voice, My Choice

Ms. Collins (Victoria) ..... 13888

### Michel Rochefort

Mrs. DeBellefeuille ..... 13888

### Ethics

Mr. Brock ..... 13889

### Sashbear Walk

Mr. van Koeverden ..... 13889

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Democratic Institutions

Mr. Poilievre ..... 13889

Mr. Mendicino ..... 13889

Mr. Poilievre ..... 13889

Mr. Mendicino ..... 13889

Mr. Poilievre ..... 13889

Mr. Mendicino ..... 13890

Mr. Poilievre ..... 13890

Mr. Mendicino ..... 13890

Mr. Poilievre ..... 13890

Mr. Mendicino ..... 13890

Mr. Blanchet ..... 13890

Mr. Mendicino ..... 13890

Mr. Blanchet ..... 13890

Mr. Holland ..... 13890

Mr. Singh ..... 13891

Mr. Mendicino ..... 13891

Mr. Singh ..... 13891

Mr. Mendicino ..... 13891

Mr. Chong ..... 13891

Mr. Mendicino ..... 13891

Mr. Chong ..... 13891

Mr. Mendicino ..... 13891

Mr. Barrett ..... 13891

Mr. Mendicino ..... 13892

Mr. Barrett ..... 13892

Mr. Mendicino ..... 13892

Mr. Berthold ..... 13892

Mr. Oliphant ..... 13892

Mr. Berthold ..... 13892

Mr. Oliphant ..... 13892

Mr. Villemure ..... 13892

Mr. Mendicino ..... 13893

Mr. Villemure ..... 13893

Mr. Mendicino ..... 13893

Mr. Cooper ..... 13893

Mr. Mendicino ..... 13893

Mr. Cooper ..... 13893

Mr. Mendicino ..... 13893

Mr. Deltell ..... 13893

Mr. Mendicino ..... 13893

Mr. Deltell ..... 13894

Mr. Mendicino ..... 13894

### Indigenous Affairs

Ms. Idlout ..... 13894

Ms. Hajdu ..... 13894

### Health

Mr. Davies ..... 13894

Mr. van Koeverden ..... 13894

### Democratic Institutions

Mr. Turnbull ..... 13894

Ms. Chagger ..... 13894

### Public Safety

Mr. Brock ..... 13895

Mr. Mendicino ..... 13895

Mr. Brock .....	13895
Mr. Mendicino .....	13895
Mr. Paul-Hus .....	13895
Mr. Mendicino .....	13895
Mr. Paul-Hus .....	13895
Mr. Mendicino .....	13895
<b>Democratic Institutions</b>	
Ms. Normandin .....	13896
Mr. Mendicino .....	13896
Mr. Fortin .....	13896
Mr. Champagne .....	13896
Ms. Findlay .....	13896
Mr. Mendicino .....	13896
Mr. Scheer .....	13896
Mr. Oliphant .....	13896
Mr. Scheer .....	13897
Mr. Mendicino .....	13897
<b>Justice</b>	
Mr. Noormohamed .....	13897
Mr. Lametti .....	13897
<b>Democratic Institutions</b>	
Mr. Poilievre .....	13897
Mr. Holland .....	13897
Mr. Poilievre .....	13897
Mr. Mendicino .....	13897
Mr. Poilievre .....	13897
Mr. Mendicino .....	13898
<b>Housing</b>	
Mr. Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek) .....	13898
Mr. Hussen .....	13898
<b>Disaster Assistance</b>	
Mr. Boulerice .....	13898
Mr. Blair .....	13898
<b>The Environment</b>	
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) .....	13898
Mr. Guilbeault .....	13899

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

<b>Business of Supply</b>	
<b>Opposition Motion—Home Ownership and Renting Affordability</b>	
Motion .....	13899
Motion negatived .....	13900

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

<b>Fighting Against Forced Labour and Child Labour in Supply Chains Act</b>	
Bill S-211. Third reading .....	13900
Motion agreed to .....	13902
(Bill read the third time and passed) .....	13902

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### First Nations Fiscal Management Act

(Bill C-45. On the Order: Government Orders) .....	13902
Mr. Schmale .....	13902
Motion .....	13902
(Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to a committee) .....	13902

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### Government Response to Petitions

Mr. Lamoureux .....	13902
---------------------	-------

### Committees of the House

#### Foreign Affairs and International Development

Mr. Zuberi .....	13902
------------------	-------

#### Transport, Infrastructure and Communities

Mr. Schiefke .....	13902
--------------------	-------

### Petitions

#### Publication Bans

Ms. Collins (Victoria) .....	13902
------------------------------	-------

#### Hazaras

Mr. Kmiec .....	13902
-----------------	-------

#### Human Rights

Ms. McPherson .....	13903
---------------------	-------

#### Public Safety

Mr. Vis .....	13903
---------------	-------

#### The Environment

Mr. Green .....	13903
-----------------	-------

#### Syria

Mr. Green .....	13903
-----------------	-------

#### Climate Change

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) .....	13903
--------------------------------------	-------

#### Criminal Code

Mr. Kurek .....	13903
-----------------	-------

Mrs. Waganall .....	13904
---------------------	-------

Mr. Dalton .....	13904
------------------	-------

Mr. Falk (Provencher) .....	13904
-----------------------------	-------

#### Seniors

Mr. Lamoureux .....	13904
---------------------	-------

### Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Lamoureux .....	13904
---------------------	-------

### Questions Passed as Orders for Returns

Mr. Lamoureux .....	13906
---------------------	-------

### Motions for Papers

Mr. Lamoureux .....	13907
---------------------	-------

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### Strengthening Environmental Protection for a Healthier Canada Act

Bill S-5. Report stage ..... 13907

#### Speaker's Ruling

The Deputy Speaker ..... 13907

#### Motions in Amendment

Ms. Collins (Victoria) ..... 13907

Motion No. 1 ..... 13907

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) ..... 13907

Motion No. 2 ..... 13907

Motion No. 3 ..... 13907

Ms. Collins (Victoria) ..... 13907

Mr. Duguid ..... 13908

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) ..... 13909

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) ..... 13909

Mr. Longfield ..... 13911

Ms. Pauzé ..... 13911

Ms. Collins (Victoria) ..... 13911

Mr. Duguid ..... 13911

Ms. McPherson ..... 13913

Mr. Patzer ..... 13913

Ms. Pauzé ..... 13913

Mr. Deltell ..... 13914

Mr. Longfield ..... 13915

Ms. Pauzé ..... 13916

Mr. Angus ..... 13916

Ms. Pauzé ..... 13916

Ms. Collins (Victoria) ..... 13918

Mr. Duguid ..... 13918

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) ..... 13918

Mr. Lamoureux ..... 13918

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

### Court Challenges Program Act

Mr. McKinnon ..... 13919

Bill C-316. Second reading ..... 13919

Ms. McPherson ..... 13920

Mr. Mazier ..... 13921

Mr. Beaulieu ..... 13921

Mrs. Thomas ..... 13921

Ms. Larouche ..... 13922

Ms. McPherson ..... 13924

Mr. Lamoureux ..... 13925

Mr. Nater ..... 13926

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### An Act Respecting Regulatory Modernization

Ms. Hajdu (for the President of the Treasury Board) ..... 13927

Bill S-6. Second reading ..... 13927

Mr. Fergus ..... 13927

Mr. Patzer ..... 13928

Mr. Garon ..... 13928

Mr. Desjarlais ..... 13929

Mr. Blois ..... 13929

Mr. Patzer ..... 13931

Mr. Garon ..... 13931

Mr. Garrison ..... 13931

Mrs. Kusie ..... 13931

Mr. Gerretsen ..... 13934

Mr. Garon ..... 13934

Mr. Angus ..... 13935

Mr. Aboultaif ..... 13935

Mr. Ste-Marie ..... 13936

Mr. Garon ..... 13937

Mr. Gourde ..... 13937

Mr. Lemire ..... 13938

Mr. Patzer ..... 13940

Mr. Angus ..... 13940

Mr. Ste-Marie ..... 13940

Mr. Desjarlais ..... 13941

Ms. Rood ..... 13944

Mr. Lemire ..... 13944

Mr. Cannings ..... 13944

Mr. Patzer ..... 13945

Ms. Idlout ..... 13945

Mr. Patzer ..... 13945

Mr. Lemire ..... 13947

Ms. Idlout ..... 13947

Mrs. Kusie ..... 13948

Mr. Perron ..... 13948

Mr. Angus ..... 13949

Mr. Lemire ..... 13949

Mr. Garon ..... 13950

Mr. Davidson ..... 13950

Mr. Perron ..... 13951

Ms. Blaney ..... 13952

Mrs. Kusie ..... 13952

Mr. Seeback ..... 13952

Ms. Idlout ..... 13953

Mr. Gerretsen ..... 13954

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) ..... 13954

Mr. Vis ..... 13954

Mr. Gerretsen ..... 13956

Mr. Perron ..... 13957

Mr. Green ..... 13957

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) ..... 13957

Mr. Lemire ..... 13957

#### Privilege

##### Foreign Interference and Alleged Intimidation of a Member

Mr. Julian ..... 13958

#### An Act Respecting Regulatory Modernization

Bill S-6. Second reading ..... 13959

Mr. Aboultaif ..... 13959

Mr. Lemire ..... 13960

Mrs. Kusie ..... 13961

Ms. Idlout ..... 13961

Mr. Garon ..... 13961

Mr. Gerretsen .....	13963
Mr. Epp .....	13963
Ms. Zarrillo .....	13963
Mr. Genuis .....	13964
Mr. Boulerice .....	13966
Mr. Epp .....	13967
Mr. Tochor .....	13967
Mr. Gerretsen .....	13968
Mr. Richards .....	13968
Mr. Julian .....	13969
Ms. Idlout .....	13970
Mr. Chambers .....	13970
Mr. Epp .....	13971
Mr. Gerretsen .....	13972
Ms. Idlout .....	13972
Mrs. Kusie .....	13972

Mr. Tochor .....	13972
Mr. Gerretsen .....	13973
Mr. Julian .....	13974
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) .....	13974
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) .....	13974

### **ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS**

#### **Foreign Affairs**

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) .....	13975
Mr. Sidhu (Brampton East) .....	13975

#### **Government Appointments**

Mr. Arnold .....	13976
Mr. Gerretsen .....	13977



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>