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# House of Commons Debates

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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, May 8, 2023

The House met at 11 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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• (1105)

[*Translation*]

## ORDER PAPER

**The Speaker:** I wish to inform the House that, pursuant to Standing Order 55(1), and at the request of the government, I have ordered the printing of a special Order Paper giving notice of a government motion.

[*English*]

I therefore table the document in question.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*Translation*]

### FOOD DAY IN CANADA ACT

The House resumed from April 17 consideration of the motion that Bill S-227, An Act to establish Food Day in Canada, be read the third time and passed.

**Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be the first to rise on this sunny Monday morning. Spring is here and we are happy. There is sunshine and warm weather, and we are happy.

Since this bill talks about establishing a food day, I would like to begin by paying tribute to the many people who run the food banks in my riding. The work they do is truly important, even crucial. Today, I want to name and recognize them.

Alternative Centregens is an outstanding food bank in my riding. The Centre d'action bénévole de Saint-Hubert is also very important. There is La Croisée de Longueuil, L'Entraide Chez Nous, the La Mosaïque community outreach centre, Partage Saint-François-de-Sales and Le Repas du Passant. There is also Chrismene Joseph, who does a wonderful job with CESUMAS. There is Aide aux familles in Saint-Hubert, where Yvonne Ornau works. I am often in touch with her and we support her. These people do an important job every day and they help communities. We know that things were really difficult with the pandemic.

Les Cuisiniers Différents is another very special food bank. It is staffed by young adults living with intellectual disabilities. They make meals for struggling schools, and the organization is a crucial resource. Chantal Pagé, who I speak with almost every week, is one of the main go-to people in my riding on community issues. I want to send her a warm hello.

I think that everyone who has heard me speak on housing knows how much importance I place on the well-being of others. It is so important to me that I would be willing to declare every Monday national food day. I think that food is a central part of our lives, along with housing, another matter I have often addressed in my speeches.

Food is central to all things. Food is an essential need. When people are hungry, everything gets harder. Yesterday, some of us might have eaten steak and fries, a piece of salmon or a chicken breast grilled on the barbecue. Unfortunately, for many people across this country, these food items are out of reach. Sometimes, the things we take for granted are considered a luxury by others. Sadly, in Canada, having enough food to eat is still a luxury. This can never be said too often. We have to work on this problem.

I think it is important to keep in mind a few extremely important points about food. First, I think that everyone should have access to a sufficient quantity of healthy food.

According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, a specialized UN agency, the right to food means that “the state [and that is us] has an obligation to ensure, at the very least, that people do not starve.” That seems obvious, but it is not that easy to achieve. In Canada, we are not there yet. “As such, this right is intrinsically linked to the right to life. However, states are also under an obligation to take appropriate measures to ensure the realization of the right to adequate food for everyone within their jurisdiction. In other words, all people, at all times, should have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food.”

This seems to be a self-evident truth, but, as I said earlier, we are not there right now.

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All of this is to help people lead “an active and healthy life.” Food is deemed to be adequate when it is also “culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods.” The issues here are still quite significant. Finally, the “accessibility of such food [should] not interfere with the enjoyment of other human rights”.

I spoke about this earlier, when I said that food insecurity is also a problem in Canada and Quebec. It is a problem now, today.

According to Statistics Canada, “[d]uring the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic [in Canada] in fall 2020, about 1 in 10 Canadians aged 12 and older reported experience of food insecurity in their household in the previous 12 months.” For a country like Canada, I find that absolutely unacceptable.

“HungerCount 2022” reports that, in Quebec alone, 2.2 million requests for food hampers are processed each month. That is a 20% increase since 2021. In addition, 34% of people receiving food assistance are children. In Canada, 485,000 children do not have enough to eat.

Establishing a day like this could help highlight that, even here, in our country, people are going hungry and do not have the kind of access that would enable them to meet their basic needs, such as food and decent housing, and that we must absolutely find a solution to these problems that are hurting a whole segment of society. We are talking about half a million children.

About two-thirds of some 1,200 organizations that provide food hampers report that they have been short on food supplies from their usual sources over the last year. Faced with the current supply chain problems, the food banks' usual donors, such as food producers and processors, have begun to manage their supplies more efficiently, which, in itself, is good news for the environment but ultimately leaves them with less surplus to give away and leaves us with empty food banks.

As we know, the agricultural and agri-food sector is a priority for the Bloc Québécois. We are constantly talking about food sovereignty, in particular by promoting the supply management system, which is a good example. Over time, the Bloc has raised a number of issues to promote food sovereignty in Quebec and Canada, particularly the need to secure our food chains, foster the next generation of farmers, promote local agriculture and processing, help farmers and processors to innovate, especially when it comes to building resilience to climate change, protect critical resources and agriculture and processing facilities from foreign investment, promote human-scale farms by encouraging buying organic and, especially, champion buying local.

All these measures will help people eat healthy and enable food banks to continue doing their work, although they must be given the means to do so. This is why I find the preamble of the bill quite interesting. First, it makes the link between a state's sovereignty and its agricultural system. Clearly, for me, as a Bloc member, as soon as we talk about sovereignty, I am interested. The bill is also interesting because it addresses the fact that this system is more than just a commercial industry. We are talking about people's health and well-being, and that should not be a commodity.

Let us get back to the concept of food sovereignty, which is defined by a people's right to responsibly choose its positions, the policies to define them and, above all, the means to implement them. This can be addressed from several angles. From a social perspective, fostering social cohesion in our communities, land use, and respect and recognition for the work of farmers and processors—those who feed us—may cut food waste and promote the sharing of knowledge and know-how we need to develop our own food sovereignty.

In terms of the environment, we need to work on developing innovation programs so that producers and processors can conserve more resources. Finally, from an economic perspective, food sovereignty is a more protectionist vision of agriculture, which enables poorer countries, for one, to develop their agriculture, implement fair trade rules and improve food quality standards. Clearly, this has many positive aspects.

Of course, for trade to be mutually beneficial, it must first be fair. A trade system that results in exploiting poor countries and dumping in rich countries is not sustainable. We cannot allow free trade that results in a race to the bottom. That is not what this is about.

In closing, this food day is a great idea. The Bloc Québécois will be supporting this bill. This day should be accompanied by a range of meaningful measures. Simply having a day is not enough. As I pointed out, we still need to implement an action plan to feed people, to adequately support farmers and, above all, so that I can stop feeling guilty about having steak tartare for dinner while 485,000 children in this country do not have enough to eat.

• (1110)

[English]

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am honoured to be here today to speak to Bill S-227, an act to establish food day in Canada. I thank the member for Perth—Wellington for sponsoring it in this place.

This bill is very similar, with some minor changes such as the date, to Bill C-281, an act to establish a national local food day, which was introduced in the 42nd Parliament by the former NDP MP and national parks critic Wayne Stetski. MP Stetski's bill was itself a reiteration of legislation introduced in the 41st Parliament as Bill C-449, an act respecting a national local food day, by former NDP MP and agriculture critic Malcolm Allen. Therefore, it is good to be here debating this bill, which has such a rich history in this place.

It is incredibly important to ensure that Canadians have access to healthy, affordable food and a sustainable food system. These are national priorities. I agree with the former speaker that they need a lot more support and investment. It is important to support our local agriculture markets as they are essential to us moving forward with this goal.

As I was preparing for this speech, I was thinking a lot about what we experienced during the beginning of the pandemic. I remember a lot of communities and organizations contacting me to talk about food and how worried they were with the big changes that were happening across the planet and with their food security.

My riding is just under 60,000 square kilometres. I have a lot of communities on islands, and they were very concerned. I remember when there was a COVID outbreak in Alert Bay. The butcher there became very ill and had to be away for 14 days. That made it very hard for people to access the meat and protein they desperately needed.

Therefore, ensuring that we have local responses and that we honour the importance of assuring that if something happens there is enough food to sustain us is incredibly important.

I am also pleased to have an opportunity to talk about the rich farmers' markets across my riding. What I find profound about all the farmers' markets is that they are evolving quickly, and they celebrate locally grown food, which I really appreciate. It means I can go online and look at all the resources our farmers' markets bring. They connect us locally to people who are producing different types of food. The websites are available on that one site, so people can look at what they can locally connect to directly, and that is important.

When we know who feeds us locally, it means we can access their products. It is good for the environment and it supports local businesses. I come from a rural and remote riding, and keeping money in our region is incredibly important. These folks work very hard, so I appreciate how it connects us to local providers and allows us to buy locally to protect not only those local business but also our planet. We must always remember to celebrate the people who make food for us and who are very close to us.

I think of my visit to the Blueberry Commons' farm co-operative, which does some great work around connecting with children in schools, providing food for people and creating a local business that is going to make sense. It is also looking at how it can add housing to this co-operative. When it looks at its community, it sees how high the need is for affordable housing. It is quite incredible when we see these kinds of groups coming together and identifying how they are going to support not only keeping food healthy, local and affordable for people, but also ensuring that affordable housing is included going forward.

I think about the Namgis community garden. When I went there I was amazed by the establishment it had created and by the many young people who would go there to learn how to garden from the more mature members of the community. This brings the community together. It was very profound to see the number of young people who were getting jobs because they were working with local busi-

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nesses and people saw an opportunity to hire them. As they said, it was a good problem to have.

I think of Big D's Bees. We have strong support for bees in a lot of places throughout our riding. Big D's Bees does a lot of work to ensure we have good honey, but we are also showing our solidarity with the bees, which are struggling so much.

• (1115)

Amara Farm is another one, one of my favourite farms in my region. They do a lot of incredible work to create produce, and also work very hard to make sure that the farmers' market is successful.

The reality is that when we talk about this bill, we have to acknowledge how many people are going hungry. Twenty per cent of Canadians have said that they were very likely or somewhat likely to obtain food from a community organization in the next six months. We know that people are struggling to make ends meet, and it is getting harder and harder.

One of the hardest challenges for families that are struggling financially is finding affordable, accessible food that is healthy for their children. We hear about this all too often: children going to school hungry, children struggling with health issues because they cannot eat the proper food.

I know that my friend, the MP for Vancouver Kingsway, has put forward Bill C-212, an act to develop a national school food program for children. This is absolutely important. We know that too many children go to school hungry. We need to make sure that we are supporting those children without any embarrassment or shame, so that they can get the health and nutrition they need, so that they can be better educated and take care of that education. I really appreciate the focus on those kinds of things.

When we talk about this, we also know we are watching some of our grocery chains in this country, specifically Loblaws, which are seeing outrageous profit during this time when so many Canadians are going hungry. I remember when our leader asked Galen Weston how much profit is too much, and of course he was unable to answer that question. I wonder why. We know that feeding people is less important than making sure there is profit for people who have a stake in that business.

As the cost of food goes up, as we know, more and more food is being shipped across the planet. We need to find ways to look at this and have a more sustainable future that includes healthy food for people, but also includes accessing local food before we go outside, especially when we look at things like the carbon footprint and what that means for us as food travels around the world.

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I have only a couple of minutes left in my speech, but I also want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the great heroes of all of us across this country, and that is our local food banks. Not too long ago, I was in Gold River and I was talking to one of the members of the town council. She was talking about how the Gold River Food Network is doing everything it can, but it is getting harder and harder to feed people because so many people are accessing it. They noted, specifically, that there are a lot of seniors accessing food banks. That is quite concerning, that people who are living on a fixed income are struggling more and more. If they do not have healthy food, their health outcomes are worse.

I also think of the Campbell River Food Bank, which does a lot of work in that community, but also holds a lot of food for other food banks on some of the islands near our region. As they see the increase in just the Campbell River area, they are having a harder and harder time taking in that extra food that they hold for those other communities. Storage is becoming a huge issue. If they cannot store the food, then it gets harder to get food out to other communities, and that really concerns me.

I also think of the Powell River Food Bank. I went to meet with them, and one of the stories I will never forget was about the embarrassment of a wife coming in and asking them to please not tell her husband that she had to go to the food bank, because they just did not have enough food. She had paid all the bills and there was nothing left over.

In this time when food insecurity is increasing, it is incredibly important that all of us in this place take responsibility and understand that we must support healthy food for people. We must look at what is happening in our local communities and lift those businesses up, lift those farms up so that they could provide the best food.

I look forward to supporting this bill, and I hope that we have a special day to recognize and celebrate local food. I also hope that all of us will celebrate it every day by buying products that are close to home.

• (1120)

**Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to bring the voices of Chatham-Kent—Leamington, and today the voice, hopefully, of many Canadians, to this chamber. I want to begin by thanking Senator Black for bringing forward this bill to acknowledge a food day in Canada. He comes from the other place, and I want to acknowledge my friend and colleague, the member for Perth—Wellington, for shepherding it through this place.

I also want to thank him for some delicious craft beer that resides in my fridge, as he recognized that the Leamington Flyers prevailed over his St. Marys Lincolns in the western conference finals of the junior B hockey league. I also want to acknowledge that last night the Stratford Warriors, also from his riding, tied the series for the Sutherland Cup at 3-3; he and I will continue discussions on that matter later.

However, today is about food and the important place that food has in our lives, both for our physical needs and also for our social needs. It has such a major place as we celebrate with families, as

we celebrate occasions and as we celebrate social events. Today, I want to spend most of my time talking about the physical aspect of how food nourishes us.

As previous members have acknowledged, many of us have access to local food, and that is great here in Canada, but the reality is that most of the food that we consume as Canadians comes to us through one of two complex food value chains: It is either food that we purchase at the grocery store, through the retail value chain, or it is through the food service aspect. After a number of us have spoken here to this bill, we will go to the lobbies and enjoy some food prepared here through the chamber. As we celebrate weddings and other social events, we have the food service industry serving us there through our hospitality venues, as well as through our hospitals. That is the other complex food value chain that often supplies us with food.

I am a farmer, and on our farm we have produced many vegetable crops and grain crops. However, I have spent much of my life also involved with the transfer of raw products from our farm to the next step, that second step, as it goes from farmers to food manufacturers or food processors, and then on to retailers, distribution centres or food service companies.

Several generations ago, most people understood the food value chain. What I really like about this bill is that it focuses on our food value chain and it gives us an opportunity to talk about it, so that we all collectively understand where our food comes from. In this chamber, we hear at times debate around supply management, where we talk about open markets or contracts or the spot market or informal alliances. In the general public, I do not think it is that well understood. Why does agriculture not just get together and have one simple way of transferring food or the value of raw product to the next step? Obviously, it is very simple to understand at the local markets or the roadside markets. In my home riding of Chatham-Kent—Leamington, we are blessed with many of them throughout the summer, and with our greenhouse industry, we often have access through many months of the year. However, as I said earlier, most of the food comes to us through a complex web of interrelationships, and that is where I have spent some time off the farm. I will speak a bit to that.

I am a proud Conservative. I sit on this side of the chamber, for now. However, I have also spent 20 years or more collectively bargaining. I am very proud of that, representing producers and their relationships up the value chain. How can I do that? I very much firmly believe in the market mechanism as the most efficient mechanism for transferring value of goods and services, but markets work only when there is a balance of power in the marketplace. Different mechanisms, different structures and at times different regulations are required to provide that balance of power. What I have noticed over my time in the food industry is that there are four factors that actually determine the amount of structure and the style of relationship between producers, farmers and the next step up, be it food manufacturers or processors.

• (1125)

Let us begin with them. The first one is the perishability of the product we are talking about. If we were to talk about the price of a glass of milk, or a tomato, which I have produced, or a bushel of grain, and if we were to sit down across the desk to determine the value and not agree, we might want to come back in two or three weeks' time and talk about the value of those products again. That glass of milk is going to have some problems two weeks later, if it is not properly cared for. The tomato might hang in there and have some value, but it would certainly be reduced. For the bushel of grain, be it wheat, corn, soybeans or canola, if stored properly, we can talk about it in six months, and it would be fine. Therefore, perishability determines the dynamic or the power we have to talk about it. Even with different products, we can talk about beef versus dairy. Both are products that come from bovine species, but they have totally different marketing aspects when it comes to perishability.

A second factor is the complexity of the biology or the complexity of the technology. We can take a dairy herd as an example. A dairy herd takes years to build up to a productive asset, as does an orchard or a vineyard. They are not things one plants in spring and harvests that fall, immediately; it takes time. Therefore, if there are errors, mistakes or marketing challenges, that can really mess with that operation for years.

My farm, Lycoland Farms, is an annual crop producer, so we get a new chance every spring, and we are at the point where we do a fair bit of double cropping, so often we are able to plant two crops a year. That dynamic, the complexity of the biology, determines how much structure and regulation might be required in transferring value.

A third factor is the balance of buyers and sellers, and we have talked a lot about that in this House recently. How many buyers are there for how many sellers? Is it a monopoly or an oligopoly buying, or are there a number of options I can sell to as a producer?

I think of different instances here. The grain markets are becoming more concentrated, but the reality is that I have several elevators I could transfer my corn or soybeans to, and I am not bound to take it to one if we disagree on the local basis levels. I look at our greenhouse industry, a very complex and highly technical industry, and there is a large absence of marketing structures. As they specialize more, they are starting to move toward contracts, but the reality is that in that industry, several years ago, there were over 60 marketing agencies willing to transfer the value of greenhouse product to the retailers, to the market. That has shrunk down somewhat, but there are a number of options. That balance of buyers and sellers, monopolies and oligopolies, plays into how much structure a market needs to function effectively.

Last, there is the international scene. How is agriculture treated in other countries? Canada is a trading nation, so we cannot eat all the wheat we produce or all the pork we produce, and our orange juice production and our coffee production suck. We need to trade, and how other countries treat agriculture is also extremely important in our relationship.

Those four factors, over time, play into how an industry transfers value, and this is largely between the primary producers one step up

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in the value chain. These factors are not static. Innovation, changes in technology and changes in how other countries interfere with or support their agriculture become very important.

I am reminded of 2008, when the grain markets rose significantly. That actually led to the Arab Spring. When the average consumption of a country's population drops below 1,800 calories per citizen, often civil unrest follows, so countries around the world are interested in their agriculture and their food supply. Food sovereignty is important to every nation in the world, and that plays out in many different ways.

In the few seconds I have left, I just want to touch on two points. First of all, there is a myth that it is field-to-fork that brings the food to our plate. I, as a primary farmer, have so many suppliers. I have relationships with input suppliers, seed suppliers and farm machinery suppliers, so our food value chain extends before the farmers. I do not want to leave anyone with the wrong impression.

In conclusion, the legacy of Anita Stewart from Perth—Wellington is to be honoured, and that is a point of pride for our agriculture communities and for our whole food value system. I am honoured to address that today.

• (1130)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, having grown up in the Prairies, whether in Manitoba or Saskatchewan, or in Alberta when I served in the Canadian Forces, I have had the opportunity to really get a good sense of what our Prairies are, even going into British Columbia. Food, as it has been talked about, is not something that is critical. It is even more important than critical, as life is dependent upon it.

I thought I would try to give a bit of an image of driving in the Prairies. I can think of highways such as Highway 2 driving out in the Carman area or down Highway 1. One can see beautiful bright yellow fields, blue fields or golden fields, virtually wherever the eye can see. One of the most impressive sites is when driving on Highway 2 and one can see a line of five or six huge four-wheel drive combine tractors in the field bringing in the food. It is so impressive that one must realize it is a bread basket for the world.

We export so much product, and our farmers have done such incredible work with the diversification of our farms. Canola, in particular, is one of my favourites. It comes from the University of Manitoba. There has been fine work done through science. It has been expanded to incorporate the Prairies, with some of the products going out of Saskatchewan into countries such as India. There are so many products.

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Canada does play a very important role when it comes to food security, not only for today but into the future. I would like to emphasize the imagination of individuals to take a look at the vastness of the Prairies and the work that our farmers do in ensuring that we have those basic crops, which are so essential to the existence of life.

For diversification, it has been so important that the government support our farming community through the pre-pandemic, pandemic and post-pandemic years, which it did with budgetary measures allocating hundreds of millions of dollars, as well as by looking at ways to enhance trade opportunities and ensure local food security through supporting the many different organizations out there. There is so much in that sector.

This is a government that has a genuine interest in making sure that our agricultural and food sector industries are strong, healthy and viable. I believe that food day would fall on the first Saturday after the first Monday in August, so that this year it should be on August 5. When we designate days, weeks or months, we will usually hear fairly encouraging words about the topic of the legislation or resolution that is being debated. There is absolutely no doubt that education is a major component to any sort of recognition of a day. We have some amazing organizations out there.

I have referred, for example, to Peak of the Market, which is located on Route 90, a nice, easily accessible highway in the past. I had the opportunity a few years back for a tour of Peak of the Market with the minister of agriculture. Food circulation is of critical importance, but I had the opportunity to have a wonderful tour, where I recognized the white potatoes, red potatoes, vegetables and storage capabilities available. There are all sorts of things that take place here. It is, for all intents and purposes, an organization to promote Manitoba-grown products and vegetables. It has had such a huge impact.

People have referred to food banks. Peak of the Market donates thousands of pounds every year to food banks. Peak of the Market is out there promoting and encouraging people to buy local and to promote that product beyond the borders of Manitoba.

• (1135)

We have great strawberry farms. Every year, when I was in the Manitoba legislature, we would get a basket full of strawberries grown in Portage la Prairie. Last summer or the summer before, I was north of the Interlake and was able to see cattle farms and even a beef farm. If people go to the southeast, they will see chicken producers. They have the barns where they are born, grown to 28 days old and then processed to provide food, whether it is for Kentucky Fried Chicken, hotels or grocery stores.

We can look at the hog industry, an industry that I have talked at great length about in the past. The hog industry in Manitoba is huge, and it continues to grow. It is not just in Manitoba. HyLife is a great contributor to the Canadian economy with its significant footprint in the province of Manitoba, where it processes thousands of hogs every day, which ultimately get exported to Asia. This created jobs and provides essential food. It is endless. We can talk about the hog production plants in my home city of Winnipeg or in Brandon. Thousands of hogs are being produced for local consumption and export. They are the best-quality hogs.

I would argue the best-quality potatoes are found in the province of Manitoba. Some of my Prince Edward Island colleagues might question me about that, but, from my perspective, I believe Manitoba does produce the best.

There are industries we need to look into more for possible opportunities. I had an opportunity to look at the aquafarms in a very small way, but it is an interesting opportunity and something we should be looking at. It provides all sorts of opportunities from an educational point of view. We may be able to have aqua farms even in cold climates with greenhouses. The science behind food enables us to get more engaged.

It is important, when we look at the food industry, that we need to recognize the degree to which our farmers have sacrificed. I referred to the farming of wheat. We can talk about the dairy farmers and the cattle industry. They are there today because of our agricultural products and food industry have one purpose at hand, and that is to ultimately provide the quality foods we see on our grocery shelves and being served to us, as one member said, whether it is in the MPs' lobbies or in our many wonderful restaurants throughout all of our communities. It is wonderful to recognize the importance of food and all those involved in ensuring we have food to eat.

• (1140)

**Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to join the debate today to talk about Bill S-227, which was brought forward by my friend from Perth—Wellington. I thank him very much for bringing this forward.

As many people know, I grew up on a dairy and beef farm in southwest Saskatchewan, so agriculture had a huge impact on my life when I was growing up. I will take a few minutes today to talk about how important agriculture is, was and will continue to be in our country.

First and foremost, we have the best agricultural producers in the world. What we do here in Canada when it comes to agriculture is so fundamentally well done by the people who are in the fields, raise cattle and produce milk. I am very happy to have lots of friends in the agriculture sector still, and to be a member of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, which unanimously passed this bill back to the House for third reading. I was so happy we passed it quickly so the legislation can pass and be made law, and so we can celebrate food day on August 5 of this year, as my colleague from Winnipeg North said.

One thing we are doing in Saskatchewan, which is one thing this bill would help with, is improving the education on how our food is produced. In Saskatchewan, we do something called “agriculture in the classroom”, which is about having students learn about where their food comes from and that it does not just appear in the grocery store or on their plate when mom or dad cooks it at home. It teaches them where it starts, which is the fields, the farms and the cattle ranches in our country.

Agriculture in the classroom is not just about the students. It gives educators the opportunity to gain real-life experience on the farm. One of the educators who took part in this in 2022 said:



This was the most transformational excursion I have had the pleasure to go on. I loved learning about how farmers are taking active measures to ensure that our food is produced in the most environmentally friendly way.... I really appreciated the connections I made with several of the participants and look forward to using some of the resources in my classroom now that I have a great awareness of what is available for my grade.

This is a quote from Sherry Lesser, a 2022 agriculture expedition teacher.

This bill would bring together rural and urban citizens and allow them to start the conversation about how we produce food in this country.

As I said, I have been on the agriculture committee for several years, and one thing we really need to make other Canadian citizens aware of is just how much has been done to improve sustainable agriculture, though I think all agriculture is sustainable. Our farmers should get credit for what has been done in the last 20 to 25 years. They should get credit for zero tillage, which has now practically been incorporated. They should get credit for crop rotation, where different crops take out different nutrients from the soil.

People have come to present to committee, and the agricultural soil in Canada is in the best shape it has ever been in. This is because we leave more in the ground and have the ability, through technology, to make our soil as healthy as it has ever been.

I had the experience of attending Ag in Motion, one of the biggest agricultural shows in North America. It takes place just outside Saskatoon. Yara, which is a fertilizer company, had a research plot there, and I was able to go on a tour with the company, which field-mapped the plot. Technology has done great things for agriculture. Yara had a little machine that scanned 30 leaves in this plot and then gave a reading, down to the decimal point, of how much fertilizer needed to be added to that part of the field.

Technology has come such a long way. We can now have a field map, with GPS, and the tractors now have GPS as well, so farmers can be so precise on how much fertilizer they put in the fields. It is amazing how much more sustainable our practices are. If one talks to any producer, one will hear that they want to lower their inputs as much as possible, because fertilizer and fuel cost a lot of money and that hits the bottom line. I am so proud of our producers and how well they have done in using that technology to make farming even more sustainable.

• (1145)

Of the total emissions for Canada, agriculture represents 8% to 10%. In any other jurisdiction in the world, the agriculture sector accounts for 25% of emissions, or more. That is how well we are doing in Canada: Our emissions are three times lower than in any other jurisdiction in the world that has agriculture as major part of its economy. That is what we have to keep in mind when we are talking about sustainability and agriculture. We have to let people in this country know how well our producers are doing when it comes to agriculture and sustainability. It is something we should be proud of, and the government should be there to promote what our producers have done.

We are definitely going to be at the forefront of being sustainable and feeding the world. As our population grows, our outputs and yields have to continue to grow. As we have lowered our emissions,

### *Private Members' Business*

the hard-working men and women in agriculture have also increased their yields. It is fantastic to see how much more we are producing with less, and that is something for which we should give credit to our producers. They made a lot of these innovative changes without any government intervention.

Getting back to Bill S-227, we can talk about education in the classroom, which is vitally important. I always talk about my rural, agricultural background, but I am an urban MP. I represent the west side of the city of Regina, so I am an urban MP. I always say I kind of blend the rural and the urban together. That is something this country should do more of. I think that people in downtown Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, our bigger cities, need to have conversations with rural people and talk about where our food comes from and how sustainably it is produced. That is something that will bring this country together more. At such a time in our country's history, we need more things that bring us together instead of dividing us.

Many people are one generation removed from the farm and still have that connection to rural areas, whether in Ontario or Quebec. I think there is a particular pride in being from a rural part of this country. When I am door knocking in Regina—Lewvan, many of my constituents either still have a farm in their family or are one generation removed. They talk about producing and what they are growing, with pride showing on their faces. I can see the smiles and memories that come back from when they were living on the farm, especially during harvest and seeding, when people really have that experience of coming together as a family.

We are going to see a lot of hope and optimism in May. Lots of people are hitting up fields right now in southern Saskatchewan. I wish everyone who is planting this year the best of luck. I hope it rains at the right times and that we have an amazing crop this year, because that is what we look for. There is a lot of hope and optimism in May in Saskatchewan, with people going out into the fields, but there is a lot of pressure too. It is big money, millions of dollars, that people are putting on the line to grow, fuel and fertilize so they can feed the world. With that hope and optimism also come a few worries.

Another thing I would like to do with respect to food day is to acknowledge that where our food comes from is a great way of life. Growing food and growing what we actually eat ourselves comes with a pride that cannot be explained. We raise our calves and send them into town. When we get that meat and eat it, we talk with our kids about how that meat went from being a calf to being part of our diet. There is something that comes with that, and it is a point of a pride when talking to kids.

*Private Members' Business*

Class field trips are something I remember. I remember going to a Hutterite colony when I was in grade 6 or grade 7. I learned about how everything is produced in that one setting. It starts in the field, where they have a bunch of plants. They also package and sell some of their own meat. We have not done that for a while, but my wife is on the student council at our school, and we are starting to do more trips to Hutterite colonies to have kids learn things first-hand and be on the farm. They can see how that production happens. It is interesting, because now, when my kids go to the grocery store, they look at the packaging of the meat a bit differently. They see where the meat was produced and packaged.

Food from field to fork and plate is something we can all learn a lot about. We should take great pride in our agriculture producers and how well and sustainably they produce the food that fuels this country. Canada will always have the food, fuel and fertilizer the world needs. We have to support our farmers. I am very happy to support my friend with this private member's bill.

• (1150)

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Resuming debate. The hon. member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères.

I will have to interrupt the member at some point.

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am disappointed that I will not have as much time as I had hoped for my speech on Bill S-227, which is now at third reading.

This is an interesting bill. It would create a food day in Canada. I am a little uneasy about seeing the word “Canada” in the name. That said, the idea of the bill is to create a day, in this country, in Canada, to celebrate local food and local products. That seems perfectly reasonable. Obviously, I would prefer a Quebec day, because there are great farmers in Quebec who make fantastic products. However, we will make do with food day in Canada. One day, we will try to propose a Quebec day as well. That would be even better.

This is a bill that interests me because people often tend to forget that there are farmers in Quebec and that a lot of farming happens there. Quebec's agricultural sector is highly diversified, with all kinds of products. Many people are unaware of this and do not appreciate this sector enough.

My riding is 10 minutes from Montreal. We are right next to the big city. There are towns with a population of 40,000 or 20,000, suburban towns with many inhabitants. There is also a lot of farmland in my riding, which not many people realize. Not everyone is aware of all the different farming operations in our area. I will name just a few.

My riding can be reached via Highway 30 or Highway 132 along the St. Lawrence River, or via other major roads like the Chemin des Patriotes or the Chemin du Rivage along the Richelieu River.

The thing that will stick out to anyone driving through my riding is the sheer number of fields they drive past. Once they drive out of the town limits, they may see nothing but fields for more than an

hour. They may begin to wonder if there is anything around besides fields. There certainly is an enormous amount of land set aside for field crops such as wheat, soybeans and corn. Corn is a very popular local crop. My riding is also home to dairy farmers, the people who provide the milk, yogourt, cheese and other dairy products we consume every day.

A lot of those kinds of products come from my region, including grains that can be made into bread, cereals and other important staples, as well as corn and soybeans, which are also used to make many things.

We also have maple syrup producers. I like to say that Saint-Marc-sur-Richelieu is the capital of sugar shacks. There are many sugar shacks to visit in my region because there are so many maple syrup producers.

All the maple syrup producers in the Verchères riding got together recently for a sugar shack community supper. Everyone brought a can of their syrup. The idea was to taste each other's product to determine whose is the best. I guarantee that anyone who visits my riding will see for themselves that we make the best maple syrup.

I have talked about the dairy sector and maple syrup production. I see that I am already out of time, and I have only talked about two or three products made in my region. I hope I will have a chance to talk more about it later.

Above all, let us be proud of our local producers, because we make high quality food here. It is important to eat local food and support our farmers.

• (1155)

[*English*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Perth—Wellington for his right of reply.

**Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is indeed with great satisfaction that we finally reach the end of debate before passing Bill S-227, an act to establish Food Day in Canada.

I would like to begin by thanking the member for Northumberland—Peterborough South for his assistance in helping me to accelerate the process, so we could pass this bill today. I would also like to thank all hon. members from all parties, senators and staff who have supported this bill and helped us to reach this final stage today. I particularly want to thank the hon. Senator Rob Black, who first introduced Bill S-227 in the Senate.

I would also like to thank and acknowledge the Stewart family members, who are making a strong legacy in their mother's memory in passing this bill, as well as Crystal Mackay from Food Day Canada and her family for their support. I would also like to thank and acknowledge my own family, including my wife, Justine, and our three ABCs, Ainsley, Bennett and Caroline, for their support as well. They tell me that they have heard more than enough about Bill S-227 at the dinner table and that they could give speeches on it themselves.

This summer, 20 years after Anita Stewart organized the first Food Day in response to a national crisis that devastated our beef industry, Food Day Canada will be officially recognized across Canada. This bill is particularly important as we focus on such issues as food sovereignty and food security. What is more, we could use Food Day to promote food literacy for both the young and the young at heart.

Coming to know where our food comes from and how it is produced, processed and prepared could be a learning process for all Canadians. This summer, and for every year to follow, we will, together, recognize the work of farmers, fishers, processors, chefs and everyone along the food supply chain; they not only feed us but also enrich our vast and diverse national culture.

I will close with the advice left to us by the late Anita Stewart, who founded Food Day in Canada almost 20 years ago and is, indeed, the inspiration for this bill. She wrote:

We need to have at least one day when no living Canadian can ignore the fact that Canada has some of the finest ingredients and culinary talent—from researchers and producers to home cooks and...chefs—on the planet.... [A]bove and beyond all else, Canadian cuisine is about celebrating our magnificent differences, our roots and our ethnicity. It's about possibilities, and how we as a people continue to welcome immigrants from all over.... It's about branding ourselves "Canadian" and giving our producers an unmistakable edge that no other nation can emulate.

• (1200)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The question is on the motion.

[Translation]

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

[English]

The hon. member for Perth—Wellington.

**Mr. John Nater:** Madam Speaker, I think you will find it is the will of this House to pass the bill unanimously.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed)

\* \* \*

## PRIVILEGE

### FOREIGN INTERFERENCE AND ALLEGED INTIMIDATION OF MEMBER

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am rising to contribute to the question of privilege that was raised by my colleague, the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, last week.

To put it bluntly, I was flabbergasted. I am responding in particular to the government House leader's intervention on this point. I was completely flabbergasted when I heard the arguments he advanced, Madam Speaker, appealing to you to reject standing up for a colleague who had been threatened.

## Privilege

The government House leader had two main themes, which I will take in turn. First, he asserted that the Globe and Mail report last Monday constituted "uncorroborated statements". That is just not so.

On Tuesday, the Prime Minister convened a briefing for the member for Wellington—Halton Hills with the national security and intelligence adviser and the director of the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service, or CSIS. As we heard from my colleague that afternoon, he was able to confirm, at that briefing, the details of the Globe's reporting. That very confirmation came from those senior national security officials and was relayed to the House by the hon. member. The Globe's reporting was, therefore, corroborated before the question of privilege was raised.

Many questions were asked, last week, about when the Prime Minister and the public safety minister, among others, received that CSIS report. However, we might have reason to be skeptical, as the House was told it was last week. To be clear, no one in the government, other than the government House leader, has denied the existence of this report. To my knowledge, Beijing's embassy and the government House leader are the only ones denying Robert Fife and Steven Chase's reporting from last Monday. That fact alone is astonishing.

That also contrasts markedly with the outrageous claims the government House leader's own parliamentary secretaries tried to make on Thursday morning. They claimed that the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills had actually been briefed about these threats two years ago.

The level of gaslighting from this government and from the government House leader's own team is, quite frankly, disgusting. Nonetheless, if my counterpart insists that it would be impossible to establish the existence of the CSIS report, despite his government's statements, I would refer him to the words of Speaker Milliken on October 15, 2001, at page 6085 of the Debates:

The hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona in his remarks tried to assist the Chair by suggesting that it was for the Chair to investigate the matter and come up with the name of the culprit and so on. I respect his opinion of course in all matters, but in this matter I think his view is perhaps wrong. There is a body that is well equipped to commit acts of inquisition, and that is the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, which has a fearsome chairman, quite able to extract information from witnesses who appear before the committee, with the aid of the capable members who form that committee of the House.

The motion that the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills set out in his notice to you, Madam Speaker, proposes to refer the matter to that very committee for investigation. Of course, as we know, it is not up to the Chair to make a final ruling on the actual question itself but only to say whether there is enough evidence put before the House.

### *Privilege*

Ultimately, it will be the House making that decision. If the House decides to proceed with it, then, of course, the standing committee would do all the investigation work. In other words, it is not up to the Speaker to do all that but just to choose to give this question the priority that we believe it deserves. Perhaps the government House leader is afraid of what answers might come tumbling out when officials and others start getting cross-examined at committee.

Let us not lose sight of the burden that my colleague has to establish here, that is, a prima facie case. *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, at page 142, refers to such a case as being “on the first impression or at first glance”.

*Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, second edition, at page 221, says:

A prima facie case of privilege in the parliamentary sense is one where the evidence on its face as outlined by the Member is sufficiently strong for the House to be asked to debate the matter and to send it to a committee to investigate whether the privileges of the House have been breached or a contempt has occurred and report to the House

On November 9, 1990, Speaker Fraser, at page 15177 of the Debates, favourably cited the definition of prima facie as “evidence which suffices for the proof of a particular fact until contradicted and overcome by other evidence”. This is found at page 1071 of *Black's Law Dictionary*, fifth edition. The Globe and Mail report has neither been contradicted nor overcome. It has, in fact, been established by the subsequent and widespread acknowledgement of the CSIS report's existence, including by members of the government.

• (1205)

Next, I want to answer the other argument advanced by my counterpart that the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills failed to raise the matter at the earliest opportunity. First, we take members at their word. That is an age-old principle in this House, so if the member says that Tuesday afternoon was the first opportunity he had to raise the matter, then we must accept that fact. I can say from experience, Madam Speaker, that a submission for a question of privilege does not just pop into one's brain. Researching precedents, establishing the facts of the case and putting it together to submit it all take time.

The fact that my colleague was able to do all that within 24 hours, from the time he first learned of the existence of the CSIS report to the time he rose to raise this question, is remarkable. Rather than being used as a flimsy justification to dismiss the question of privilege on a technicality, the timeline is in fact evidence of the seriousness of the situation and the haste with which my colleague brought it to the attention of the Chair.

Second, the fact that the matter was raised the following day is, I would argue, perfectly reasonable in any event, and especially so when we think about the context. For starters, over the course of that 24 hours, the hon. member was able to secure a briefing from senior national security officials. Had he made his intervention on Monday, as the government House leader seems to prefer, it would have been on the basis of uncorroborated allegations, the very other thing that the government House leader claimed distress about. In other words, my colleague did not receive official confirmation that

the report existed until he was briefed by the Prime Minister and his security officials on Tuesday; he raised the question of privilege the very same day.

However, speaking of distress, put yourself in the shoes of our colleague, Madam Speaker. You get a phone call from a reporter asking you to provide comment on an article that is about to run concerning a two-year-old intelligence report on the targeting of you and your family by a brutal Communist dictatorship. You go on to read about the details on the front page of a national newspaper. I do not know about you, Madam Speaker, but my mind would be reeling. The dignity and composure with which our colleague reacted to this news through a measured and thoughtful approach should be commended, not disparaged as the government House leader sought to do.

Last fall, the government House leader urged the procedure and House affairs committee to consider making Parliament a more humane place, where we show compassion for one another. There was, sadly, nothing humane or compassionate about the comments he or his parliamentary secretaries put forward last week about a dictatorship's targeted threats of a colleague.

Third, the interpretation of raising a matter at the earliest opportunity should be, and has been, viewed contextually. It has never been held to require a same-day complaint. There are lots of examples, so let me offer two precedents to bear in mind.

On February 6, 2004, Speaker Milliken, at page 244 of the Debates, made a prima facie finding in an immediate response to a question of privilege raised that morning, the fourth sitting day following the opening of the session. It sought to revive a privilege reference to the procedure and House affairs committee, which prorogation had extinguished. Despite plenty of forewarning and a week to raise it, the delay was not held against the member.

On March 12, 1996, Speaker Parent was asked to rule on a question of privilege regarding a member's October 26, 1995, press release appealing to members of the Canadian Armed Forces to desert in the event of Quebec voting to secede from Canada. In ruling on the matter, which was raised over four months after the press release was issued, the Chair held, at page 562 of the Debates, “The House today is being faced with one of the more serious matters we have been faced with in this 35th Parliament. As a matter of fact, in my view it is so serious that the matter's being raised at the first opportunity, which I have brought up in passing, is moot.”

I dare say that the matter of Beijing's meddling in the Canadian state and democracy, now including votes in the House of Commons, is also one of the most serious matters, if not the most serious matter, discussed in the current Parliament. Indeed, the conversation has stretched across Parliaments when one considers the landmark ruling that the current Speaker made in the last days of the previous Parliament relating to the Winnipeg lab documents concerning fired scientists with links to the Communist regime.

The government's argument about delay is equally specious and infuriating, but should it constitute grounds for you, Madam Speaker, to dismiss my colleague's question of privilege, it will surely give the House a lot to think about. Those arguments are almost demeaning to your intelligence, frankly, and it is disturbing to think that ministers even believe they could try to convince you to provide cover for them over one of the most serious threats to come before this House on the flimsiest of technical grounds.

Although I have confidence in you, Madam Speaker, being able to see through the government House leader's representations, I simply could not allow them to go unanswered.

• (1210)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I do appreciate the additional information from the hon. opposition House leader, and we will be taking that into consideration as the decision to respond is made.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS NO. 25—PROCEEDINGS ON BILL C-21

**Hon. Omar Alhabra (for the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons)** moved:

That, notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-21, An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms), be disposed of as follows:

(a) it be an instruction to the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, that during its consideration of the bill, the committee be granted the power to expand its scope, including that it applies to all proceedings that have taken place prior to the adoption of this order, to:

- (i) address unlawfully manufactured, unserialized and untraceable firearms, electronic in nature or otherwise, including their parts, that can be purchased online and/or assembled at home by amending the Criminal Code and the Firearms Act,
- (ii) address the illegal acquisition of cartridge magazines by requiring a Possession and Acquisition License to purchase cartridge magazines,
- (iii) amend the definition of "prohibition order" and provisions relating to prohibition orders (sections 109 and 110) to include prohibiting a person from possessing any firearm, crossbow, prohibited weapon, restricted weapon, prohibited device, firearms part, ammunition, prohibited ammunition, or explosive substance, or all such things,
- (iv) amend the definition of "prohibited firearm" in the Criminal Code to include a further technical description for an assault-style firearm and criteria that includes any unlawfully manufactured firearms,
- (v) allow for an amendment that will ensure a statutory review of the technical definition proposed in paragraph (iv) above,
- (vi) amend the Criminal Code as it relates to the proposed definition of prohibited firearm,

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(vii) add a definition of "firearm part", which means to include a barrel for a firearm, a slide for a handgun and any other prescribed part, but does not include, unless otherwise prescribed, a barrel for a firearm or a slide for a handgun if that barrel or slide is designed exclusively for use on a firearm that is deemed under section 84(3) not to be a firearm,

(vii.1) add new offences, and exceptions to the offences, relating to a firearm part or relating to computer data and provide for their enforcement and provide for the court to impose restrictions in relation to firearm parts;

(vii.2) expand the concept of orders under section 117.011 to include orders in respect of access to a firearm part,

(viii) add a new definition of "semi-automatic", which, in respect of a firearm, means that the firearm to include a firearm that is equipped with a mechanism that, following the discharge of a cartridge, automatically operates to complete any part of the reloading cycle necessary to prepare for the discharge of the next cartridge,

(ix) add a non-derogation clause affirming the rights enshrined under section 35 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms,

(x) allow for the addition of a regulation-making authority and definition respecting unregulated firearms,

(xi) make any consequential or technical amendments;

(b) during consideration of the bill by the committee:

(i) the committee shall have the first priority for the use of House resources for committee meetings,

(ii) amendments filed by independent members shall be deemed to have been proposed during the clause-by-clause consideration of the bill,

(iii) not more than 20 minutes be allotted for debate on any clause or any amendment moved, to be divided to a maximum of five minutes per party, unless unanimous consent is granted to extend debate on a specific amendment, and at the expiry of the time provided for debate on an amendment, the Chair shall put every question to dispose of the amendment, forthwith and successively without further debate,

(iv) the committee shall meet between 3:30 p.m. and midnight on the two further days following the adoption of this order,

(v) if the committee has not completed the clause-by-clause consideration of the bill by 11:59 p.m. on the second day, all remaining amendments submitted to the committee shall be deemed moved, the Chair shall put the question, forthwith and successively without further debate on all remaining clauses and amendments submitted to the committee as well as each and every question necessary to dispose of the clause-by-clause consideration of the bill, and the committee shall not adjourn the meeting until it has disposed of the bill,

(vi) a member of the committee may report the bill to the House by depositing it with the Acting Clerk of the House, who shall notify the House leaders of the recognized parties and independent members, and if the House stands adjourned, the report shall be deemed to have been duly presented to the House during the previous sitting for the purpose of Standing Order 76.1(1);

(c) not more than one sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration of the bill at report stage and on that day the ordinary hour of daily adjournment shall be midnight, and, not later than 11:59 p.m. or when no member rises to speak, whichever is earlier, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the bill shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment;

(d) not more than one sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration of the bill at the third reading stage and on that day the ordinary hour of daily adjournment shall be midnight, and that, not later than 11:59 p.m. or when no member rises to speak, whichever is earlier, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the bill shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment; and

(e) on the sitting days the bill is considered at report stage and the third reading stage, after 6:30 p.m., no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair.

*Government Orders*

• (1220)

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are gathered on the traditional, unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people. I would also like to acknowledge the impact colonization has had on indigenous peoples, with overincarceration and overrepresentation in the foster care system, and the impact it has had on missing and murdered indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people.

I am pleased to begin debate today on the motion before the House and speak about the importance not only of this motion but of passing Bill C-21 in a timely manner.

Last week, we introduced a number of important amendments that reflected conversations had across this country with Canadians and indigenous peoples. I will acknowledge that we needed to step back and ensure that we got Bill C-21 right, and the time we took was important to do that.

We have introduced a new amendment to ensure that we do not derogate from the section 35 charter rights of indigenous peoples. We have introduced a technical definition to prohibit firearms that inflict the most casualties in the least amount of time, while respecting hunters, as well as a suite of measures to address the rise of ghost guns.

It has been clear since the bill was first introduced that the Conservative Party had no interest—

[*Translation*]

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

The hon. member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia on a point of order.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud:** Madam Speaker, we are not getting any interpretation in French.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** We are having problems with the interpretation.

[*English*]

It is working now. Perfect.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Madam Speaker, it has been clear since the bill was first introduced that the Conservative Party had no interest in advancing this transformational legislation. Rather than asking relevant questions of officials, last week Conservative members of the committee spent over three hours of the committee's time parroting the speaking points of the gun lobby. In addition to their previous obstruction tactics, this made it clear that the committee was going to be bogged down with unnecessary delays and that it would take not months but years, at that pace, to see the bill reported back to the House.

In fact, the NDP member for New Westminster—Burnaby asked twice for unanimous consent to add 20 hours to the clause-by-clause study of the bill and was twice denied by the Conservative Party. I did the calculation. We are meeting for three hours at the public safety committee tomorrow. In this motion, we are seeking

eight and a half hours for two days, which is the equivalent of the committee meeting until June 15 if we were to hold regular meetings.

Non-partisan government officials received death threats due to their appearance at committee as they provided technical advice on the bill, which underscores why it is critical to complete clause-by-clause promptly.

That is why this motion is important today. When I talk about death threats and intimidation, that is something I have been subject to from the gun lobby since 2019, when I first spoke out during the debate on Bill C-71. I have received threats and intimidation, and these are a lot more than “mean tweets”, as the Canadian Coalition for Firearm Rights calls them. Twice my riding was targeted by the gun lobby, when it visited my riding in 2019 and 2021, and twice the constituents of Oakville North—Burlington have stood up for gun control and the work that we are doing in this House and sent me back to Ottawa in spite of the intimidation tactics that the gun lobby has tried to use against me.

Working in this place as an MP is a privilege I do not take lightly. I have had the opportunity to work on many issues since I was elected, and one that I am most proud of is the actions our government has taken to prevent gun violence. I was elected to this place for the first time in 2015. When one is elected as an MP, a number of things happen very quickly. One learns about the functioning of the House, as one of 338 Canadians who have the privilege to take a seat at the centre of democracy. I was not expecting to be placed on the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, but I am grateful every day that this is where the whip chose to put me. I have worked hard to learn the file and advocate on difficult subjects, knowing that the issues the public safety committee deals with are ones that fundamentally shape our country, and that our work on it is fundamentally about building a better, safer and fairer Canada: questions surrounding systemic racism and the oversight of law enforcement; how to build a corrections system that upholds human rights and prioritizes rehabilitation; implementing needed safeguards to protect our national security from hostile foreign actors; and, yes, gun control.

Today, as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and as a member of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security since 2016, I would like to share the context of where we were, where we are now, where we can go with the passage of Bill C-21, and why it is important to expand the scope of the bill and pass it in a timely matter.

*Government Orders*

In 2019, Bill C-71, an act to amend certain acts and regulations in relation to firearms, received royal assent. Through Bill C-71, our government introduced mandatory lifetime background checks for anyone who applies for a licence to purchase and own firearms, increasing the previous regime from a five-year background check. It also updated the Firearms Act to the modern age by requiring the chief firearms officer to look at a firearms licence applicant's online behaviour for signs of violence when making a determination on whether an individual is eligible to hold a licence. The legislation also required people in businesses to have proof that they are selling non-restricted firearms only to those who are lawfully licensed to possess one. It ensured that when a court issues a prohibition against a person from owning a firearm, the weapon is forfeited to the Crown, instead of giving an individual the ability to give the firearms to a friend or family member. This ensures that those who should not have access to firearms do not.

These measures improved public safety and ensured that those who enjoy the privilege of firearm ownership meet the test of a rigorous licensing regime. At the time, the Conservatives delayed the bill at committee and eventually voted against it in the House.

● (1225)

While many refuse to talk about it, gun control is a women's issue. The Canadian Women's Foundation notes that the presence of firearms in Canadian households is the single greatest risk factor for the lethality of intimate partner violence. Access to a firearm increases the likelihood of femicide by 500%. The Ontario coroner's death review panel said that 26% of women who were killed by their partner were killed using a firearm.

In speaking with groups like the Lethbridge YWCA, they have told me that every single woman who came to their shelter had been threatened by a partner with a firearm. These are among the nearly 2,500 women victimized in this way over the past five years. Intimate partner violence accounts for nearly 30% of all police-reported violent crime in Canada. That number has risen during the pandemic. In my riding and across the country, local organizations like Halton Women's Place are helping shine a brighter light on the dangers of gun violence.

Over the last eight years, we as a country have also become more aware of the role that coercive control plays in abusive relationships. When we add firearms to the mix, it is a recipe for continued physical, emotional and psychological abuse. In fact, coercive control, when a man uses a gun to control women without ever pulling the trigger, is real and happening right now.

An Oakville resident sent me an email that stated, "Let me just say that you can endure the physical and emotional abuse, but when he pulls out a double-barrelled shotgun, loads it and tells you he is going to kill you, then you know true terror! Thank you for looking out for the victims before they become statistics."

Our government has been advocating, and will continue to advocate, for women, and through Bill C-21, we would be taking additional steps to support survivors of intimate partner violence who have been threatened with or on the receiving end of violence with a firearm.

Bill C-21 would introduce new red and yellow flag laws, allowing courts to remove guns from and suspend the licence of people who pose a danger to themselves or others and would ensure that those individuals subject to a protection order have their firearms licence revoked. Bill C-21 would mark an important next step in removing guns from the hands of abusive partners.

In addition to the creation of these new red flag provisions, Public Safety Canada will establish a program to help raise awareness among victims about how to use the newly proposed provisions and protections. A guide about how to submit an application to the courts and the protections available could be developed, and the program could fund services to support individuals' applications throughout the court process. It would support vulnerable and marginalized groups, including women, people with mental health issues, indigenous groups and other racialized communities, to make certain that the red flag laws would be accessible to all, particularly those who may need it most.

The government will make available \$5 million through a contribution program to ensure support and equitable access.

Enhanced licensing and the creation of additional tools for survivors of intimate partner violence is just one way our government would implement stringent gun control that prioritizes public safety, while still respecting those who own and use firearms.

I would like to take a moment to take us back to April 2020 and the tragedy that unfolded in Portapique, Nova Scotia, where 22 innocent lives were lost over the course of a weekend rampage. We were all shocked and heartbroken. As we learned the identities of the victims of these terrible crimes, we were reminded of the tragic impact that gun violence could have on all of our communities, urban and rural, from coast to coast to coast. Mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, friends and neighbours were taken from us in a terrible violent way, and far too soon.

Gun violence is not a new thing in our society, but it is made all the more deadly with the proliferation of firearms that are more powerful than ever before. Assault-style firearms, those that were not designed for hunting or sport shooting, have become more and more prevalent in our Canadian retail market. For as long as these guns have existed, they have been capable of inflicting tremendous damage when they fall into the wrong hands.

● (1230)

For decades, chiefs of police, advocacy groups, grieving families and everyday Canadians have called for a ban on these types of firearms, guns that were designed to kill people, intended in their purpose to kill people in the fastest time, and have been used in Canada to kill innocent people.

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Canadians have been calling upon successive governments for reform, for stronger gun control. In May 2020, we took additional action through an order in council to ban over 1,500 models of assault-style firearms, including the AR-15.

As retired U.S. Major General Paul Eaton has said, “For all intents and purposes, the AR-15 and rifles like it are weapons of war.” These weapons were designed for the battlefield and have no place on Canadian streets.

Through Bill C-21, we are building on the work done in 2020 to offer a prospective technical definition to ensure that in addition to the weapons banned in 2020, no future similar weapons would ever be able to make it into the Canadian market. It responds to recommendations of the Mass Casualty Commission.

Doctors for Protection from Guns called the definition “A victory for science, public health, and Canadian values...to permanently ban future models of assault weapons.”

Dr. Najma Ahmed said, “As a trauma surgeon I can say there is no greater damage done to the human body than that from semi-automatic assault weapons. I invite any Member of Parliament who denies this reality to join me in the operating room.”

This scoping motion before us today would ensure that this technical definition could be included in Bill C-21.

That brings us to where we are today. Bill C-21 puts forward some of the strongest gun control measures in over 40 years. These new measures include implementing a national freeze on hand guns to prevent individuals from bringing newly acquired hand guns into Canada and from buying, selling and transferring hand guns within the country, a freeze which through regulations has been in effect since October 2022; taking away the firearms licenses of those involved in acts of domestic violence or criminal harassment, such as stalking; and fighting gun smuggling and trafficking by increasing criminal penalties, providing more tools for law enforcement to investigate firearms crimes and strengthening border security measures.

Over 75% of firearm deaths in our country are by suicide, and there are provisions in the bill to help medical professionals and others ensure that firearms do not remain in the hands of those who are a danger to themselves or others.

The new amendments that are outlined in the scoping motion before us include tackling ghost guns, guns that are privately manufactured, or 3-D printed. This is probably one of the most important things we can do for law enforcement in Bill C-21 to support them with the emerging prevalence of ghost guns.

Members of the public safety committee visited the RCMP gun vault and were able to see how quick and easy it was for criminals to 3-D print firearms illegally. Police services across the country have told me how worried they are about ghost guns infiltrating our communities.

Investigators like Michael Rowe of the Vancouver Police Department, who appeared at our committee during our study on guns and gangs, emphasized the need to create legislative solutions to address this gap so police would have the tools to apprehend those creating these ghost guns.

During his appearance at committee, Inspector Rowe said:

...one of the trends we're seeing out here in Vancouver right now is the use of privately made firearms or “ghost guns”. During the gang conflict, we're seeing more ghost guns, specifically in the hands of people who are involved in active murder conspiracies or people who are believed to be working as hired contract killers. Ghost guns can be 3-D printed or modified from what's called a Polymer80 handgun...

Modern 3-D printing materials can produce a durable firearm, capable of shooting hundreds of rounds without a failure. For example, one of my teams recently completed an investigation in which we executed search warrants on a residential home. Inside this home, we located a sophisticated firearms manufacturing operation capable of producing 3-D printed firearms. They had firearm suppressors and they were completing airsoft conversions—converting airsoft pistols into fully functioning firearms.

The amendments before us in Bill C-21 are in direct response to Inspector Rowe's ask, which was:

...I'd respectfully like to submit that a potential solution would be to bring in legislative remedies to regulate the possession, sale and importation of firearms parts such as barrels, slides and trigger assemblies. This type of legislation would give us, the police, the necessary tools to be able to seize these items, get active enforcement action and more effectively target the manufacturing of privately made firearms.

● (1235)

Our proposed amendments to Bill C-21 would do just that.

Police services across the country are sounding the alarm on this problem, and the amendments we are introducing to address ghost guns is another reason Bill C-21 is such an essential piece of legislation that would increase our public safety.

I would like to share the words of Noor Samiei. Noor was there that night at the Danforth shooting. She lost of best friend, Reese Fallon. Noor, Reese and their friends had graduated high school and were out to celebrate Noor's birthday with friends.

Here are Noor's words:

“What started off as a night of excitement in celebrating my 18th birthday ended in sheer horror and misery. It has been almost five years since the Danforth shooting, and I still struggle to find the words to speak about what my friends and I experienced that night.”

“There will never be enough words to adequately convey how beautiful Reese was. As cliché as it sounds, she was unlike anyone I've ever met before.”



“Another word for friendship is love. Friendship is one of the sweetest and most purest forms of love. Reese was love personified. She radiated so much light and shined so bright in any room she stepped foot in. She had a love so strong that nothing or no one could take that away.”

“While some may argue we were in the wrong place at the wrong time, it does not take away from the fact that it was a legally imported handgun that was later stolen from a gun shop in Saskatchewan. That's why legislation is vital and crucial.”

Canadians are calling on us to take action.

Bill C-21 would save lives, because the status quo is not good enough for Canadians. The status quo led to people like Reese not being here today. The status quo led to the slaughter of women at Polytechnique, the shooting rampage in Nova Scotia, the devastating taking of life at Dawson College and the mosque in Quebec City. The status quo has led to firearms deaths from coast to coast to coast.

In my religion, we are taught that the gift of grace has been given to us by God so that we may give it to others, even if we do not think they deserve it.

We do not deserve Noor's grace, but we are given it anyway.

Let us do something with that gift. Let us pass this motion before us, so we can efficiently deal with Bill C-21 in committee and the House and save lives.

• (1240)

**Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would point out a few things in the member's speech. All along, this party across has been trying to crackdown on illegal firearms coming in across the border. We have been trying to deal with criminals and keeping those guns out of the hands of criminals.

The Liberal Party stands up and says that it is doing great things, but meanwhile it is lessening consequences for firearms-related crimes. I think many Canadians have seen this is a hypocritical thing to so-call crackdown on firearms when, on the other hand, it lessens consequences for firearms crimes.

The question I am going to ask the member is about something she said in her speech. She referred to shotguns. We have already found out that Liberals have been trying to ban hunting rifles, shotguns, etc. She alluded to the fact that shotguns were bad. For clarity, I want to know from the party opposite, are you trying to ban all firearms in Canada?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I want to remind the member he is to address the questions through the Chair.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Madam Speaker, I would encourage the hon. member to read the bill, because there are two provisions in the bill, Bill C-21, that would increase the penalties for firearms crimes from 10 years to 14 years.

It is ludicrous to say that the government is trying to ban all firearms. In fact, we took the time to ensure what we were putting

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in the bill was respectful of hunters and indigenous peoples, but by the same token keeping Canadians safe from the kinds of firearms that were designed for the battlefield. There is a difference between what hunters are using and what is being used in the battlefield. To conflate the two, as the Conservative Party and the hon. member do, is unfair to Canadians.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Madam Speaker, in a few days, it will be one year since the government introduced Bill C-21. One year is usually enough time for the government and the opposition parties to debate a bill.

That is not what happened with Bill C-21. The regular debate was held in the House, then the bill was referred to committee. After consulting with experts, the government proposed new amendments on assault weapons. Not everyone was on board, because the government did not communicate its intention properly and withdrew its amendments in February. That left the government 13 weeks before it came back here with another amendment, which it proposed last week.

During those 13 weeks, we could have debated Bill C-21 and amended it in committee, but we did not because the government was not ready. A week after proposing its new amendments, the government is asking us to limit debate on Bill C-21.

Does my colleague agree that the only one responsible for the fact that we still have not passed Bill C-21 is the government, which is unable to work for the people?

[*English*]

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Madam Speaker, I would remind the House that last week the NDP asked twice for unanimous consent to add an additional 20 hours of committee time for this week and were denied twice by the Conservative Party.

My hon. colleague, the member for New Westminster—Burnaby, calculated that at the rate we were going, it would be October of 2026 before we would be able to complete the study of the bill. It is obvious that there is obstruction of the bill at committee, and that is why we are moving this motion today.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I was glad to hear that the parliamentary secretary started her remarks with an acknowledgement of indigenous communities, because they led the way, with the Assembly of First Nations, in fighting against the amendments the government brought in at the eleventh hour. I am glad to see that those amendments were withdrawn. I would also thank committee members for passing my amendment to save the sport of airsoft. We have had a lot of very positive correspondence from that community, which is glad to see that the government will go back to the drawing board on this.

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By my calculation, after tomorrow's meeting, the committee will have had eight hours on clause-by-clause. If this motion passes, there will be an additional 17 hours, which will be the equivalent of 12.5 meetings. By comparison, Bill C-18 only had seven meetings. I think there will be enough time to get this bill through.

Could the parliamentary secretary talk about the other bills that are waiting their turn at the public safety committee, like Bill C-20 and Bill C-26, and how important it is to look at those bills?

• (1245)

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Madam Speaker, we miss the member on the committee, although we welcome his colleague. His contributions to this bill have been important and he is absolutely right.

Waiting in line at the public safety committee is Bill C-20, a bill that would provide important oversight for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canada Border Services Agency, something that, for many years, has been called for to enhance that oversight for the RCMP, but also provide oversight for CBSA for the very first time.

In addition to that, we have Bill C-26, which deals with cybersecurity. The member is absolutely correct. We have two important bills waiting, but we cannot get to them until we finish Bill C-21.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I want to mention one thing for the hon. parliamentary secretary about the motion so it is on the record. It is a small complaint, but it matters. It is the reference to how we will go forward over the next number of days. It refers to independent members but no where does it refer to Green Party members. I do not imagine that the intent of the motion is to leave us out, but I just draw attention to the fact that we are not independents, and I do have amendments before the committee.

My specific question for the parliamentary secretary is about what this bill would do now to deal with the SKS semi-automatic rifles that have a 7.62 mm dimension. The rifle, with an extended magazine, was the type of gun used on June 28, 2022, in what was not actually a bank robbery in my riding. It was an attempt to kill as many policemen as possible as fast as possible. Thank God none of the police officers who were wounded, many seriously, died, but six officers were in hospital following this devastating attack, some for months.

I wonder if we can get these weapons off the street. Many innocent people are killed and wounded, including police officers.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the work that she has done over the years on this issue.

With regard to her specific question on the SKS, that was one of the firearms that was included on the list, which has been withdrawn from the bill. However, the minister has indicated that we are reconstituting the Canadian firearms advisory council. That council will take a look at those 482 firearms to determine in an independent way those that we should not move forward with and provide advice to the government.

We have seen how politicized and divisive this debate has become. We are asking a non-partisan, independent advisory committee to take a look at these firearms and to provide us advice on how

we should be moving forward. The one the member mentioned, in particular, is one of the ones it would be looking at.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I was glad to hear the hon. member in her speech refer to the Vancouver Police Department and the concerns it has expressed about ghost guns. One of the things that is really important in my community is that we address the proliferation of these ghost guns, which are being seen more and more in criminal activity.

What delays would be caused and what are the consequences of not moving forward with dealing with the very important issue of ghost guns, which affects all of our communities in urban and rural Canada?

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Madam Speaker, the hon. member has raised a very important point. Until this bill is passed, the police do not have the tools they need to deal effectively with ghost guns, and lives are being lost. These guns are cheap to manufacture and there are limited tools available to the police. The sooner we can get this bill passed, the sooner lives would be saved, because we would give police services not only in Vancouver but across the country the tools they need.

We would be ahead of organized crime and gangs by passing this legislation and giving the police the tools they need to deal with these guns.

• (1250)

**Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am very happy to be talking today. I take that back, I am not very happy to be talking today in the House of Commons on the circumvention of the democratic process and the very important discussion we are having on Bill C-21. I have a lot to say about the many amendments that were being discussed on Bill C-21, and I may not have the right to talk about those, other than in a very limited way at committee, if this time allocation motion passes today.

I want to put on the record what we are really talking about.

The Prime Minister has made his true agenda very clear to Canadians very recently, in the last four months, while we have been having this discussion on Bill C-21 and the Liberal effort to expand it to be the largest hunting-rifle ban in Canadian history. When the Prime Minister was pressed about this after enormous backlash from the hunting, sport shooting, farming and indigenous communities, he did admit that taking hunting rifles away was the goal when he said, "Our focus now is on saying okay, there are some guns, yes, that we're going to have to take away from people who were using them to hunt".

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The Prime Minister said it himself. He has let Canadians know what his true intentions are, and so no matter what the Liberals talk about, no matter what slogans, quick words or terminology they want to use, make up or pull out of thin air, he has made it very clear that the Liberal government, in partnership with the NDP and the Bloc Québécois, are going after firearms used to hunt by Canadian hunters, farmers and indigenous Canadians. There is a lot to talk about today, but, again, I would underline what the motion would do if passed.

The discussion at committee that we are having about Bill C-21, now that the Liberals have let us resume the process on Bill C-21 discussion at committee, is proceeding quite well. We have done almost half the amendments, and there are many amendments, in just two meetings. Considering how contentious this is, that is record time.

Also, considering the Liberals reintroduced a so-called “new definition” to the previous version, which is almost the same, really put shockwaves through the firearms community in Canada. Members could imagine that our scrutiny as opposition parties is very high, and so it is quite miraculous that we have actually managed to get through that and half of the amendments for Bill C-21, which amounts to inches of paperwork. The bill would impact 2.3 million gun owners, their families, their communities, hundreds of millions of dollars in our economy and tens of thousands of jobs, not to mention centuries of culture and heritage in Canada. It is surprising that the parties worked so well at committee, and we have gone over almost half of the amendments in only two meetings, which is quite surprising. So, why the need for the motion before us?

Well, it is very interesting. Part of the work that we have been doing at committee is to, of course, heavily scrutinize Bill C-21, and the very sneaky and underhanded amendments that the Liberals introduced at the 11th hour of committee back in, I believe, November 2022, which was when everything blew up about Bill C-21. Hunters, farmers and indigenous Canadians saw the true feelings of this government, which is that it would come after hundreds of their firearms.

Remember, Bill C-21 is supposed to be the so-called “handgun ban”, which it is not really, but the Liberals expanded it to banning hunting rifles and many hundreds of long guns. Of course, Conservatives, right off the bat, said, “Well, that is not in the scope of the bill.” We went to vote at committee to rule it out of scope and to kick this part out of Bill C-21 for good. However, the NDP teamed up with the Liberals and voted down that out-of-scope vote. We could have stopped this right at the beginning if not for the NDP. Of course, its members are working very closely with the Liberals and their true agenda to take away firearms from hunters, sport shooters, farmers and indigenous Canadians.

Then, I think the NDP was having some remorse. Obviously, in their rural and northern communities, there was significant backlash. I know for a fact that the NDP member from northern Ontario got a lot of backlash. The NDP sort of moved to almost wanting to rule this out of scope, which we appreciated and the hunters appreciated. Now they have completely backtracked, despite almost the exact same definition coming in, but it is actually much worse, which I will talk about in a minute.

Again, Conservatives, in our diligence, at committee last week moved to rule this out of scope again, because the bill is not about long guns, it is not about banning hunting rifles. Yet, the Liberals, working with the NDP, are trying very hard to make that within the scope of the bill. They voted that down yet again. So, it is very convenient to have today's time allocation motion, which is very long and talks about a lot of things.

● (1255)

In essence, what is really important to remember is that this will expand the scope of the bill. They are retroactively expanding the scope of Bill C-21 so that we cannot have it ruled out of scope. Of course, as a last-ditch effort there was a parliamentary procedure we could have tried. That would have been to go right to the Speaker to rule this out of scope of Bill C-21. Considering he represents a rural riding with tons of hunters, sport shooters and farmers, I would imagine he would have considered it, especially considering that we are right and it certainly is outside the scope. I find it very convenient that that is part of the objective of today's motion. It is within the scope. That eliminate all options for us to have it ruled out of scope. No longer do we have any parliamentary procedure left to have this ruled out of scope. It is very important for people to understand that.

This is a nuclear option. This is what happens when committees go awry and there are hours of filibusters with nothing moving. That is all that was happening at committees last week. We went through half of the amendments in a highly contentious bill at only two meetings; two meetings, which is pretty impressive by every measure that I have seen in my time as a parliamentarian. There is no reason for this at all. In fact, the NDP member at committee has spoken more than almost anybody in the last two meetings.

It does not really make sense why the Liberals are trying to forcibly limit debate the way they are doing it. If this passes at committee, we will only have five minutes to ask any questions about each clause. If people ever watch me, which I know a lot of people interested in this have, we have to ask the officials questions and ask for clarification.

Again, this impacts 2.3 million gun owners, their families and hundreds of millions of dollars of the economy; tens of thousands of jobs, centuries of culture and heritage in Canada, so the idea that we would limit debate so severely is very concerning to us, especially since we have been enacting in good faith and have gone through half of the amendments in two meetings. I cannot stress that enough.

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I was very surprised to see this over the weekend. I have to be honest that it was a real slap in the face to the work that we have been doing at committee. If we wanted to drag it out, we could still be talking about that definition. There are so many ambiguities in that so-called new definition we could easily be talking about that still, yet we had our questions. We recognized that there are other things to talk about at committee. It is the public safety committee and we are in a public safety crisis in this country because of repeat violent offenders that the Liberals keep letting out of jail. I will talk about that later.

There are so many things we should be talking about at the public safety and national security committee so we are moving along. This is what we get; a real lesson to me about working together at committee. I have learned my lesson today about giving any benefit of the doubt or acting in good faith at all. Obviously, it is upsetting because we have been working hard at committee and doing our due diligence. This is what we get: forcing the elimination of proper debate and scrutiny on Bill C-21 amendments that impact millions of people. I think I have harped on that enough. Maybe I will come back to it later.

Let us talk about this new definition. It is really not new. It is just almost like lipstick on a pig, for the lack of a better expression.

I will outline the old definition. It said a firearm that is “a rifle or a shotgun that is capable of discharging centre-fire ammunition in a semi-automatic manner and that is designed to accept a detachable cartridge magazine with a capacity greater than five cartridges of the type for which the firearm was originally designed.” That was the original definition. That was clause G4. If folks have heard of G4, that was G4, along with a number of other things from the May 2020 OIC, which we are all very familiar with. It was also provided in a very short order, in a very sneaky, underhanded way, with clause G46, which folks will remember was hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of pages long and looked to ban an additional, almost 500, long guns. That is where the infamous SKS is found, which is very popular with hunters and indigenous. Again, that list was massive. It was about three inches thick. They dropped that in a very sneaky and underhanded way, along with this definition.

Months went by. There was a massive uproar with hundreds of thousands of phone calls, letters and social media posts from the firearms community across Canada. The Liberals, for once, relented and withdrew G46 and G4. I have never seen that before. That was actually quite shocking. I have never seen them back down on anything before. That was round one, as we found out.

Round two, here we are yet again with almost no change. Actually, I would argue that it is worse now. I will tell the House why.

● (1300)

I just read the old definition. This is the new one. The definition includes a firearm “that is not a handgun that discharges centrefire ammunition”, which was mentioned before, “in a semi-automatic manner”, which was also mentioned before, “and that was originally designed with a detachable magazine with a capacity of six cartridges or more.” There are weasel word changes there, but they are very subtle. The reason they mention a firearm that is not a handgun is interesting.

There is more weaselling manoeuvring here. The French translation for what they originally had was “*fusil de chasse*”, which means “hunting rifle”. That was the direct French translation of what the Liberals were trying to ban late last year, but of course there are tens of thousands of hunters, sport shooters and farmers in rural Quebec, which the Bloc forgets, but there are, and they were in an uproar, obviously. Therefore, the government has worked it out so that at least it does not say “hunting rifle” in French, but that is the translation of what it was trying to ban just in November. Let us just be clear about that. The government just switched around the words a bit, which is very interesting.

What is very problematic about this is that the government has mostly boasted or talked at length about how it is not bringing forward the big list, not to worry about the big list and the government is not going to ban those in legislation. That was what the public could scrutinize. There were almost 500 additional rifles and shotguns in there, many of which are very commonly used hunting rifles. There were a lot of them in there and the public could at least see the list. People did see it, and they were shocked at the number of hunting rifles being banned. The government said not to worry, and that it was not bringing forward the list again, just the definition.

However, what the government is doing in a very sneaky, underhanded way seems to be a theme for the government when it comes to banning hunting rifles, which is by doing it through the back door. The Liberals are bringing forward a firearms advisory committee, and they keep referring to it. When asked about the SKS, for example, which does not technically fall under this definition but was on the original list, the Liberals have as much as told us that the firearms advisory committee will look to ban that. The minister has said that and the parliamentary secretary has referred to that. Immediately, when asked about the SKS, the answer is that the firearms advisory committee will be looking at that.

What is this firearms advisory committee? The Liberals are saying it is a non-partisan group of experts they are putting together. We have heard that before. The Liberals have had similar advisory committees for firearms, and they have had some of the biggest anti-gun groups in the country on the so-called advisory committee they had before, in a previous iteration. Therefore, I do not trust for one minute that there are going to be advocates for lawful firearm ownership for hunters, sport shooters, farmers and indigenous Canadians in this regard and from this perspective on that committee. Not for one minute do I trust that this is going to be the case.

The Liberals keep referring to that committee whenever we ask about the SKS. Therefore, to me, it is very clear. In the language that was used just today in the House was very telling. The member said that they will take a look at that, referring to the SKS, and the 482 firearms to decide which ones to move forward with. When the member was asked about the SKS, she would be referring to the firearms committee. She was talking about deciding which ones to move forward with banning.

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Again, it is very sneaky because there is no list we can scrutinize. It is just some unelected body. The firearms advisory committee would be a committee of so-called experts, which we know will be partisan anti-gun groups from the country. They will be coming up with lists to ban, so this is worse than what we had before because now we cannot see the list. It is likely not even going to be announced. It is just going to be a new list added to the OIC or some other version of it, and people will find out somehow down the road what they can no longer own. It is a very arbitrary list, indeed.

I will remind folks that, in May 2020, after the worst mass shooting and worst mass killing in Canadian history, in the hours and days following that, when people had not had the chance to bury their loved ones or properly mourn the people who had been lost by that vile, sick killer, the government was scheming to bring forward the May 2020 OIC. It did, and there were 1,500 long guns that were banned in the cloak of darkness during the middle of the pandemic, as it had hit Canada just a month and a half prior. The government banned that and has subsequently added 400 more long guns to that over the last couple of years. Then, in November, there were another almost 500 added on.

The Liberals are not going to stop. If we were to ask any Liberal if this is going to be the last firearm ban they are going to bring forward, I would be shocked if any of them said yes because, again, this firearms committee is going to be bringing forward tons more firearms to ban. The Liberals keep referring to the committee when we ask about the SKS, which is a ubiquitous hunting gun in this country, so I do not trust them at all.

Again, we have been acting in good faith, and here we are with this time allocation motion to limit democratic debate.

• (1305)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Vancouver Granville is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed:** Madam Speaker, the hon. member noted that she was dealing with the criteria. She has ignored one important criteria that seeks to take the conversation—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** This is debate and not a point of order. I would remind the hon. member that he will have an opportunity to ask questions and make comments, depending on how many people rise to be recognized.

The hon. member for Kildonan—St. Paul.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Madam Speaker, I will remind the Liberal member that, if he is looking to throw me off, he is severely underestimating me, just like many a man before him. I have a lot to say, and I will be here for quite some time, so hopefully he is hydrated and fed because he is going to be waiting a long time.

I have more to say on the announcement last week, which was impacted by Bill C-21. The minister at the same time announced the firearms advisory committee, the so-called new definition, but with the old definition, but sneakier.

He also announced that there is going to be something about a permanent alteration to magazines, which we have already, but the way he worded it would signify to me that there is going to be a change in what that means. When we tried to ask about it at com-

mittee, we did not get any answers because apparently it was not technically within Bill C-21, but he announced it at the same time he was talking about the bill. The Liberals and officials would not answer our question, but what was taken from that in the firearms community is that the permanent alteration of magazines would go a step further than what is being done now and would impact many a firearm that really is Grandpa Joe's hunting rifle.

For example, the Lee Enfield, is a very popular firearm. It was the British firearm until about the 1950s. It is well made and has been passed down through generations. It is made completely from wood stock and is exactly what we would think of and picture when we think about Grandpa Joe going out to hunt deer. However, one cannot permanently alter the magazine capabilities of that firearm without destroying it. There is no way. Therefore, is the minister now saying that he is going to destroy the Lee Enfield? He will not answer. I have urged people to write to the minister to ask him about that because he will not answer our questions, nor will the Liberals on the public safety committee.

I will also note that the tubular magazine hunting rifle, where the bullet goes right into the tube because there is no magazine, as in the image the Liberals are trying to bring forward, is an old school, 1800s-level technology. For example, the Winchester 1873, I think it is called, is a tubular magazine firearm that holds seven to 14 cartridges or bullets. It cannot be altered in any way, as that would destroy the firearm.

These are heirloom firearms. I am pretty sure my grandfather had one in the closet for when coyotes would try to get into the chicken coop. That is how old school these firearms are. There are hundreds of versions of these in rural Canada. It is owned by collectors, and certainly by hunters and indigenous Canadians. If the SKS is popular in indigenous communities, so too is the Lee Enfield, so why would the Liberals not be clear on what they are talking about with respect to these permanent alterations to magazines? Why are they being so cagey about that? Is it because they do not know? Is it ignorance, or are they hiding something? I do not know.

I have given them the benefit of the doubt before. However, here we are, and they are forcing an end to the democratic discussion and scrutiny that is needed on this bill at committee today, so I really do not trust anything they are about to say on that, if they say anything at all, because they have refused to answer my questions and our questions at the public safety committee about the Lee Enfield and tubular magazine long guns.

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While this has been going on, and we have heard so much about this, the Liberals are attacking us, particularly me. I suppose it is because I have been the lead on firearms. They talk about the Conservatives more in their announcements than they talk about the crime that is wreaking havoc in our communities, which they are not doing a lot about.

I want to say that I know this debate is very heated and very personal to people on all sides. I have always done my best to lead this discussion from our perspective, from a professional and authentic standpoint, and what really shocked me was last week, or it might have been the week before, when the minister was announcing phase one of his so-called buyback, which I will get to. He said, in essence, that Conservatives were at fault and bear some of the responsibility for the abuse the Liberals are getting from what they say are gun owners. I have no idea, as I have not seen that.

It is interesting that they talk about it as if we have not received any abuse from people who do not agree with our position. I can tell members that I have certainly received very threatening abuse for the position we have taken. I am the lead on this file. I have received many threats and have been concerned for my safety in this debate, so I was very offended when I heard them trying to blame Conservatives, particularly me because I am the lead in this regard, when I have not been spared or kept from any of that abuse myself.

● (1310)

I am undeterred. I will continue on. I will not be bullied into silence on this. However, just to be clear, the rhetoric from the Liberals is trumping up a lot of hate toward me and others on this side of the House as well. I do not like talking about it. We do not want copycats. We do not want any heroes from these evil, sadistic people, but when I heard something like that, I thought that I had to say something.

I have kept quiet, but I will not stand idly by while the Minister of Public Safety blames me for the abuse he has gotten for his underhanded policies, when I too have suffered abuse because of his rhetoric. I just wanted to put that on the record. I hope to speak to the minister personally about that.

We are talking a lot about firearms. Of course, exclusively, Bill C-21 only impacts, with the so-called handgun freeze or ban, which is really not any of that, people who follow the law. They are the trained, tested and vetted Canadian citizens who are approved by the RCMP to own firearms. Those are really the only people who are impacted by all of these measures since the May 2020 OIC and Bill C-71 before it. It only impacts regular, everyday Canadians who are legally allowed to own firearms. They are heavily vetted Canadians, who are legally allowed to own firearms.

However, the government continues to bring forward measure after measure to attack this group of people. Meanwhile, criminals are running rampant on our streets. I have talked at length about the crime issues. Canadians know full well what has been going on, on public transit and on the streets of Toronto. Everywhere we go in Canada there seems to be horrific headlines of innocent people being attacked by complete strangers who are deranged.

We are facing very serious issues, yet the Liberal budget 2023 really failed to address those violent crime issues. In fact, violent crime was not mentioned once, zero times, in that budget.

Do members know what else was not mentioned once in that budget? Bail reform was not mentioned once in the budget and has not been mentioned in the priorities of that budget from the Minister of Public Safety, despite the fact that every premier of every province and territory in Canada has written two letters to the Prime Minister demanding bail reform because of what is happening in their provinces and territories with crime and repeat violent offenders continuing to get bail and getting back on our streets, hurting Canadians.

When have we ever heard every premier in the country agreeing on a letter? It is very rare. Maybe when they are asking for health care funding, but aside from that, it is a very rare occurrence. There have now been two letters sent to the Prime Minister.

There are also municipal police forces. I just spoke at the big ten police conference, which included every major police association, municipal police forces across the country. I just flew to Calgary last week to speak to them. They are demanding bail reform. Every big city mayor in Ontario is demanding bail reform. While everyone seems to agree on bail reform, there has been no meaningful action or change taken by the Minister of Public Safety on bail reform. I will remind those watching of violent crime in this country, which is up 32% from 2015 to 2021.

When we get to 2022 stats, it will be deeply concerning, I am going to guess that they are going to be way up, just based on the headlines, but they are up 32% between 2015 and 2021. It equates to 124,000 more violent crime incidents per year, which is an insane amount of additional crime that the police are having to deal with, despite police numbers really suffering, which I will talk more about in a minute. We are seeing that crime wave steadily increase, year by year, under the Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety's watch. That is all happening.

On that, bail reform is a huge issue. If we look at Vancouver, there were 6,000 crime incidents, interactions with police, for crime. Of these, 40 people were responsible for 6,000 interactions with police. Those 40 people are sure keeping police busy in Vancouver. These are violent repeat offenders causing havoc on transit, when we walk down the street with one's family and when we are trying to enjoy the parks. There are 40 people causing 6,000 interactions with police in one year, yet there are crickets about bail reform. They say, "Oh, we are meeting and talking about it", but that is all we hear. It has been months.

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• (1315)

In fact, the Victoria police recently put out a news release about a vile rapist who committed 10 sexual assaults with a weapon. Why was he released? The police wanted to make sure the public knew why it was not their fault he was released. At the bottom of the news release, there is a question that asks, "Why was this person released?" I think this is consistent on their news releases, when it is relevant. It was because of Bill C-75. That is a Liberal bill from a few years ago that made bail, in essence, the default for violent repeat offenders. They got bail by default.

Now the chickens are coming home to roost. We are seeing a massive crime surge, and this is one of the reasons police are underlining this and making this heard by MPs over and over again. That is all going on. We are hearing through Toronto police statistics that of the 44 murders, I think it was either last year or in 2021, in over half, 24 or 26 of the 44 murders, the murderers were out on bail at the time. Over half of 44 murders could have been prevented if the Liberals had not brought in such a weak bail regime. They are getting up at the mike and talking about how this so-called new definition, old definition, no list, sneaky list given to the firearms advisory council is going to solve crime, or is one of the things that are going to solve crime.

It is not going to do anything about the people in Toronto who are getting out on bail and murdering people. Toronto police will remind us that about nine out of 10 firearms used in crime in Toronto, mostly handguns, are smuggled in from the U.S. We could outlaw, and I am sure the Liberals are working on it, every single handgun legally owned in this country, and the situation will get worse in cities. The statistics will continue to go up because these criminals are not legally owning the guns. Most of them are prohibited from ever going near a firearm.

Most repeat violent offenders should be in jail, because they smuggle the firearms in quite easily through the Prime Minister's very porous border, through which he has allowed all these drugs and guns to come into the country. That includes human trafficking and all kinds of other things he has allowed under his watch. They are flowing into Toronto and other big cities, such as Montreal and Winnipeg. I have seen the firearms myself, as the Winnipeg police have shown me smuggled ones. There are 3-D-printed guns as well. People are using 3-D printers and printing plastic handguns that are going for \$7,000 a pop on the streets of Winnipeg. Bill C-21 would really not do a lot about that.

We worked together on an amendment to perhaps give police a teeny extra tool, which I supported, but going after lawful firearms owners is not going to do anything about the problems in Toronto. Nothing in Bill C-21 would really have stopped the murders of those 20-odd people who were murdered by those on bail who smuggled guns in or printed them. The Liberals say they are increasing maximum sentencing on gun smugglers. That is technically true, but in reality it is baloney. One of my Conservative colleagues, who did great work, made an information request to the government asking how many people have received the maximum sentence, up to right now, for gun smuggling. Do members know, for the eight years that the Prime Minister has ruled the country, how many people got the maximum 10-year sentence for gun smuggling activities? Zero people have gotten the maximum, so to

increase it to 14 years is really not going to do a whole heck of a lot.

Perhaps what they should have done is to bring in mandatory minimums for gun smuggling. That would have taken criminals off the street. That would have actually done something, maybe. Conservatives were looking at maybe doing that with an amendment, but we were told it was out of scope so we could not bring forward mandatory maximums. Maybe that is something the member for Carleton, as prime minister of the country, will look at, because that would make a real, actual difference in cracking down on gun smuggling.

I will remind the House that, at the same time as the Liberals were going after lawful firearms owners to such a degree, with so many taxpayer dollars and so much effort by the Minister of Public Safety, in the fall, the Minister of Justice brought forward a bill, which he apparently celebrated quite excitedly when it was passed, to remove mandatory minimum sentences for serious gun crimes and violent crimes. Does everyone want to know what the list of those crimes is? On the list is robbery with a gun. Someone can rob a store with a gun, and it is no longer guaranteed that they will go to jail. That is the Liberal Prime Minister's vision of what we should do about crime: People can rob someone at gunpoint, and there is no longer a mandatory minimum for them.

• (1320)

The list continues with extortion with a firearm; weapons trafficking; importing or exporting, knowing the firearm is unauthorized; and discharging a firearm with intent, including things like drive-by shootings. There is no longer mandatory prison time for the people who commit these offences. Also on the list, there is using a firearm in the commission of an offence, or breaking the law with a gun; there is no longer a mandatory prison time for this. For possession of a firearm, knowing its possession is unauthorized, or illegally possessing a firearm, there is no longer mandatory prison time. For all those criminals in Toronto, it was a good day when Bill C-5 passed.

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There is also possession of a prohibited or restricted firearm with ammunition. A person could have a prohibited gun with a whole bunch of ammunition, and there is no longer mandatory prison time for them. Again, gangs are celebrating every time the Liberal Prime Minister is elected. For possession of a weapon obtained by commission of an offence, stealing one, in essence, there is no longer mandatory prison time. For possession for the purpose of weapons trafficking, excluding firearms ammunition, there is no mandatory prison time.

For discharging a firearm recklessly, there is no longer mandatory prison time. People die in cities because there are gangsters discharging firearms recklessly all the time, firearms they have smuggled in or 3D-printed. There is no longer mandatory prison time for them. In fact, in that same bill, Bill C-5, the Liberals brought forward a supposedly improved option for people who commit sexual assault. Now the law ensures that people who commit sexual assault, rape, do not have to go to prison. They can actually serve house arrest in the comfort of their homes. Rapists can serve their sentence playing video games, with their feet up, in their own homes. It is unreal. I should not be laughing about it, but it is so outrageous and ridiculous that it is hard for me, as a woman, to wrap my head around a so-called feminist government saying that rapists can serve house arrest for their sentence. This just happened in Quebec, where a vile rapist violently raped a woman and got zero days in prison and only 20 months under house arrest.

This is all in the scope of what the Liberals view as their crime priorities. They are getting up at the mike every other day, announcing new gun control measures to go after folks who are lawfully allowed to own firearms, and saying that that is going to make a difference. What would make a difference is repealing Bill C-5 and making sure violent criminals and rapists go to jail. That would make a difference in public safety.

It is not just about firearms. In fact, a lot of the crime we are seeing involves knives. Where is the conversation about knives? We just had what I believe was the third-largest mass killing in Canadian history, and we barely heard a peep about that, certainly not from the Liberals. We tried to study it at committee, and they would not let us. It was in the fall, the third-largest mass killing in Canadian history. A man who got out on parole despite—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** One moment, we have a point of order.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Madam Speaker, I am sure the hon. member does not mean to mislead the House, but there was absolutely no stoppage of anything on the stabbing at—

• (1325)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I would say that this is debate, and I would ask the hon. parliamentary secretary to consider rising to be recognized for a question when it is time for questions and comments.

The hon. member for Kildonan—St. Paul.

**Ms. Raquel Dancho:** Madam Speaker, I say respectfully to that member that I remember those committee meetings very well. I tried very hard, and so did my Conservative colleagues on the committee, to bring forward an urgent study of what happened, how the parole system failed the 11 people who were butchered by knife by

that man who was out on parole, and failed the 17 more who ended up in hospital. It was the third-largest mass killing in Canadian history. One would think it would be an urgent priority to review what happened in our parole system. We were given excuses and told to let people do their work. They can do their work, but we need to know now what happened and how to prevent it, with at least an introductory study.

I was very clear that we needed to study that right away and perhaps have a follow-up once we had heard more. That fell on deaf ears. The third-largest mass killing in Canadian history was not a priority for public safety. The committee was too busy with its planning to bring forward the most underhanded amendments such that the bill would constitute the largest hunting rifle ban in Canadian history. It was too busy to study the third-largest mass killing in Canadian history. I could talk all day about that, because I feel quite strongly about it. Why is it that a first nations community that had 11 people butchered by a man on parole was not prioritized? We barely talked about it. The public safety committee has not looked into that. I think it is a failure that we could be talking about if the government were not so occupied with coming after lawful firearms owners. I believe the perpetrator had 59 prior violent crime convictions. Why was he allowed out on parole? I do not know, but 11 people are dead, and 17 more were stabbed with a knife by that vile man.

A lot of knife attacks are happening, and bear mace attacks as well. I have a friend who just told me that his kids got on public transit, in the Calgary area, I believe. His college-aged kids were just going to a party. They are nice young people, and everyone in the whole group was bear-maced. The police told them it was the eighth time that had happened recently. It was the eighth time that some punks had bear-maced innocent people on public transit. The victims lived, so maybe the Liberals do not think that it is a priority to talk about that. I do not know.

There are stabbings where young people and older folks are being stabbed to death on public transit. In fact, there was a violent knife attack on the SkyTrain in Surrey that left a young man in hospital. The suspect, the man who attempted to murder that man with a knife, was let out on bail about nine days later. I am told bail reform is not in the budget. Someone who had stabbed someone and attempted to murder him was out on the streets nine days later. This is Liberal Canada, but it is important to go after lawful gun owners, apparently.



This incident followed the death of a 17-year-old, also in B.C., who was stabbed to death on a bus. He died. He was murdered, by knife, on a bus, just recently. This followed a 16-year-old boy having been stabbed and killed in a Toronto public transit station. These are young people who are being murdered, and there are countless other examples. There was a woman who was ice-picked last year. There was a woman who was set on fire in Toronto, near a public transit stop, I believe. There are elderly people who are being pushed to their deaths.

It is common now for people to feel uncomfortable riding public transit, and we are not talking about bail reform. There is no action coming forward on bail reform and how to clean up our streets, yet we are talking, every other day, about going after lawful gun owners. I can go on about how frustrating this is, and this is to say nothing of what police have experienced in the last year.

The Conservatives have been talking about bail reform for quite some time, but the country really started talking about it quite strongly just as a result of something that happened over Christmas. Nothing the Liberals have announced would have done anything to stop what happened to Greg Pierzchala. He was a young OPP officer, about 27 years old. He was young, and he was keen on the job. On December 27, just two days after Christmas, there was a truck in a ditch. He approached the truck, and the driver shot and killed him. That driver was a repeat violent offender with a lifetime weapons prohibition order, who was on bail at the time. He shot and killed that police officer. The officer is no longer with us, because of our bail system.

That, obviously, sparked a national outrage, and that was when the first letter from the premiers went to the Prime Minister demanding bail reform, obviously. There has been a subsequent one, and police have been very vocal. In fact, the Toronto police, who are stoic people, were getting emotional speaking up at the mike at their meetings about the need for bail reform. Actually, Greg Pierzchala was one of 10 police officers killed in the last year, eight of them on the job. That is an insane number of police murders. It is unbelievable. The police have had a pretty rough go of it over the last number of years.

• (1330)

The morale is very low. These are dedicated men and women who kiss their families goodbye in the morning and are never 100% sure if they are going to see them again, especially after a year like this. Ten of them have died, eight of them on the job. Many of these murders involve violent repeat offenders who should not be out on our streets. It is unbelievable that we are not talking about bail reform and that the government is not making announcements about bail reform or parole reform every day.

These guys, and it is mostly guys, who are getting out over and over again should not be on the streets. I think almost everyone agrees with that except extreme leftists, who want to go soft on crime and seem to have taken over the Liberal Party's crime agenda. It is unbelievable.

If we look at B.C., it is an NDP province. However, to its full credit, even B.C. has written to the Liberal cabinet about all its violent repeat offenders. These are unbelievable statistics. I checked them in the article that was published about a week or two ago to

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make sure they were right, but it seemed, by the reporting, that these are the statistics.

There were 1,325 violent offenders on trial, but prosecutors, or government lawyers, asked only for detention 516 times. Therefore, of over 1,300 violent criminals, government lawyers only asked that they would not get bail about 500 times. Of those 500 criminals for whom prosecutors actually asked for detention, judges only granted bail denial 222 times. Therefore, of over 1,300 violent repeat offenders in B.C., only 221 of them were actually denied bail. That is astounding. That is less than 20% of violent criminals being denied bail.

Why is the number not higher? It should be asked every single time someone has a violent record, should it not? Why are government lawyers asking only half the time? Actually, they are asking less than 50% of the time. Why are judges only saying that violent repeat offenders with a long rap sheet should not be out on bail less than 20% of the time?

I do not know. I am not a judge or a lawyer, and I do not have the expertise to talk about that. However, the Liberal government and the justice minister in charge of our Criminal Code should be talking about why that is happening and how we can fix it. They should be talking about how our justice system could be better supported with Criminal Code changes and other measures. This could equip our court systems to ensure that the most violent people do not get out on bail, so that the 17-year-old boy in B.C. would not have been stabbed to death, so the 16-year-old boy in Toronto would still be alive and so Greg Pierzchala would still be alive.

On the parole board, there has been a 36% decrease in the number of staff and an 11% funding cut, for some reason. Maybe that is why there are mistakes like what happened in the fall on James Smith Cree Nation. That is where the man I mentioned killed and murdered 11 people, butchering them to death.

It is so frustrating, not just as a Conservative but as a Canadian and a woman who cares about the safety of my family walking down the street. Women already have sort of a sixth sense about this. We are concerned walking at nighttime or getting into an elevator alone with a bunch of men. This is innate in us. To see that, in many cases, women no longer want to ride public transit, especially in Toronto, which is our biggest city, is frustrating.

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They are not really talking a lot about that even when we have a clear demand for bail reform. However, Bill C-21, going after lawful firearms owners, is the priority. I will remind folks as well that when the Liberals first brought forward these amendments, they did so in a very sneaky way, in November, before withdrawing them. On November 3, they said they were going to do consultations. We did a couple of consultation meetings at committee, and we brought forward a lot of people to talk about the impact those amendments would have.

The Liberals are saying they are not going after hunting rifles. We brought forward a lot of hunters and experts in that regard, and they have a very different opinion than the Liberals do. The ones who actually use them to hunt have a very different opinion than the Liberals who want to ban them. That is interesting.

The Minister of Public Safety went on a nationwide tour to consult, and he received quite the backlash in many of the meetings he went to. I wonder how many Conservative ridings he went to. I would love to know that, actually. I would imagine it was not very many.

He went to the Yukon. On January 25, in response to his tour to talk to hunters, whose firearms he was looking to take away, the local paper, the Yukon News, said:

● (1335)

None of those who spoke with...[the Minister of Public Safety and the Liberal member for Yukon] were supportive of the proposed legislation. They each gave their reasons. Among them were longtime firearms collectors concerned about a loss of value in their collections; relatively new sport shooters encountering confusing rules...

That is a recurring theme we are hearing from the firearms community and the police who have to enforce these rules. The quote continues:

...and hunters, trappers and resource-industry workers worried that the firearms they rely on to protect themselves from animals in the wilderness will be banned.

In that same article, the quotes from the local people who were “consulted”, or so it was called, by the Minister of Public Safety were quite emotional, which would be the polite word. They are deeply unhappy with what the Liberals are trying to do. There was a lot of that on his tour. He heard it loud and clear, yet he brought forward a very similar definition. Rather than being transparent with the very long list of hundreds of firearms they are looking to ban, they are going to pass it on to a Firearms Advisory Committee.

Despite all these consultations at committee, all these consultations with the Minister of Public Safety and all the things he has heard first-hand from the real, law-abiding people that these things impact, the Liberals are trudging forward and plowing through. The Liberals are determined to, quite quickly, eliminate a lot of hunting rifles from Canada.

At committee, we had a lot of indigenous leaders come and speak to the impact all this would have on them. Bill C-21 has a number of red flag provisions and other things that I will say I thought were red flags when they were originally brought forward. These are supposed to help vulnerable women and indigenous women, and they could be good. I actually stood in the House and asked this: Why do we not split red flags from the bill so that we

can usher them along more quickly and take the politics out of it so that we can protect vulnerable people?

I stood in the House. The Minister of Public Safety shouted down the motion I brought forward to do that. It was another good-faith effort from Conservatives to take some of the politics out of this contentious issue. It was shouted down by the Minister of Public Safety; I will never forget that.

Indigenous leaders, women chiefs and others came to committee, and they were very alarmed by some of these red flag laws. They said a number of things. They talked about the red flag laws. In essence, they felt, and I am paraphrasing, that there could be people who have negative views of indigenous people, and they could more easily call in and make up false stories about indigenous people to take their firearms away.

This was a real thing we heard from multiple indigenous leaders. They said, in essence, to paraphrase their sentiments, this would not be good for their community and those who do not like them. That is what came across, and that is not so good. This is supposed to protect indigenous people, particularly women. It does not seem like they want this at all. In fact, they very badly do not want it.

We also heard from law experts. We heard from an organization named the National Association of Women and the Law; there was a Liberal witness. There was also an anti-violence against women Quebec group. I think the thought process from Liberals was for them to support these red flag laws, but all three of the groups that were brought forward said they were terrible. They do not want them. The laws actually further burden women who are being abused by their partners.

It is the exact opposite of what I thought the red flag laws were going to do. Obviously, I am not going to support them. We are not going to support them. I do not believe some of the other opposition parties are either.

We can work together on a few things; that is evident. However, again, this is a measure that was to be brought forward under Bill C-21, and the Liberals were not listening to the people they were trying to help on the issue that they were trying to solve. It is another very clear example that they were not listening to vulnerable women or indigenous people about something that they said was going to help them. This is symptomatic of how the government approaches firearms.

It was pretty interesting. We had one of the most notable Canadian hunters, a really incredible guy from an incredible family. I am talking about Jim Shockey. His daughter is quite a hero for young women hunters across the country. I have to say, one of my sisters follows her Instagram and has for years. He said the following:

Everybody understands hunters are not a threat to your safety or the national security of this country. However, we feel vilified and marginalized. Recently, we've felt attacked. We're not the enemy. We love our country. The taking away of life is obviously a terrible and fundamentally wrong thing, but the taking away of a way of life is also wrong.

That is a powerful quote coming from someone who knows hunting probably better than almost anyone in the country aside from indigenous Canadians, who have been hunting on this land for thousands of years.

When Liberals say this is not a hunting rifle ban, ask hunters. They saw the SKS on the list. They saw other firearms on the list that they commonly use for hunting. Whom should the public believe? Should they believe people who actually hunt, use them for a living and pass them down to their kids? Or should they believe Liberals who, as we have heard from the Prime Minister, say that some hunting guns will have to be banned?

● (1340)

In my opinion, that is just the beginning, obviously. Again, ask the Liberals if this is going to be the last hunting, rifle, shotgun or firearms ban. I would guess that they are going to say no or change the subject quickly.

We have Martin Bourget; he and his wife have a Quebec French hunting show. Hunting in Quebec is a huge, massive industry. They said, “Legitimate gun owners in Canada are deeply puzzled about the very legitimacy of the process set out in Bill C-21 and the enforcement of these measures.” They are asking for nothing less than a study of the bill's true impact on the safety of Canadians and on traditional hunting, harvesting and sport shooting. Of course, we never really got an in-depth study on all those things. We had a couple of consultation meetings, and now the Liberals are really trying to limit debate on the impact of many of these amendments.

I think that Mr. Bourget's wife represents 20,000 female French hunters, which is pretty amazing. I really hope I get a chance to go hunting with them some day. In any case, they are speaking for a large group of hunters, who are not a big fan of the bill. They feel that the consultations have not met the true depth of respect that is needed for our hunting community, our farmers and indigenous Canadians. It is not being met at committee and certainly not being met by the Liberals.

Actually, there is something on consultation. A few years ago, the Liberals did a consultation on firearms, which we found out from an information request they spent over \$200,000 on. Of the 133,000 respondents, when asked, in essence, if further measures should be taken against handguns, about 87% said no. When asked the same question about so-called assault-style firearms, I think between 70% and 80% said that no more action was needed. Again, this is a made-up Liberal term and not a firearms term.

I think that is pretty shocking. In the actual consultation that the Liberals spent significant taxpayer dollars on, of the 133,000 people responding, very few of them thought that any of these measures should be undertaken. I assume they kind of just chucked that in the garbage, because they really have not talked about it at all. The evidence is right there, and yet they do not want to look at it or acknowledge that it is, in fact, what Canadians believe. The Liberals talked about some random poll once and that is it, but the 133,000 people who were asked did not show a lot of support for what they are doing. Anyway, these are very inconvenient facts for the Liberals, which we found out through an information request.

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Who else did we ask? We talked to someone from the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. I think it is one of the oldest associations in the country. It is very notable, reputable and moderate. It is a hunting and angling association, and it is part of the lifeblood of the hunting community. I grew up going to my local game and fish association. Certainly, being from Ontario, I believe this Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters is the largest in the country. I think it represents about 100,000 active members and has an impact on the family members and small communities it supports. However, it said that:

Firearms are not the disease, particularly in a nation like Canada with robust gun laws. Gun violence is often symptomatic of much bigger societal issues.

I would agree with that. It goes on to say:

Taking firearms away from law-abiding Canadians will not reduce the upstream issues that fuel criminal activity and demand for illicit firearms. Therefore, model-based firearm prohibitions will continue to fail as they won't be able to have a detectable impact on reducing gun violence or enhancing public safety.

Again, I do not know this person's profession, but I do not believe they are a legal expert. However, they have put an obvious statement very eloquently. This seems foreign when we are looking at the Liberal priorities on firearms and the relentless assault on law-abiding Canadians.

Marc Renaud, president of the Fédération québécoise des chasseurs et pêcheurs said in French, which I translate into English, “we strongly believe in the power of education and prevention for promoting firearms safety. Our members want to feel safe, too, and they hope new laws intended to improve public safety focus on the right targets. Hunters and sport shooters who comply with the training requirements and get the right licences are the wrong target.”

Again, this was in response to the G-4 and G-46 amendments on the definition in the long list from November 2022. They brought forward a very similar definition, and the list will just be passed over to the firearms advisory committee, as was said today in the House by the Liberal parliamentary secretary.

● (1345)

We are here again. These are the comments from hunters, from large hunting advocacy groups, and the Liberals are still saying this is not a hunting rifle ban.

Lynda Kiejko is Olympian in women's pistol shooting. Many people may not know this, and again those who follow the Olympics would know this, Canadians are very proud of our Olympians, that we have Olympic sport shooters and have for over a century.

*Government Orders*

If we look at hunting just like anything else, hunters and farmers use them as tools. People in the military or police are going to use firearms. Who is the best shot? Who is the most accurate at targets? That comes from the firearm community. That is very obvious.

It is actually a sense of real pride for someone who is a good marksman. Someone who does not know anything about hunting or sport shooting would not understand that, I get it. However, those who are from a hunting community, every person knows that when people get a big buck, they sit around the table while the hunters relive their epic story about the hunt. They will say how many yards away it was, whether it was windy. They recount a great story of their great hunt. It is part of the culture. For indigenous Canadians, it has been the same for thousands of years. This is important.

Those who are a good marksman or markswoman like to brag about that. This is very normal and natural in hunting and sport shooting communities. Of course, sport shooting also comes, in part, from that.

It is incredible that Canada has some of the best marksmen in the world, and Lynda Kiejko and her family are some of the best marksmen in the country. In particular, she is in the women's pistol shooting.

The Liberal efforts to freeze, ban or whatever they are saying in Bill C-21 about handguns really would not do any of that. As we have heard from our Olympic sport shooters and our national sport shooters from IPSC and the like, which is a national sport shooting association that competes internationally, all it really would do is impact their sport shooting community. It makes it very difficult for them to get new parts for the tools they use when they compete. It makes it very difficult for them to bring their firearms in and out of the country for competition. It makes it very difficult for Canada to host any sort of sport shooting competition. It makes it very challenging.

The World Police and Fire Games are coming up. Winnipeg is hosting those games, which it is pretty incredible. It is a nightmare to try to get firearms in for the sport shooting part of that competition. Again, there is a real sense of pride for Winnipeg and Canada that we are hosting the World Police and Fire Games this summer. It is very exciting.

Lynda Kiejko is a proud Olympian, and all Canadians should be very proud of her. I am, and I know the Conservatives are. She said:

I take great pride in representing my country on the world stage, as do all athletes. I'm sad that due to the handgun ban, the order in council, Bill C-71 and this proposed legislation, I will not be able to represent Canada on the world stage. Athletes who come after me won't even have an opportunity to compete, as they will have no access to competition firearms.

The Liberals, with Bill C-21, and this is out of the mouths of the sport shooters themselves, are wiping out sport shooting in Canada. Certainly this would be the last generation that ever sport shoots, with pistols for sure.

When challenged about that at committee, the Liberals looked down their noses at our sport shooters, in essence saying, and people can look at the video footage, that Canada did not want that anymore, that they did not want those dirty Olympians sport shooters. I am paraphrasing, obviously. This is my tone being put on the

Liberals, but people can look at the video. In essence, they are looking down their nose, judging sport shooters, saying that they are not welcome anymore in Canada, that they do not want them, and to get out.

That is the sense I walked away with when I watched that interaction between the Liberals and our Olympian. I could not believe it. Everyone should be proud of our Olympians, especially our best marksman, and a woman. That is awesome.

We will fight very hard to ensure that we can continue to compete internationally with IPSC and Olympic sport shooting. Again, once this passes, and the Liberals already did it through regulation, we will see the death of sport shooting in Canada, particularly pistols first and then likely the rest, if the Liberals get to proceed with their true agenda here.

It is very frustrating in that regard, that we have real people, who use these as tools, coming forward to committee and saying that the Liberals are banning their hunting rifles, they are banning their ability to compete in sport shooting on the world stage, representing Canada with pride, yet the Liberals are saying they are not, that this is not true.

Who do we believe? The people who are impacted by it or the Liberals who do not want people to own firearms, which is what I think is really going on here.

● (1350)

What about the data. We could talk a lot about the facts of this, because in committee we see the Liberals bring forward folks of various stripes. We are all allowed to bring forward our own witnesses, which is part of the democratic process. However, that is the party that consistently says it follows the science, it believes in data over and over again, except when the science does not suit its agenda. It is very clear.

Some of the best researchers in the world are from Canada, when it comes to firearms. Dr. Caillin Langmann is an award-winning researcher, highly recognized in the medical and scientific research community for his work. He has scrutinized every possible data point in Canada, looking at the impacts of subsequent gun control and what that has done or not done on homicide. Whether it is mass homicide, homicide, domestic homicide, he has looked at it all for decades. He has looked at Australia and has also commented on the U.K. as well.

*Government Orders*

Not only has he done his own research, but he has reviewed the research of others because of his ability to heavily scrutinize data. He is widely recognized in the scientific community for his high level of integrity and scrutiny on this. I have not seen one piece of evidence even close to the integrity of Dr. Caillin Langmann when it comes to the impact of gun control on homicide. There is nothing that holds a candle to it. No one has brought anything forward. I have heard that, in the court cases that are ongoing on this right now, the government has not really brought forward any evidence to make its case for this either, but that is another discussion that I will likely get to at some point as well.

Dr. Caillin Langmann, after all of his research, said, “the evidence so far demonstrates that the proposed handgun and semi-automatic rifle bans would have no associated reduction in homicide rates or mass homicide rates. Methods that have been shown to be more effective in reducing firearms homicides involve targeting the demand side of the firearms prevalence in criminal activity.” It seems very obvious and this is what police have been telling us, but he has actually seen that in the data.

In fact, what he and some other researchers of high repute have found is that the only real impacts we can have in terms of responsible gun ownership are basic things that we have had for almost 30 years. We can talk about background checks, licensing and safe storage. Those are the only proven things to have an impact on homicide and public safety when it comes to firearms, and those are things that are very much supported by the Conservative Party of Canada and that we have had for a number of years. That is responsible gun ownership, and we are behind that 100%.

Only people licensed, trained and vetted by police should ever have ownership of firearms. That is what we believe; that is very clear. That is what the evidence says is important to protect public safety, yet the Liberals are ignoring the scientific evidence by highly reputable researchers and medical doctor. They are cherry-picking the information that suits their narrative, which has been widely shredded by Dr. Caillin Langmann with his high degree of integrity and research ability.

We also have Dr. Teri Bryant, chief firearms officer of Alberta's Chief Firearms Office. I have never met a person who is as much of a firearms expert as she is. It is incredible. She can be asked about any firearm, and this woman knows. It is unbelievable, and great to see. She said:

Even after the withdrawal of G-4 and G-46, Bill C-21 continues to undermine confidence in our firearms control system while contributing nothing to reducing the violent misuse of firearms. Bill C-21 is built on a fundamentally flawed premise. Prohibiting specific types of firearms is not an effective way of improving public safety. It will waste billions of taxpayer dollars that could have been used on more effective approaches, such as the enforcement of firearms prohibition orders, reinforcing the border or combatting the drug trade and gang activity.

Again, it seems self-evident, but to hear from an expert who is charged with this at the provincial level is refreshing. We had her expertise at committee. All of this was said, and yet there really was no change in what was brought forward. We asked a number of questions on the definition.

The Liberals brought forward something else, which I should have mentioned at the beginning, but it is unsettling because we are not really clear on what the implications will really be. It seems

good kind of, but then maybe it is really not. Based on the Liberals' track record of lack of transparency on this, I am deeply concerned. There is, in essence, sort of a forward-looking clause that they have brought forward for that definition. It is a grandfathering clause, in a way. Anyone who owns these firearms that Liberals are looking to ban now apparently gets to keep them. Who would have thought? The Liberals are saying, for now, that those people get to keep them.

• (1355)

We will see what the firearms advisory committee says in a couple of months, but it is saying that anything that falls under this new definition the Liberals have brought forward, which is really the old definition, people will get to keep those and they can keep buying and selling them. However, they cannot buy the brand-new models that are manufactured, any new version of these firearms.

That sounds okay, I guess. It is just kind of limiting. They cannot buy the almost exact same firearms that are new, but they can buy existing ones. It does not really follow. Further, it does not follow that the Liberals have been getting up in the House and at press conferences for years saying things about these firearms, that they are weapons of war designed for killing people. They have been taking that position. They have been very clear that these are terrible things that no one should own, yet now they have brought forward a new definition that allows everybody to keep them. That does not make sense.

We spent about an hour and a half asking clarifying questions about this. I am not reassured that what we are seeing is really the case. If it is, I feel quite confident that they are going to just shoot this over. The Liberals are going to say that people can keep them but they are going to send it over to the advisory committee and it will ban it for them. I really think that is going to happen.

People will let their guard down. The firearms advisory committee will let its guard down with this new definition to let people keep firearms, but people are not going to get to keep them. I believe that the firearms advisory committee, as was alluded to when asked about the SKS, will have to do the dirty work. It will have to look at that very long list of firearms that was hundreds of pages long and had hundreds of hunting rifles on it. The committee will be looking at that list and looking to ban those firearms. We heard as much today. Therefore, people should not be reassured for one moment by this new definition. It is leading people down the garden path, letting people let their guard down.

### Statements by Members

However, we know what is going on here. The Conservatives, along with law-abiding citizens in our country, private property owners who are trained, tested and vetted by police, will continue to stand up for those people who have been repeatedly kicked by the Liberal government and treated terribly, like they were criminals. That seems to be the focus.

I know I am going to take a pause and restart at some point, but just to conclude for this hour and 10 minutes I have been speaking, the minister seems to have really cranked down on his remarks about who the Conservatives are standing with. He has been vicious in talking about who we are standing with. I being the lead, he is talking about me and he is talking about the Leader of the Opposition, who I am standing with when I am talking about law-abiding citizens and fighting for firearms' owners. He makes outlandish, unfounded claims about who I am standing with when I am in the House talking about this. I find it deeply offensive.

Here is why. Who am I standing with? I went to a game and fish association event in rural Manitoba, in my hometown, Beausejour, Manitoba, just the other day. I spoke to people about the work I was doing in the House to fight for their way of life. A big, burly, country boy came up to me at the end as I was leaving and asked to speak to me. He wanted to thank me for fighting for firearms' owners. He looked me in the eye and I could see he was visibly getting emotional. He thanked me for fighting for them, for standing up for them, for always fighting against the Liberals and for signing up for their way of life. He had to start walking because he was getting emotional, a big country boy. I could not believe it. I have been getting that a lot.

Those are the people I am fighting for, those good Canadians. I will fight relentlessly for them every single day without stopping. We will pick this up again the next time.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### NATIONAL WATER AGENCY

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada has the largest number of lakes in the world and makes up approximately 7% of the world's renewable fresh water. The recent federal budget has made it very clear: The government cares about our rivers, lakes and watershed areas.

For the first time ever, Canada is establishing a national water agency. This new agency would be headquartered in Winnipeg where water science, the quality of water, floods and droughts would be studied and acted on in every way. Not only would it create good middle-class jobs in Winnipeg, but, more important, it shows that this government is serious about protecting and managing the critical natural resource of water.

\* \* \*

• (1400)

### OUR COLLECTIVE JOURNEY

**Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Our Collective Journey is a non-profit organization

operating in Medicine Hat that provides a range of services to support individuals who are facing challenges related to addiction and recovery. The personalized support, guidance and accountability help individuals build resiliency through conversations and goal setting around stress management, mindfulness and self-care, establishing a strong foundation for long-term success.

Through the recovery coaching, resiliency building, podcasting and community meetings, Our Collective Journey provides individuals with the resources and support they need to overcome obstacles and build healthy, fulfilling lives. The people there believe that everyone deserves the opportunity to achieve their goals and live their best life. They are committed to helping individuals to do just that.

I thank Our Collective Journey for the incredible work that it is doing to improve the lives of those struggling with addictions and recovery. Unlike other jurisdictions in Canada, the people at Our Collective Journey are hope dealers and not dope dealers.

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### COMMUNITY SERVICE

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Irene Lambert is taking early retirement at 92, after years of dedicated service to the community. Visually impaired but always undaunted, Irene has advocated tirelessly for people with disabilities, including as a member of the provincial commission that led to Quebec's legislation on the rights of people with disabilities. Her efforts also resulted in Bell Canada's offering free directory assistance for those with a print disability.

Irene did not stop there, however. Among her most meaningful accomplishments was being a founding member of Montreal's Low Vision Self-Help Association and a driving force behind the organization for over 30 years. On May 10, Irene Lambert will be stepping down from the board of directors of the Low Vision Self-Help Association with a well-deserved sense of a job well done.

I ask all members to join me in thanking Irene for her pioneering role as a community builder who has steadfastly promoted the values of volunteerism, activism and inclusiveness.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### JOANE VANDAL

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, human beings and justice were fundamentally important in the life of Joane Vandal, who headed Équijustice Lanaudière Sud for 36 years.

*Statements by Members*

In carrying out her mission of making our society fairer and more equitable, Joane was never afraid to think outside the box. She was highly committed to advocating for community mediation and restorative justice.

She worked alongside the traditional system to ensure that victims obtained reparation for the harm suffered and offenders accepted responsibility for the harm they caused.

Victims and offenders who wanted to use this approach found themselves at the same table with Joane. Faced with horrible situations, from sexual assault to homicide, Joane managed to shepherd people towards healing and always with care for others. Her former colleagues consider her a she-wolf who cares for her pack, and they are proud to carry on her work.

I wish Joane all the best in her well-deserved retirement. I thank her for her decades of service to others and for having prepared her successors so well.

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*[English]***WORLD OVARIAN CANCER DAY**

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today marks World Ovarian Cancer Day. On this day, I would like to share the story of a constituent of mine who fought this debilitating disease that takes more than five Canadian women every single day.

Erin Barrett is an ovarian cancer survivor and the proud chair of Ovarian Cancer Canada's board of directors. She was first diagnosed when she was 36 weeks pregnant with her daughter Edie. She underwent three rounds of chemo and 25 radiation treatments. A few years later, she was diagnosed with stage 1 ovarian cancer for the second time.

Seeing how awful the statistics are for women with this disease, Erin felt the responsibility to use her voice and her skills to ensure other women are diagnosed early. The treatment protocol that Erin received was unique and not available in other parts of the world. Erin is a fighter and her success was aided by Ovarian Cancer Canada's groundbreaking research being done across the country. Investing in ovarian cancer research in Canada saved Erin's life. Erin and women like her inspire us all to do what we can to advance the fight against ovarian cancer.

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● (1405)

**ALBERTA ELECTION**

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on May 29 Albertans will go to the polls in a provincial election. Since 2015, Alberta has faced two problems: first, the accidental election of Rachel Notley and the socialist Alberta NDP; and, second, the election of the current Liberal Prime Minister and the parties that enable him.

Both of these political parties have brought about devastation in Alberta. Their high-tax, anti-energy and inherently flawed economic policies have led to hundreds of thousands of jobs being lost, bil-

ions of dollars in lost investments, and the deterioration of the Alberta advantage.

In 2019, Alberta dealt with the first problem and returned Conservatives to power in Edmonton. Despite many challenges, my home province has once again been moving forward.

On May 29, Albertans have a choice to elect the Alberta NDP, who with the federal Liberals and their NDP partners in Ottawa will punish Alberta, or to elect a strong, united Conservative majority.

I am voting for my local UCP candidate. We can then move on to dealing with the second problem, which is to get rid of those tired—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Scarborough—Guildwood.

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**RESULTS CANADA**

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in 2007, I joined Results Canada on a delegation to Kenya, which was far from being a junket; rather, it was a slum tour. Nairobi has some of the biggest slums in the world. What I remember most is the smell of open sewers and the chronic overcrowding.

Results Canada is a grassroots NGO, composed of volunteers who are dedicated to reducing poverty and advancing human rights. Today we are joined in Ottawa by volunteers from Results Canada, including constituents from Scarborough—Guildwood, who have come to Ottawa as part of the national conference of game-changers for achieving the global goals by 2030.

Please join me in thanking all the Results Canada volunteers today, the real game-changers, who would like to end extreme poverty.

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**CANADIAN CONSUMER SPECIALTY PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION**

**Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Consumer Specialty Products Association recently celebrated its 65th anniversary, marking over six decades of advocacy and representation for the consumer specialty products industry in Canada. Founded in 1958, the CCSPA has been instrumental in ensuring that Canadian consumers have access to safe and innovative products, ranging from household cleaners and personal care items to pest control and automotive products.

*Statements by Members*

The CCSPA has played a vital role in shaping regulations and standards for the industry to promote best practices and improve product safety. The association has also provided valuable support to its members, including market research, networking opportunities and educational programs. During the pandemic, it worked tirelessly to ensure Canadians had access to disinfectants, wipes, hand sanitizers and cleaning products.

I give a shout-out to Shannon Coombs, who has been the president of the CCSPA for more than 25 years, shaping the best consumer product landscape for Canadians.

The 65th anniversary is a significant milestone. I congratulate everyone.

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**ALBERTA WILDFIRES**

**Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, since Saturday, Alberta has been in a state of emergency due to raging wildfires. Currently, there are 108 wildfires across the province: 28 that are out of control, 20 that are being held and 60 that are under control. Nearly 30,000 Albertans have been evacuated from their homes and, sadly, some have already lost their homes.

The hot, dry and windy conditions continue to produce extreme burning conditions and a fire ban remains in place for most of Alberta.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the firefighters who are working tirelessly, day and night, to keep our communities safe while risking their own lives, including firefighters who arrived yesterday from Ontario and Quebec to help the efforts. We also extend our gratitude to all emergency personnel, volunteers and everyone who is out there helping their fellow Albertans.

Our prayers are with them during this challenging time, and we remain Alberta strong.

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**CANADA-EUROPE PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION**

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as president of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association, I rise to highlight two significant dates for our European friends: Today, May 8, Victory in Europe Day; and tomorrow, May 9, Europe Day. Both dates reflect on and celebrate European unity and spirit.

Nazi Germany's unconditional surrender on May 8, 1945, meant an end to nearly six years of war in Europe and millions of lives lost. Five years later, on May 9, 1950, the Schuman declaration was proposed to set out a new form of political co-operation in Europe that would make war between Europe's nations unthinkable. For this we celebrate Europe Day.

Upholding our shared values of peace, democracy and unity has never been more important. In the face of the ongoing unprovoked Russian aggression against Ukraine, Canada and Europe remain steadfast in their support for the sovereignty of Ukraine and the freedom of the Ukrainian people.

As President Ursula von der Leyen stated in this House, “The histories of our democracies are tied together.” We have seen what is possible when Canada and Europe work together.

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● (1410)

**CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA**

**Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government and the Prime Minister are plagued with scandal and ethics violations. Canadians are struggling to make ends meet because of his inflationary deficits and carbon tax.

The good news for Canadians is that the next Conservative government has a plan to bring home lower prices. We will end the government's inflationary deficits and scrap the carbon tax. Conservatives will bring home powerful paycheques for Canadians by lowering taxes and clawbacks, to reward hard-working Canadians. Led by the leader of the official opposition, Conservatives will bring home freedom from foreign interference because this Prime Minister will not.

Canadians know that our leader and our caucus stand for the common sense of the common people, united for our common home, Canada.

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**LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with Liberal taxes sparking rising inflation and food prices out of control, today's Canadians have never had it worse. Forget about a vacation, most people cannot even afford a staycation.

The Prime Minister does not have the same worries. He has taken five foreign vacations this year alone, including living it up in New York City with celebrities and selfies, and his \$80,000 vacation in Jamaica, paid by Trudeau Foundation donors. Canadians who can only dream of such a luxury are paying thousands for his security and travel costs.

After eight years of this out-of-touch Prime Minister and his taxes, life costs more, work does not pay, house costs have doubled, crime is increasing and Canadians are out of money.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**NATIONAL NURSING WEEK**

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today marks the start of National Nursing Week. What a great opportunity to thank the nurses of Sherbrooke, Quebec and the entire country for their work on the front lines delivering care to Canadians.



*Statements by Members*

The COVID-19 pandemic was a painful reminder of the harsh working conditions facing our guardian angels. Their efforts on behalf of patients in need during that difficult time came at a cost to their own physical and mental health.

The Government of Canada continues to stand up for our health care providers in various ways, for example with the new federal health plan, which provides \$50 billion in new funding over 10 years, including \$7.8 billion under ongoing bilateral agreements for home care, mental health care and long-term care services. However, even with ongoing funding, a lot of work remains to be done to improve the conditions of all health care workers.

I thank all the nurses of the CIUSS de l'Estrie—CHUS for their dedication. They deserve Sherbrooke's unending gratitude.

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*[English]***GEORGE WHITNEY**

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, George Whitney was a dedicated civil servant, a committed conservationist and one of the most interesting, most curious and most entertaining people I have ever met. Among his many roles, George was the superintendent of Algonquin Provincial Park and the director of fisheries for the Government of Ontario.

His last position was with the Canadian International Development Agency in Zimbabwe and it was in Zimbabwe that George and I met for the first time. People may have wondered how our friendship developed. He was 30 years my senior and we had very different lives. Sometimes the world is a funny place and I like to believe that George saw in me a kindred spirit, someone who was interested in our world, interested in wild places, interested in creating a world that was more equal for all.

George, his highly entertaining brother Paul, our dear friend Scott and I would spend many a night talking about our global exploits, arguing about what made the perfect dog, which is, of course, the Rhodesian ridgeback, and scheming about how we would fix the world.

The world is a less interesting place without him in it.

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● (1415)

*[Translation]***LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party held its convention on the weekend, to the dismay of those Liberals who had better things to do than to discuss their ideas.

On Saturday morning, thousands of delegates could have discussed inflation, the housing crisis, the fight against climate change, or Chinese interference. Of course, that does not exist. They could have at least discussed the major Liberal priorities.

However, no one was there, as barely one-tenth of the delegates were on site. Where were they? The Liberals were glued to their

TV screens, getting choked up as they watched the coronation of King Charles III.

The Prime Minister would like us to believe that the new King of Canada has the same priorities as Canadians. I am wondering if one of the King's priorities is abolishing the monarchy, because there is a consensus on that in Quebec and also in Canada. The Liberals could probably have seen that too, had their tear-filled eyes not been riveted on the television to watch the royal carriage go by.

\* \* \*

*[English]***TAXATION**

**Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, people in my home province of Saskatchewan are struggling more than ever to make ends meet, and the Prime Minister is oblivious. Canadians are feeling the pressure to keep the lights on and food on the table, while the government continues to raise taxes on gas, heat and food.

The Prime Minister has squandered taxpayer money, taking lavish foreign holidays that most of us could never afford. His \$80,000 gifted vacation from the Trudeau Foundation donors cost more than an annual salary for many families in this country. Taxpayers are on the hook for these foreign holidays, while most Canadians simply take modest holidays, such as camping out or visiting their grandparents. Canadians are facing tough times because of the government's irresponsible fiscal management.

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**NATIONAL MINING WEEK**

**Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize National Mining Week.

Mining activity takes place across the country and creates 665,000 direct and indirect jobs. In 2021, it contributed \$90 billion to Canada's GDP.

Canada is a global mining power thanks to our world-class people, deposits and environmental practices. In a net-zero economy, this industry can reach even higher. That is why we made a historic commitment of \$3.8 billion to implement the critical minerals strategy. This includes \$1.5 billion to establish critical mineral value chains, another \$1.5 billion to unlock projects, the doubling of the mineral exploration tax credit, \$144 million for R and D, and more.

In last month's federal budget, we built on Canada's competitive position, committing to the clean tech tax credit to increase domestic mining and processing. The Government of Canada is fully seized with capturing the opportunities before us.

*Oral Questions***POINTS OF ORDER**

## DECORUM—SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker:** Before going on to question period, I would like to make a statement on maintaining order and decorum in the House, following the point of order raised during the sitting of May 4.

The rules and practices governing order and decorum are intended in part to ensure that proceedings are conducted in a civil, courteous and respectful manner. In particular, members are expected to address each other through the Chair and to avoid making any offensive or disruptive remarks. For example, stating directly, or indirectly, that a colleague is a liar, or has lied, is unacceptable.

[*Translation*]

Maintaining order and decorum in the House is a responsibility that has been delegated to chair occupants. This is a task of great importance whose enforcement relies on striking a fine balance between the nearly unlimited freedom of speech in the House and complying with Standing Order 18, which provides, and I quote:

No member shall...use offensive words against either House, or against any member thereof.

• (1420)

[*English*]

When the Chair is asked to rule on alleged unparliamentary language, it takes various criteria into account, including the member's tone, manner and intent, as well as the disorder in the Chamber that follows the remarks.

Chair occupants always try to apply the rules consistently. What may appear inconsistent to some is often the result of the fact that every situation is different. As a result, as *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, notes on page 624, "language deemed unparliamentary one day may not necessarily be deemed unparliamentary on another day."

[*Translation*]

When the Chair finds that a member has used unparliamentary language, the Chair may ask the member to withdraw their words and apologize. If the member declines to do so, the Chair may then refuse to recognize them, or "name" them and expel them from the Chamber for the remainder of the sitting.

[*English*]

As stated during the events of Thursday, May 4, the Chair wishes to reiterate that it will use all the powers at its disposal. To be quite clear, any remarks the Chair deems unparliamentary will be required to be withdrawn immediately and accompanied by a full and proper apology. If a member refuses to comply, the Chair will cease to recognize them until further notice.

[*Translation*]

As I explained in my statement on November 3, 2022, which can be found on page 9298 of the Debates, and I quote, "Exchanges between members of the House are sometimes heated and intense, but the Chair expects everyone to conduct themselves in a dignified manner and to choose their words carefully."

As we approach the month of June, when the parliamentary workload is consistently very heavy, I encourage all members to contribute to the proceedings in a civilized manner, in accordance with our rules.

[*English*]

Members each have the primary responsibility for maintaining order and decorum. To help members do so, the Chair will use, in full, the powers it has been granted by the members themselves.

I thank all members for their attention and their collaboration.

**ORAL QUESTIONS**

[*Translation*]

**FINANCE**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a few months ago, the Minister of Finance admitted that deficits add fuel to the inflationary fire. A little later, she announced that she would never eliminate these inflationary deficits.

The few Liberals with common sense put forward a motion at the Liberal convention demanding a plan to balance the budget and eliminate these inflationary deficits. The Prime Minister ensured that this motion was voted down.

When will the government get rid of the inflationary deficit?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what the Liberals said during our national convention is that we are the optimistic party, we are the party that believes in Canada and we are the party that understands the importance of investing in our country.

On the fiscal front, S&P reaffirmed Canada's AAA credit rating after our budget update.

[*English*]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the question was for the Prime Minister, but he does not have the courage to stand up to answer it.

His finance minister said, just a few months ago, that deficits add oil to the inflationary fire. A few weeks later, she announced she would continue running deficits forever. There were a few courageous Liberals who showed up, in a minority to their congress, to push forward a motion, which would have required the government eliminate these deficits, but it was voted down, sadly.

Will the Prime Minister have the courage to stand up to answer? Will he get rid of his inflationary deficits, or does he believe that budgets will balance themselves?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am really glad to hear the Leader of the Opposition recognize the courage of the Liberal Party. Indeed, the Liberal Party showed itself to be courageous and optimistic this weekend. We showed we are the party that believes in Canada. We are the party that understands the importance of investing in Canadians. The economic results show that works.

Canada's AAA credit rating was reaffirmed by S&P after I tabled our budget. Our economy grew by 2.5% in the first quarter, and we have added 900,000 jobs—

• (1425)

**The Speaker:** The Leader of the Opposition.

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### DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister was so courageous, he would not be afraid to stand up to answer a question, would he?

If the Prime Minister was so courageous, he might throw out Beijing's agent. A week after we found out as a nation that this agent had been threatening the family of a Canadian MP for a vote that he cast in the House, the Prime Minister has not thrown him out. In fact, he extends credentials to that agent, allowing him to operate with impunity from our laws here in our country.

Will the Prime Minister show some courage, answer the question and kick this agent out today?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are talking about serious issues, and I would like us to all be serious for a minute.

In the House, we disagree about many things. We disagree about child care. We disagree about a price on pollution, and we disagree about investing in Canadian industrial policy, but there is one thing that I know every single member of the House, in every party, agrees on, and that is the sanctity of democracy in Canada and around the world. It is simply wrong to suggest in any way any member of this House is not a faithful, patriotic, democratic Canadian.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister believes that, he should stand up to say so and kick out this operative from Canada. So far, he has been hiding. He is hiding from answering my questions, but he is hiding from the regime in Beijing. The government is now saying that it cannot kick out this operative, even though he threatened the family of a Canadian MP, because it is afraid of the consequences that Beijing will impose on the Liberal government, which it has supported for so long.

Will the Prime Minister finally put this country first, bring home security to all MPs and kick this operative out, yes or no?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, if he were paying attention, would have heard that my colleague, the Minister of Global Affairs, convened last week with the Chinese ambassador to make it abundantly clear that we will never tolerate foreign interference. This is consistent with the strong position that Canada has taken when it comes to the conventions around what is legitimate diplomatic activity and what is not.

We will continue to put in place the authorities, the people, the resources and the transparency to defend our democratic institutions. I just wonder why it is the leader of the Conservative Party continues to politicize an issue that is a Canadian issue.

### Oral Questions

[Translation]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is because we want to protect democracy here in Canada.

The Prime Minister was not courageous enough to answer the questions. His minister said that the government will never tolerate foreign interference, but that is exactly what the government is doing right now. If the government and the Prime Minister want to protect our democracy, then they need to throw out the agent responsible for the threats against a member of Parliament here in Canada.

Will the Prime Minister show some courage and kick this agent out today?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last week, the Minister of Foreign Affairs summoned the Chinese ambassador to make clear the parameters of legitimate foreign operations. Canada will always condemn any activities that go beyond what is set out in agreements and the law.

What is more, we have already put in place the required authorities and strengthened transparency to defend our democratic institutions, and we will continue to do so.

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### IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the Century Initiative, the goal of which is to triple the population to 100 million by 2100 through immigration.

Even the initiative's creators admit that the initiative does not take into account the future of French or the political weight of Quebec or the first nations. It is strictly about economics. The Liberals never announced that they were espousing this idea, but their immigration targets for 2023 and 2025 already match the initiative's objectives.

If the government is going to use the Century Initiative as its immigration policy, will it at least announce it openly?

• (1430)

**Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is essential that every member of the House understand that it is possible to increase the number of newcomers in general while protecting the demographic weight of francophones across the country.

That is clear because, last year, for the first time in our country's history, our government met its target of 4.4% of francophone newcomers. That is very important. Last year, we also had the largest number of newcomers in Canada's history in general.

That is a good thing for our communities.

*Oral Questions*

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Century Initiative is strictly about economics. On February 1, its co-founder, Dominic Barton, a former director of McKinsey, was asked if he had considered the future of French. He replied, and I quote, “the focus...was just on economics. It wasn't thinking about the social context. It was on productivity.” There is not a single word about French in the 88 pages of the initiative.

Since it is not considering the future of French, what other studies on this topic did the government consult before adopting the initiative's immigration targets? Will it disclose those studies?

**Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have good news for my colleague. Our government is the one making the decisions on our country's immigration policy. It is not Mr. Barton, and it is not the Century Initiative.

This is very important. Our government's perspective is economic, social and demographic. It is essential to consider these factors because when we use them, we make the right decisions for our country.

Last year, we protected the demographic weight of francophones across our country and supported the francophone minority community.

\* \* \*

[*English*]**DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, CSIS informed Canadians and the government that multiple members of this House have been targeted by foreign interference. All parliamentarians need assurance that their safety, their families' safety and their freedom of expression are not threatened. Canadians need to know that their vote counts and that our democratic process is free of foreign interference.

The government needs to assure Canadians that it is acting on these serious allegations. Let us start with some transparency. Have all MPs impacted by interference been fully notified by the government?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I share the concerns of my colleague. That is why last week I tabled an annual report of CSIS, which illustrated that they have provided briefings to 49 federal parliamentarians. We will continue to provide the support that is needed for every member in this chamber to be able to do their job, secure in the knowledge that they are representing their communities in a way that is safe.

This is a government that will continue to do everything that is necessary to defend our democratic institutions, including the people who work in them.

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[*Translation*]**AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I imagine that just like everyone else you have a good appetite and enjoy a good meal. I also imagine that you like

to know what is in your food. This will no longer be the case because of the Liberal government.

The Liberals gave in to the financial interests of the industry, which wants to secretly introduce new GMOs into our food. Voluntary transparency no longer exists. It is an illusion.

Will the Liberals have the courage to stand firm against the interests of the big companies and defend the rights of consumers?

**Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question.

Yes, we did establish new rules. Yes, there will be a review process to protect the organic sector across Canada. Yes, we will continue to work with the sector to ensure its growth.

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[*English*]**DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when something happens once, it is a mistake. When something happens twice, it is a pattern. When something happens three or four or five times, it is a decision.

The Prime Minister and members of his party have all perpetuated the myth that the member for Wellington—Halton Hills knew about the threats against his family because he was briefed two years ago. It is false. At some point, someone made a conscious decision to gaslight Canadians.

Will someone on the other side have the courage to stand up and apologize for the disgusting attempt to discredit a member of this House?

● (1435)

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as my colleague across the aisle knows full well, both the Prime Minister and I directly reached out to the member for Wellington—Halton Hills to share the concerns with regard to the reports around foreign interference and his family. We offered him a briefing, and we will continue to provide that support going forward.

What is also important is that while the Conservatives talk tough when it comes to national security, they never back it up. They cut nearly a billion dollars out of the national security apparatus. They stood in the way of the additional tools to our national security apparatus, which are there to defend the members of this chamber. If they are serious about uniting behind the cause of defending democracy, they will start doing it today.

*Oral Questions*

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, he was not briefed two years ago on it. They know it and they are purposefully victim blaming. They are gaslighting Canadians. This is about a member of this House serving his country and the safety of his family in the balance. It is appalling that the Liberals are tarnishing this MP, but it is even worse that the diplomat who perpetuated it is still here, with rights even Canadians do not have, given to him by that government.

If there are no consequences, it will just happen again. The diplomat needs to go back to Beijing, and it needs to happen now. Will they do it today?

**Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I first want to say that there was a lot of heat in the House last week about this issue and not a lot of light. I think what we all, on this side of the House, want to do is express our concern for the member for Wellington—Halton Hills and for every Canadian who could be the subject, the target, of any interference from China, from Russia or from any other country in the world.

We will continue to take the steps to ensure that MPs are informed, that Canadians are informed and that we have a safe and secure democracy.

**Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is really trying hard to save face after his complete failure to protect our democracy, Canadians and members of this House from intimidation by the Beijing dictatorship. Last Friday, he doubled down and blamed and attacked the credibility of the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. The Prime Minister claimed that his office had not been briefed and that he knew nothing about this until recently.

Will the Prime Minister stop spreading this categorically false narrative and finally expel this Beijing agent today?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the only falsehood that is being spread today is the outrageous suggestion that the members of the government on this side of the chamber have no care or regard for the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. Nothing could be further from the truth. That is why we are continuing to support him, and we will support all members when it comes to doing their job so that it is free from foreign interference.

The Conservatives need to stop politicizing this issue. That simply plays into the hands of foreign interference. We need to be united in defending our democracy, and we can do that work successfully only if we do it together.

**Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that Canadians do not believe the Prime Minister and, most assuredly, the minister. Canada's spy agency did in fact notify the government two years ago regarding Beijing's threat to a member of this House. Even the Prime Minister's own national security adviser confirmed that her office had received this information in 2021.

Enough of the smoke and mirrors. Will the Prime Minister apologize for deliberately misleading this House, be a leader for once,

stand up for the security of all Canadians and finally expel that Beijing agent?

**The Speaker:** I just want to mention and make sure that everyone is clear that if you are misleading someone, you are doing it unintentionally, but “deliberately misleading” is not acceptable language. I am sure it was an error on the member—

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

**The Speaker:** As I was saying before I was rudely interrupted, I want to remind everyone that there is certain language that is not allowed in the chamber, and deliberately misleading is not allowed.

The hon. Minister of Public Safety.

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for reminding our colleagues in the Conservative Party about that principle. In all candour, the only way that we are going to be able to do the work of defending our institutions is if we rid ourselves of the kind of partisanship and politicization that has been plaguing this subject for weeks.

It should be abundantly clear that if we want to protect our democratic institutions and the people who work in them, including every member in this chamber and their families, then we must do that together. This government has put in place new authorities and transparencies. Let us get behind the cause of defending it so we can have real debates that are rooted in our democratic principles.

• (1440)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what an embarrassing answer. A member of the House and his family were targeted by a bully diplomat from Beijing following a vote in the House. The events occurred two years ago, yet the member was only informed last week.

Since then, the Liberals have been whipped into a frenzy. Instead of supporting our colleague, they have accused him. Who accused him? It was the member for Kingston and the Islands and the member for Winnipeg North. Worse, the member for Papineau and Prime Minister, who had to have known, claims that the opposition member knew, but the member in question told us that is not true.

Are all the Liberal ministers okay with defending a Beijing bully instead of a Canadian MP and his family?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, every minister in our government—and this should be true of every member of the House—agrees that we must work together to protect democratic institutions and to ensure that all members of the House, including our friend from Wellington—Halton Hills, are able to do their jobs as members of Parliament without foreign interference.

This has always been a priority for our government. We have implemented measures that did not exist under the previous government. We will continue to strengthen them further.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, how can the Liberals continue doing something that they never started doing in the first place? The Prime Minister did nothing. The Prime Minister's Office did nothing. The Minister of Foreign Affairs did nothing. The Minister of Public Safety did nothing. There were no arrests and no expulsions. This sends a clear message: Beijing can go on intimidating Canadian MPs, and this Prime Minister will just keep his eyes shut.

The only real consequences are that two members of the House were silenced for trying to put a stop to Liberal disinformation. Why is the Prime Minister putting up with the ongoing presence in Canada of a bullying agent from Beijing?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague seems confused. The person who did nothing to protect our democratic institutions against the already existing threat of foreign interference is the current Leader of the Opposition, when he was the minister responsible for democratic institutions.

Since we formed the government, we have taken action. We will be announcing more action to strengthen the measures we introduced in 2019 and 2021. We will keep on protecting our democratic institutions.

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**IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, no country in recent history has planned to triple its population in 75 years. The Century Initiative deserves a responsible, intelligent debate. Quebeckers have some questions, and rightly so. There has been no debate, and the federal government appears to be going ahead with it anyway.

Ottawa's immigration targets for 2025 already match those of the Century Initiative. Would the Liberals like to distance themselves from the Century Initiative, or are they confirming that this is Canada's immigration plan?

**Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am making decisions that are essential to supporting our economy and ensuring population growth in our community. It is important that every member of the House understand that protecting the demographic weight of francophones in this country can be achieved while also increasing the number of newcomers.

As the member well knows, it is up to the Government of Quebec to set the immigration levels for its province, and it is up to the federal government to set the levels for the entire country. I continue to increase the numbers to support our economy. It is good for Canada, and it is good for Quebec.

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** What a coincidence, Mr. Speaker. The federal government's targets are the same as those of the Century Initiative.

The Century Initiative's top priority is economic interests. Dominic Barton confirmed that they did not think about anything else. They did not think about the impact that tripling the population would have on the future of French. They also did not think about

indigenous languages or the political weight of the first nations. They did not think about the housing shortage.

The Century Initiative's targets are based only on economic interests, but can the government at least prove that it considered other factors before using those same targets?

● (1445)

**Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, it is not up to me to defend the Century Initiative's decisions. However, it is up to me to put forward ideas for our government. I am the one who decides on the targets set out in the federal government's immigration plan. Those targets take into account economic and social factors, particularly the decision to increase the number of francophone newcomers.

Last year, for the first time in Canada's history, we reached the target of 4.4% francophone newcomers. That is a good thing. I will continue to protect the French language.

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, they are congratulating themselves on reaching their target once in 20 years. That speaks volumes.

It is unthinkable to triple the population to 100 million without public debate. Doing so would mean fundamentally changing Canada and Quebec behind closed doors with input only from economic circles.

Immigration policies are not a virtue contest, they are public choices with real consequences that should be democratic. No one has asked Quebeckers or Canadians what they think. No one has asked workers, community organizations, groups dedicated to delivering services to the public what they think.

Why would economic circles have the first, last and only say on this?

**Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my friend is totally missing the mark. In reality, it is up to the Government of Quebec to set immigration thresholds for that province.

If members from the Bloc Québécois want the federal government to establish these thresholds for the Province of Quebec, then I invite them to appeal to my counterpart, Minister Fréchette. It would be interesting to hear how that conversation goes.

I have respected Quebec's jurisdictions. I have respected the terms of the agreement with Quebec and I increased the number of newcomers in general, in order to protect the French language while increasing the demographic weight of francophones.

[English]

### DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

**Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the current government has failed Canadians when it comes to foreign interference from Beijing. At least eight police stations have been set up to monitor Canadians on their own soil. Eleven MPs have had interference in either their nomination or election. Two years ago, a sitting MP had his family intimidated by a Beijing operative in Toronto. With all the inaction, the very least Canadians can expect is to have that operative kicked out of Canada. When will he be?

**Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to assure every member of the House that we take this situation extremely seriously, as we have been doing with foreign interference for many years. We will continue to look at the situation as we have heard it. We will continue to do due diligence, and the minister will act with the right decision at the right time. This House needs to hear that.

**Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, perhaps the minister should convene some courage.

I misspoke. I mentioned one MP whose family was intimidated. The Globe and Mail actually reported that it was MPs, plural. This should shake every MP in this House to the core. In sports, there is this saying: “Leaders anticipate, and losers react.” The current government is not even reacting. This is so much the case that the agents in Beijing wrote that they do not even care about the repercussions because there will not be any. Canadians deserve a government that will stand up for them. When will they get it?

**Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again, let me assure every member of this House that there are always repercussions if anybody breaks a law and if anybody goes outside their Vienna Convention responsibilities. Canada will continue to work to ensure that Canadians and members of this Parliament are safe.

**Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, two years ago, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service detected that a member of Parliament and his family were being targeted by an operative from Beijing in response to a vote in this House of Commons. We know that CSIS informed the national security adviser to the Prime Minister and the relevant departments at least two years ago. The Liberal government is now blaming CSIS for the government's own failure and inaction, and it has yet to expel any diplomats from Canada. Why is the Prime Minister allowing this Beijing operative to continue his interference campaign on Canadian soil?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government has always stood up for democracy in Canada and around the world, and it always will. We stood up for democracy when we supported the brave people of Ukraine with Operation Unifier. We stood up for democracy when we expelled four Russian diplomats after the deplorable nerve agent attack in the U.K. We stood up for democracy when we honoured our extradition treaty with the U.S. and detained Meng Wanzhou, despite unacceptable bullying by the government of China.

### Oral Questions

We will always stand up for democracy on this side.

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• (1450)

### DISASTER ASSISTANCE

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, more than 30,000 Albertans have been forced from their homes because of wildfires, and there is a serious lack of information about where they can get help and when.

In the absence of provincial leadership, can the Minister of Emergency Preparedness reassure the thousands of Albertans, particularly indigenous and Métis communities that have been affected by wildfires, that the federal government will be there to help with the recovery and rebuilding for as long as necessary?

**Hon. Bill Blair (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there are literally thousands of Albertans who have been significantly impacted by the wildfires. However, I also want to say that, throughout the past weekend, I have been in regular contact with my counterpart in the Alberta provincial government, Minister Ellis. The Prime Minister and the premier spoke earlier today, and about an hour ago, we received a request for federal assistance from the Province of Alberta. Everybody is working to help those people and to make sure that the supports that are needed are there for them to keep them safe and to make sure that we help them through this very difficult time.

I will take this opportunity as well to offer my very sincere thanks to all the first responders and firefighters, who are doing an extraordinary job.

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### HEALTH

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, during National Nursing Week, we recognize the critical role nurses play in our communities.

Last weekend, I travelled to Newfoundland and Labrador for important discussions on health care. I learned that there are 750 vacant nursing positions in that province. Ninety per cent of nurses experience burnout, and 85% believe that understaffing is creating unsafe conditions for patients.

Nurses called on the government to include an emergency retention fund in this year's budget, but no help was delivered. When will the Liberals finally provide this crucial support for Canada's nurses?

**Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we recognize that Canadians are proud of our health care system, but it is not meeting expectations these days. That is why we made a \$198.6-billion investment in our health care system back on February 7, and we expect that is going to help with things like the human resources and health care challenges that my colleague and friend has articulated so well.

### Oral Questions

I am glad that the member is meeting with nurses; I have been too. We recognize that it is a very challenging role in the health care system, and we have to do more to make sure that they are supported. This includes retention and better recruitment; we also have to take care of those who are working in that sector. We recognize, especially now that it is Mental Health Week, that there are repercussions for them.

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### SMALL BUSINESS

**Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in my riding of Mississauga—Erin Mills, I have heard from many constituents and small businesses about the need for urgent financial support.

Can the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance please update the House on how budget 2023 is going to help Canadians in my riding of Mississauga—Erin Mills and across Canada with reduced credit card fees for small businesses, incentives to build a greener economy and support for student loan interest?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Mississauga—Erin Mills for all her hard work on behalf of the residents of Mississauga.

Our budget presents a prudent fiscal plan that supports Canadians and Canadian businesses, lowers costs, increases tax deductions and lays the foundation for a prosperous economic future for generations to come. That is great news for Canadians. However, disappointingly, the Conservatives voted against this just last week. While their priority is on partisan games, our priority will be on supporting Canadians.

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### DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is spreading misinformation, saying that the member for Wellington—Halton Hills was briefed by CSIS two years ago about his family being targeted by a Beijing diplomat.

The Prime Minister knows this to be untrue. In fact, it was the Prime Minister who knew about it for two years, did nothing and kept the member in the dark. Now that he is resorting to victim blaming, how much lower can the Prime Minister go?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in this chamber, it never ceases to amaze me how absurd the suggestions can be from the Conservative Party on this issue.

Of course we have regard for the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. Of course we have regard for the safety and security of all members in this chamber, so that we can exercise our constitutional responsibilities by representing our constituents and doing so free and clear from any foreign interference.

That is why we are putting in place all the authorities and the transparency that are necessary to do that. It is far past the time at which the Conservatives need to abandon their rhetoric on this.

They need to roll up their sleeves and get behind the hard work, so that we can defend our democracy.

• (1455)

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, for two years, the Prime Minister covered up that a Beijing diplomat targeted the family of the member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

Then, when it became public, he falsely claimed that he knew nothing about it. Now the Prime Minister is spreading misinformation in a disgraceful attempt to impugn the character of the member, who is a victim of the Prime Minister's inaction.

Will the Prime Minister show any level of decency? Will he apologize to the member and Canadians for this disgusting display?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives can shout all they want, but that will not detract from the work that the government is doing to defend our democracy. It will not detract from the work we have done in setting up a committee of parliamentarians, which the Conservatives continue to play Jekyll and Hyde in. One week they sit on it; the next week they do not.

The Conservatives need to abandon these types of political tactics and do the hard work, roll up their sleeves and make sure that we protect this chamber as a place that is sacred, where we can have debates in the interest of all Canadians. That is what the Conservatives need to do, not continue along the lines of this hopped-up rhetoric.

**Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, rather than expel a diplomat who targeted an MP's family, the Liberal government did nothing for two years.

Last week, the Prime Minister peddled a narrative that it was the member for Wellington—Halton Hills who in fact knew and said nothing. Nobody in this chamber is debating that a Beijing official engaged in threats against a sitting member of this House.

When will the Prime Minister stop misleading Canadians to cover up for his failures, and expel the Beijing diplomat today?

**Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is really important to say that no one is misleading the House in this matter.

There are steps that need to be taken, always, if we are going to expel a diplomat. It is due process. Conservatives might say that we do not need to follow the rule of law. They do not need to say that, on that side of the House.

On this side of the House, we will always do due diligence, follow the evidence, follow the rule of law and make the right decision at the right time. The House can rest assured of that.



[Translation]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on the weekend, two former senior Liberal ministers stated that many people in Ottawa knew what was happening with the Conservative member and China, and yet the Prime Minister keeps saying that he did not know. All of Ottawa knew, except the Prime Minister.

As members know, the Standing Orders prevent me from saying what I think of the Prime Minister's attitude, but the one thing I can do is ask questions.

When will this government take action in the interest of all Canadians by expelling this so-called Beijing diplomat?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague knows full well that we will make the necessary decisions at the right time.

It is also important to remember that we are the only government that has taken the threat of foreign interference seriously. We put in place measures and strengthened them for the 2021 election.

We are obviously concerned about the situation of our colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills. That is exactly why we gave intelligence agencies further instructions.

**Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, at their convention, the Liberals came up with a solution to the Chinese interference issue: stop the media from reporting on it. This was literally one of the resolutions that the Liberals passed last weekend.

As they see it, the problem is not that China helped or threatened members and their families; the problem is that the media talks about it. It is disgraceful.

To slough off the burden of dealing with Chinese interference, the Liberals have proposed a solution worthy of the Chinese Communist party.

Can they assure that House that any consideration of this solution is out of the question?

[English]

**Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the thing about the Liberal Party is that its members can disagree on things. Our government has always respected, and will always respect, the independence of the press. Journalists need to be able to freely report the news as they see it. They need to be able to ask the tough questions and report on the facts as they see them. A free and independent press is fundamental to our democracy and is guaranteed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is also the best defence against disinformation.

• (1500)

[Translation]

**Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, that is not what the resolution said.

Last week, the Prime Minister blamed CSIS for failing to inform the member for Wellington—Halton Hills that he was the target of

### Oral Questions

threats from China. That is false. CSIS warned the Prime Minister's Office as early as 2021. The top security adviser to the Prime Minister confirmed this to the member. Why is this important? It is important because, once again, when it comes to Chinese interference, the Prime Minister is telling the opposite of the truth. What he has been saying since day one flies in the face of the truth. He has no credibility to get to the bottom of this.

When will there be an independent public inquiry?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as my colleague is well aware, we appointed an independent special rapporteur, the Right Hon. David Johnston. He is working on this as we speak. He has been reviewing all of the issues presented by the intelligence agencies for several weeks now. He has full and free access to the necessary information. We look forward to hearing his recommendations before the end of May. They will be precisely what my colleague's question is all about.

\* \* \*

[English]

### FIREARMS

**Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, one of the mass casualty commission's recommendations directly reflects the Liberal ban on firearms, Bill C-21. This bill would add firearms without consultation, and even use this tragedy to its advantage. The opposition was fierce; however, a revamped version has reared its ugly head. What we know clearly is that the monster from this tragic event was not a legal gun owner, and nor were his guns legal. In a recent op-ed, the authors state that the focus should be on securing the border, providing mental health support and diverting at-risk youth from gangs.

When will the Prime Minister start addressing violent repeat offenders and stop attacking grandpas who own a hunting rifle?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, respectfully, that is exactly what the government is doing. Last week, I was very proud to see that members of our caucus had put forward amendments to Bill C-21 that would strengthen the national ban that the government put into place on AR-15 style firearms, which have absolutely no legitimate recreational purpose in any of our communities. It is only the Conservatives who continue to put forward policies that amount to legalizing AR-15 style firearms. That is the wrong path. They need to get behind Bill C-21 so we can save lives.

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberals are at it again. The minister wants to talk about saving lives, but, under his watch, we have seen a violent wave of crime across the country. The Liberals have failed to fix the broken bail system. They are failing to address violent repeat offenders. What they are doing is bringing forward a confiscation plan that would only hurt hunters and sport shooters. In fact, I received a text this morning from Chief Rudy Turtle, a former NDP candidate, who told me that he is against any gun law that would impact their traditional practices.

When is the coalition finally going to target criminals and not—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Public Safety.

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there they go again; Conservatives are trying to stoke fear. If my colleague had actually read the amendments that are part of Bill C-21, he would have seen that we included a non-derogation clause specifically for indigenous persons, but he did not read them. Instead, the Conservatives are just filibustering. They are about their record of putting cuts to police budgets. They are about weakening our borders.

On this side of the House, we are going to keep our communities safe by strengthening our borders, by putting more resources into law enforcement and by passing strong gun control laws.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, every time a criminal uses a firearm in the commission of a crime, it costs society half a million dollars. A study published by Yanick Charette, a criminology professor at Laval University, states that the most expensive crime is homicide, costing an average of \$10 million per murder committed with an illegal firearm. Instead of addressing the source of this problem, the great Liberal-NPD-Bloc Québécois coalition would rather spend billions more on buying up legally owned guns from harmless hunters.

When are we going to stop the partisan games and actually work for public safety?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again, the Conservatives are out there with their tough talk, yet they did not take any real action during their time at the head of the previous government. Our government is making investments to support policing. This morning in the Peel region, my colleagues and I announced another \$390-million investment to protect our communities.

The Conservatives are the ones who cut police budgets. Our government will continue to support the good work of police services.

\* \* \*

• (1505)

**LABOUR**

**Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, public servants from the Canada Revenue Agency work hard to provide important services to Canadians. The Government of Canada believes in the collective bargaining process. The best deals are always the ones that are reached at the table.

Could the Minister of National Revenue update the House on the agreement in principle?

**Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle for her question.

After many weeks of hard work, the Canada Revenue Agency reached an agreement in principle with the taxation employees' union. We appreciate Canadians' patience and understanding during this time.

The best deals are reached at the bargaining table. These deals are fair, competitive and reasonable, and we are deeply grateful for the public servants who work hard to serve Canadians.

\* \* \*

**FINANCE**

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are fed up with the insulting cost of the Prime Minister's joyrides and the luxury vacations he takes at the taxpayers' expense while everyone else is struggling to pay their bills.

Could the Prime Minister stop living it up and lead by example by not recklessly spending Canadian taxpayers' hard-earned money?

**Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yes, the Prime Minister took a vacation with his family at Christmas. Is the opposition member's position that it is unacceptable for the Prime Minister to take a vacation at Christmas with his family? Is that the position of the member across the way?

The vast majority of the cost was for security. Does the member think that the Prime Minister does not need security?

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**THE ECONOMY**

**Mr. Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, inflation remains at a 40-year high, and gas prices are unaffordable and intentionally being made worse. Under the government, housing costs have doubled. Seniors are having to sell their home just to get by. Canadians struggle, while the Prime Minister continues his jet-setting ways, with a couple of days in New York with some celebrities and a week in Jamaica with a Trudeau Foundation donor. It is a good life for anyone who does not have a country to run.

When is the Prime Minister going to stop his wannabe celebrity ways and get serious about the affordability crisis?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives continue to talk down the Canadian economy, but the reality is that Canada is the best country in the world and is coping better with the challenging global economic environment than any country anywhere on the planet. Our economy grew by 2.5% in the first quarter. Last month, we added 41,000 jobs. That means we have added 900,000 jobs since the pandemic, with 129% of the jobs recovered in Canada, compared to 115% in the U.S.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Liberal government, Canadians are now desperate. Many are struggling to decide which bill to pay first. The government has driven up the cost of living, making everything more expensive. Vacations are simply out of the question for most Canadians, yet the Prime Minister spends enormous amounts in taxpayers' dollars taking luxurious foreign vacations.

Here is a novel idea: Would the Prime Minister consider staying home to actually help Canadians?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what Canadians are desperate about is the gloom and doom and the talking down of Canada and the Canadian economy that they are relentlessly hearing from the grouchy members opposite.

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

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland:** The reality is that Canada is a fantastic country and Canada is doing really well. Inflation in March was 4.3%. It has been going down for nine consecutive months, and the Bank of Canada is forecasting that it will be at 3% in the summer and below 3% by the end of the year. Canada is recovering remarkably.

• (1510)

**The Speaker:** I just want to remind the hon. members that we are in Parliament, and calling each other names really does not help the argument on either side.

The hon. member for Calgary Skyview.

\* \* \*

#### DISASTER ASSISTANCE

**Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, over 100 wildfires are burning in Alberta right now, threatening communities and forcing nearly 30,000 people from their homes. The situation has become so severe that the provincial government has declared a province-wide state of local emergency. While we are expecting more favourable conditions over the next few days, this will likely continue to be a major crisis.

Can the minister update the House on the government's conversations with Alberta and what is being done to help those affected?

**Hon. Bill Blair (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me thank my hon. colleague, the member for Calgary Skyview, for his question on behalf of the people of Al-

#### Oral Questions

berta. If I may, I would like to express my gratitude to the firefighters, first responders, emergency management individuals and indigenous leadership right across Alberta.

Canadians are there for each other. We have been working very closely with the Province of Alberta throughout this event. This afternoon, we received a formal request for assistance, and we have been working all weekend to identify the appropriate resources.

If I may, I would also like to point out that this week is Emergency Preparedness Week, and we urge all Canadians to know their risks and be prepared.

\* \* \*

#### INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the human rights tribunal ordered the government to ensure that indigenous children are given access to care and services they deserve in a timely manner, upholding Jordan's principle.

However, the government is evading that obligation by simply refusing to pay. We have had child therapists and speech pathologists who have been pushed to the point of bankruptcy because the government refused to pay the bill. The backlog in one of the latest cases is \$450,000 of deadbeat non-payments. These are children's lives that we are talking about.

Why is the government ignoring its legal obligations under Jordan's principle?

**Mr. Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this question is a really important one. Jordan's principle continues to offer important services all across Canada, but it is important for us to focus on the investments that we are making for children across Canada. That is why I am really happy to talk about the \$43-billion indigenous settlement, the largest that we have had, to make sure that we are getting it right when it comes to children moving forward.

I continue to want to work with the member opposite to make sure that we are not only supporting Jordan's principle but also supporting the children of indigenous communities all across Canada.

\* \* \*

#### ELECTORAL REFORM

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, this weekend, Liberals overwhelmingly supported a policy motion that is very similar to and consistent with Motion No. 76, put forward by my colleague, the hon. member for Kitchener Centre. This is extremely positive news, but the Prime Minister is quoted as saying that it would, despite the support of his party, never be a priority for the Prime Minister, because, he says, "The fact is, there is no consensus".

This motion calls for a national, non-partisan citizens' assembly to find that consensus.

Is "consensus" defined by the Prime Minister as including himself, and otherwise, there is no consensus?

*Business of Supply*

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government will continue to look for ways to increase Canadians' participation in the democratic process. We have a number of suggestions. The leader of the NDP and the Prime Minister, in the supply and confidence agreement, agreed to a number of elements that will improve access to voting. We are working on those kinds of issues, constructively, and the government has made it clear that there is no consensus in terms of the kind of reform that my hon. colleague is talking about.

We are focusing on issues that matter to Canadians in terms of affordability, fighting against climate change and other issues that we think are very important.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

- (1515)

[*Translation*]

### BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—INTERFERENCE BY THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

The House resumed from May 4 consideration of the motion.

**The Speaker:** It being 3:15 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 St. Albert—Edmonton relating to the business of supply.

[*English*]

Call in the members.

- (1525)

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

(*Division No. 311*)

### YEAS

Members

Aboultiaf	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Angus	Arnold
Bachrach	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Bergeron
Berthold	Bérubé
Bezan	Blaikie
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Block
Boulerice	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Cannings	Caputo
Carrie	Chabot
Chambers	Champoux
Chong	Collins (Victoria)
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
d'Entremont	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais

Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeschen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Fortin
Gallant	Garon
Garrison	Gaudreau
Gazan	Généreux
Genius	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Hoback	Hughes
Idlout	Jeneroux
Johns	Julian
Kelly	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Kwan
Lake	Lantsman
Larouche	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lemire
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd	Lobb
MacGregor	Maguire
Martel	Masse
Mathysen	May (Saenich—Gulf Islands)
Mazier	McCaughey (Edmonton West)
McLean	McPherson
Melillo	Michaud
Moore	Morantz
Morrice	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	Normandin
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Perkins
Plamondon	Poilievre
Rayes	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ruff
Savard-Tremblay	Scheer
Schmale	Seeback
Shields	Shiplely
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Singh	Small
Soroka	Steinley
Ste-Marie	Stewart
Strahl	Stubbs
Thériault	Therrien
Thomas	Tochor
Tolmie	Trudel
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vignola	Villemure
Vis	Vuong
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Williams	Williamson
Zarrillo	Zimmer — 170

### NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Atwin
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan

Bennett  
Blair  
Boissonnault  
Brière  
Chagger  
Champagne  
Chen  
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)  
Coteau  
Damoff  
Dhillon  
Dong  
Dubourg  
Dzerowicz  
El-Khoury  
Fergus  
Fisher  
Fortier  
Fraser  
Fry  
Gerretsen  
Guilbeault  
Hanley  
Hepfner  
Housefather  
Hutchings  
Ien  
Jowhari  
Kelloway  
Khera  
Kusmierczyk  
Lambropoulos  
Lamoureux  
Lattanzio  
LeBlanc  
Lightbound  
Longfield  
MacAulay (Cardigan)  
MacKinnon (Gatineau)  
Martinez Ferrada  
McDonald (Avalon)  
McKay  
McLeod  
Mendicino  
Miller  
Murray  
Ng  
O'Connell  
O'Regan  
Powlowski  
Robillard  
Romanado  
Sajjan  
Samson  
Scarpaleggia  
Serré  
Shanahan  
Sidhu (Brampton East)  
Sorbara  
St-Onge  
Tassi  
Thompson  
Turnbull  
Van Bynen  
Vandal  
Virani  
Wilkinson  
Zahid

Bittle  
Blois  
Bradford  
Casey  
Chahal  
Chatel  
Chiang  
Cormier  
Dabrusin  
Dhaliwal  
Diab  
Drouin  
Duguid  
Ehsassi  
Erskine-Smith  
Fillmore  
Fonseca  
Fragiskatos  
Freeland  
Gaheer  
Gould  
Hajdu  
Hardie  
Holland  
Hussen  
Iacono  
Jaczek  
Kayabaga  
Khalid  
Koutrakis  
Lalonde  
Lametti  
Lapointe  
Lauzon  
Lebouthillier  
Long  
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)  
MacDonald (Malpeque)  
Maloney  
May (Cambridge)  
McGuinty  
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)  
Mendès  
Miao  
Morrissey  
Naqvi  
Noormohamed  
Oliphant  
Petipas Taylor  
Qualtrough  
Rogers  
Sahota  
Saks  
Sarai  
Schieffe  
Sgro  
Sheehan  
Sidhu (Brampton South)  
Sousa  
Sudds  
Taylor Roy  
Trudeau  
Valdez  
van Koevenden  
Vandenbeld  
Weiler  
Yip  
Zuberi— 150

## PAIRED

Members

Bibeau

Duclos

## Routine Proceedings

Liepert

Perron— 4

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

**The Speaker:** I believe the hon. member for Don Valley West is rising on a point of order.

**Hon. Robert Oliphant:** Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to inform the House that the Government of Canada has declared the individual in question today, a diplomat from China, Mr. Zhao Wei, *persona non grata*.

Our government has been clear we will not tolerate any form of foreign interference in our internal affairs. The Minister of Foreign Affairs has taken this decision carefully after considering all factors. Diplomats have been warned that any type of engagement in interference in Canada—

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

• (1530)

**The Speaker:** I will interrupt the point of order, because I have another point of order regarding the information.

The hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle has the floor.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** Mr. Speaker, this sounds awfully like a political speech. The government had multiple opportunities to respond to questions in the House of Commons and has not.

I would just point out there is a rubric coming up in Routine Proceedings called statements by ministers. If they have something to say, that would be the time to say it.

**The Speaker:** I am afraid the hon. member has a good point, and I am going to go along with that.

As the Chair, I thought maybe somebody would want the information, but we will wait for it to come forward.

## 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.

\* \* \*

### PETITIONS

#### HUMAN RIGHTS

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, this is a very significant petition dealing with an issue that is very topical. It is that Canadian corporations based in Canada contribute to human rights abuses and environmental damage in other countries. The people who protest these abuses and defend their rights are often harassed, attacked or killed, and in this group are particularly indigenous peoples, women and marginalized groups who are under threat.

*Routine Proceedings*

We know the process set up for observing responsible enterprise of Canadian corporations lacks the tools to actually ensure Canadian corporations do support human rights and operate in ways that make us proud.

These concerned citizens ask that the companies be prevented from adverse human right impacts and environmental damage through global operations and supply chains; require companies to do their due diligence, and Canada lacks compared to other countries in requiring companies to do due diligence; assess how their actions may be contributing to human rights abuses; have meaningful consequences for companies that fail to exercise this due diligence; and establish a legal right for people who have been harmed by Canadian corporations operating outside of Canada to seek justice in Canadian courts.

\* \* \*

## FALUN GONG

**Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskasing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise once again to table a petition regarding the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners.

The petitioners bring to the attention of the House the fact that the Chinese government has waged a nationwide persecution campaign against Falun Gong practitioners. This has resulted in arrests, with many being imprisoned for up to 20 years. They add that this includes torture and abuse. They also indicate that investigators have concluded that tens of thousands of Falun Gong prisoners of conscience have been put to death and that their organs were seized involuntarily for sale at high prices.

The petitioners call on this Parliament to pass a resolution to establish measures to stop the Chinese Communist regime's crime of systemically murdering Falun Gong practitioners for their organs, amend Canadian legislation to combat forced organ harvesting and publicly call for an end to the persecution of Falun Gong in China.

• (1535)

## MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

**Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here signed by constituents and others. They are objecting to medical assistance in dying being used for mental illness. The petitioners believe this is a very drastic step and that medical assistance in dying should not be used for mental health.

\* \* \*

## 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. 1331, 1332, 1337 and 1341.

[Text]

Question No. 1331—**Mr. Blaine Calkins:**

With regard to the Department of National Defense (DND): (a) what specific activities were conducted on the former DND site near Burnt Lands Road in Almonte, Ontario; (b) what chemicals were used on the site; (c) what tests were conducted on the site; and (d) what is DND's explanation for the high number of cases of (i) glioblastoma, (ii) other cancers, diagnosed in people who used to live in close proximity to the site?

**Mr. Bryan May (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the Almonte Antennae Yard was one of two unattended receiver sites that picked up incoming signals and relayed them through buried land lines to the main receiver inside the Diefenbunker, formerly known by its military designation, Canadian Forces Station, CFS, Carp. The Almonte site was not occupied on a regular basis by National Defence personnel and did not have the services and infrastructure associated with most military sites. It consisted of a single 26-square-metre concrete building and an expansive antennae field. Any garbage generated during routine maintenance was removed, and no hazardous materials were stored at the site. The site ceased operations in 1993.

With regard to part (b), the only chemicals used on the site were pesticides applied to restrict the growth of mixed brush and weeds. In 1991, a total of 40 litres of Spike 80W was applied at the CFS Carp, Almonte and Dunrobin sites, a total of four hectares.

With regard to part (c), soil testing conducted at the other remote receiver site, Dunrobin, and at CFS Carp in the fall of 1994 did not find any detectable pesticide residue. In July 1995, National Defence prepared an Environmental Disclosure Report for the Almonte Antennae Yard, which concluded that “since the Almonte spraying program was done at the same time [as spraying at Dunrobin and CFS Carp], it is logically assumed that no pesticide residue exists within this soil. No further action is necessary”.

With regard to part (d), the provincial public health unit is responsible for investigating and responding to community reports of disease clustering. The provincial public health unit has not raised any related concerns to National Defence.

Question No. 1332—**Mr. Stephen Ellis:**

With regard to the Statistics Canada Biobank at the National Microbiology Laboratory: (a) how many Canadians' (i) blood, (ii) urine, (iii) DNA, samples are currently stored there; (b) of the samples in (a), how many have been there for (i) less than a year, (ii) one to three years, (iii) over three years; (c) what are the guidelines and methods used by the Biobank related to how the samples are (i) used, (ii) stored, (iii) disposed of, (iv) anonymized; and (d) what are the timelines for sample disposal?

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), there are approximately 50,000 to 60,000 stored samples in the Statistics Canada biobank from Canadians who have responded to the Canadian health measures survey and the Canadian COVID-19 antibody and health survey. All holdings are from consenting Canadians and most have contributed multiple samples.

The samples include blood: 59,100 Canadian respondents for a total of 417,400 samples. The initial blood sample is separated into many smaller samples, such as serum, plasma, whole blood and dried blood spots. The samples include urine: 33,200 Canadian respondents for a total of 121,700 samples. The initial urine sample is separated into many smaller urine samples. The samples include DNA: 10,800 Canadian respondents for a total of 10,800 samples. Additionally, the samples include saliva: 11,300 Canadian respondents for a total of 11,300 samples.

With regard to part (b)(i) less than a year, 2022: there are 27,800 samples from 16,500 Canadians. With regard to part (ii) one to three years, 2019-21: there are 114,200 samples from 12,700 Canadians. With regard to part (iii) over three years, 2007-18: there are 473,800 samples from 31,000 Canadians.

With regard to part (c)(i), samples are only used for research projects at Canadian facilities and with Canadian researchers. Project proposals go through an internal feasibility review by Statistics Canada experts, followed by a second review by an inter-departmental expert biobank advisory committee. The biobank advisory committee requires the following items to grant approval: an approved feasibility review, a completed proposal, research ethics board certificates and proof of funding for the project.

Statistics Canada must approve the researchers to work on the project. Only the targeted survey samples required for the approved projects and relevant data are shared. The samples at the biobank contain no identifiable data. The survey data is connected to the biospecimen sample results using a unique digital identifier. The survey data and samples must be stored and analyzed by the researchers in a protected physical and virtual environment that must meet Statistics Canada security requirements. Laboratory service agreements must be signed with all laboratories storing and analyzing the biobank samples and the same rules as stated above apply.

All biobank projects that have been approved are listed at this location: Biobank projects.

With regard to part (c)(ii), samples are stored at the National Microbiology Laboratory's Biorepository, which is compliant with ISO 9001 regarding their quality management system: ISO - ISO 9001 and related standards — Quality management.

With regard to part (c)(iii), samples are destroyed by the reference laboratory after a sample is used for an approved research project. Canadian respondents can also request their samples be removed and destroyed at any time.

With regard to part (c)(iv), all information in the Statistics Canada biobank and the survey data is protected by the Statistics Act, the Privacy Act and the Access to Information Act. Collected samples undergo a thorough and strict labelling process. Only authorized Statistics Canada employees have access to samples and survey data. Data does not include personal information. Under the authority of the Statistics Act, samples and data in the Statistics Canada biobank will always be kept secure and confidential.

Internal standard operating procedures, SOPs, are established and followed for each step.

### *Routine Proceedings*

With regard to part (d), samples are stored in the Statistics Canada biobank until they no longer have scientific value or when a respondent requests their samples be removed and destroyed.

Samples can also be disposed of after they have been analyzed for a research project. The laboratory has one month to destroy the samples after Statistics Canada has notified to proceed with the destruction of the samples.

Visit the Statistics Canada Biobank website for more information.

### Question No. 1337—**Ms. Michelle Rempel Garner:**

With regard to the Mission Cultural Fund (MCF) since November 4, 2015: (a) what are the details of all spending from this fund, broken down by month, including, for each initiative funded, the (i) name of recipient, (ii) amount, (iii) location, (iv) date, (v) purpose, (vi) description of related events; (b) what was the amount spent from the fund, broken down by month; (c) what is the current status of the fund; and (d) if the fund is no longer active, (i) what happened to the remaining money in the fund, (ii) has the government replaced or transitioned the fund with another similar type of program, and, if so, which one?

**Hon. 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.

With regard to parts (a) to (d), Global Affairs Canada manages an extensive network of 176 missions in 110 countries worldwide. The department undertook an extensive preliminary search in order to determine the amount of information that would fall within the scope of the question and the amount of time that would be required to prepare a comprehensive response. The department concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question would require a collection of information that is not possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

The mission cultural fund, MCF, is not a grant program but an enabling fund for missions in Global Affairs Canada's international network to promote and leverage Canada's cultural presence abroad and advance foreign policy priorities. Therefore, there are no recipients for the fund, as there would be in a grant program. The department is able, however, to provide which diplomatic mission received the funds to implement the initiatives.

The MCF expired on March 31, 2023. The MCF annual allocation for 2022-23, provided by the creative export strategy, was fully expended.

### Question No. 1341—**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan:**

With regard to the Expanded Canada-India Air Transport Agreement announced on November 15, 2022: (a) what was Canada's position regarding the inclusion of Amritsar as part of the list of cities that Canadian carriers would have access to; (b) did Canada advocate to include direct flights to and from the Punjab region as part of the agreement, and, if not, why not; and (c) why was Amritsar not included in the agreement?

*Routine Proceedings*

**Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, India is an important and growing air market for Canada and for Canadians, for business, tourism, trade and visiting family and friends. The Canada-India air transport agreement, which dates to 1982, was last amended in 2012. It allowed operations by multiple Canadian and Indian airlines, with permission for 35 passenger flights per week for each country, but each side had limited a maximum of 14 flights per week to and from the same city. Canadian airlines were authorized to serve Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Kolkata, Chennai and Hyderabad. Indian carriers were authorized to serve Toronto, Montreal, Edmonton, Vancouver and two other cities to be selected by India. The air transport agreement also allowed unrestricted all-cargo services and the right to code-share.

To ensure there continued to be enough air capacity within the air transport agreement to meet the demand of Canadians, the Government of Canada was committed to pursuing a more liberalized agreement with India, including unlimited flights instead of a capped weekly amount, and access to more cities within the Indian market, including in the Punjab region. As part of this negotiation process and due to the importance of this file for Canadians, the Minister of Transport was heavily involved, including through an in-person meeting on May 3, 2022, with Minister Scindia, India's Civil Aviation Minister. In this meeting, the Minister of Transport directly requested from his counterpart unlimited weekly flights and access to Amritsar for Canadian airlines.

For months, negotiations continued between officials from Canada and India. On November 15, 2022, Transport Canada announced an important expansion of the Canada-India air transport agreement. The expanded agreement allows designated airlines to operate an unlimited number of flights between the two countries, whereas the previous agreement limited each country to 35 flights per week. During negotiation of the expansion, Canada also actively sought access to all cities in India, Amritsar included, for Canadian airlines, and access to all cities in Canada for Indian airlines.

Air transport agreements are negotiated between two countries and one partner cannot choose to unilaterally expand its rights. Until agreement can be reached regarding access to additional cities in India, including in the Punjab region, Canadian airlines cannot be authorized to fly there.

However, India is well aware of Canada's and the Minister of Transport's interest in this matter. Officials of both countries have agreed to remain in contact to discuss further expansion of the agreement and the rights of Canadian air carriers. Other cities than those listed in the air transport agreement in both countries, including in the Punjab region, can be served indirectly through code-share services.

Canada is committed to continuing to negotiate new and expanded agreements to promote the interests of Canadians, as well as the trade and tourism sectors.

\* \* \*

[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. 1328 to 1330, 1333 to 1336, 1338 to 1340 and 1342 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1328—**Ms. Leah Gazan:**

With regard to the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Plan, broken down by province and territory since their respective agreements were announced: (a) how many new childcare spaces have been created, broken down by non-profit, public and for-profit child care spaces; (b) of the non-profit spaces created, how many are in family-based care; (c) how many early childhood educator (ECE) jobs have been created; (d) how much have average wages increased for ECEs and other child care workers and assistants; (e) how much of the federal investment has been delivered; (f) to date, what is the average fee reduction; and (g) which jurisdictions have submitted annual progress reports and have made these reports available to the public?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1329—**Mr. Chris Lewis:**

With regard to the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, broken down by year for each of the last five years: (a) what was the total amount spent on airport screening; and (b) what was the total amount collected by the government from air travellers security charges?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1330—**Mr. Chris Lewis:**

With regard to asylum claims received by the government since 2013, broken down by year: (a) how many asylum claims were received; (b) how many of the claimants arrived via (i) air, (ii) land, (iii) sea, (iv) other or unknown; and (c) of the claimants who arrived via land, how many entered Canada at an official port of entry versus an irregular border crossing?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1333—**Mr. Kelly McCauley:**

With regard to non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) signed by government officials related to COVID-19 vaccine contracts: (a) how many officials were required to sign such agreements; (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by job title; and (c) how many of these NDAs are time-limited and how many are indefinite?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1334—**Mr. Scott Aitchison:**

With regard to the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat, broken down by year for each of the last three years: (a) what was the number of employees or full time equivalents working at the secretariat, broken down by employee category; (b) what was the total amount spent on (i) salary and benefits, (ii) travel and hospitality; (c) how many meetings were booked; and (d) what are the details of all meetings, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) description, (iv) purpose?

(Return tabled)



*Speaker's Ruling***Question No. 1335—Mr. Eric Duncan:**

With regard to bonuses paid out at Crown corporations in the 2020-21 and the 2021-22 fiscal years, broken down by year and by Crown corporation: (a) what was the total amount paid out in bonuses; and (b) how many and what percentage of officials (i) at or above the executive (EX) level (or equivalent), (ii) below the EX level (or equivalent), received bonuses?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1336—Mr. Charlie Angus:**

With regard to federal funding in the constituency of Timmins—James Bay, between February 28, 2020, and February 2023: (a) what applications for funding have been approved and what are their details, including, for each, the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they applied for funding, (iv) date of the application and the amount applied for, (v) date on which the applicant was informed that funding was approved, (vi) date on which a press release was issued regarding the awarding of the funding, (vii) details of any press releases regarding the awarding of funding; (b) what funds, grants, loans and loan guarantees has the government issued through its various departments and agencies in the constituency of Timmins—James Bay that did not require direct application for the applicant, including, for each, the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they applied for funding, (iv) date of the application and the amount applied for, (v) date on which the applicant was informed that funding was approved, (vi) date on which a press release was issued regarding the awarding of the funding, (vii) details of any press releases regarding the awarding of funding; and (c) what projects have been funded in the constituency of Timmins—James Bay by organizations tasked with subgranting government funds (such as Community Foundations of Canada) and what are their details, including, for each, the (i) name of the organization, (ii) department, (iii) program and sub-program under which they applied for funding, (iv) date of the application and the amount applied for, (v) date on which the applicant was informed that funding was approved, (vi) date on which a press release was issued regarding the awarding of the funding, (vii) details of any press releases regarding the awarding of funding?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1338—Mr. Jamie Schmale:**

With regard to the claim by the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance in the House on March 20, 2023 that, "The increase this year will be one cent per can of beer" in relation to the increase in the alcohol escalator tax: (a) what figures did the minister use to arrive at the one cent per can number; and (b) does the minister have any examples of brands of beer where a 6.3 percent tax increase would only increase the cost by one cent, and, if so, what are they?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1339—Mr. Jamie Schmale:**

With regard to government advertising on TikTok: (a) which departments, agencies, Crown corporations or other government entities were advertising with TikTok when the government announced that it would ban TikTok on government devices as of February 28, 2023; (b) for each department that was advertising with TikTok, did they immediately stop all advertising on TikTok, and, if not, why not; (c) for each entity in (a) that did not immediately stop their TikTok advertising, on what date will they cease advertising on TikTok; and (d) how much was spent on advertising on TikTok (i) during the 2022 calendar year, (ii) between January 1, 2023, and February 28, 2023, (iii) since March 1, 2023?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1340—Mr. Jamie Schmale:**

With regard to the decision issued by the Pest Management and Regulatory Agency (PMRA) on October 4, 2022, to phase-out the wood preservative Pentachlorophenol by October 4, 2023: (a) what is PMRA's rationale for having different Pentachlorophenol phase-out timelines than the regulators in the United States; (b) which industry stakeholders were consulted by PMRA prior to the decision; (c) what applications for oil-based wood preservative alternatives have been received, but not yet authorized, by Health Canada, including, for each, the (i) applicant, (ii) product description, (iii) stage of each application, (iv) date application was received, (v) expected timeline before a decision on approval is made; and (d) has the PMRA analysed the impact of making such a decision without having a viable oil-based wood preservative alternative, and, if so, what is the expected impact on the (i) supply of treated wood poles, (ii) supply of telecommunications and electricity

services, (iii) manufacturers of pressure-treated wood products, (iv) workers of the manufacturers and their families?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 1342—Mr. Joël Godin:**

With regard to the issuing of passports: (a) how many passports were mailed to the wrong address, broken down by month since January 1, 2022; (b) how many reports of individuals receiving (i) a passport with errors, (ii) another individual's passport, has the government received; and (c) what is the protocol when an individual receives another individual's passport in error, including whether or not the Privacy Commissioner is notified?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

**PRIVILEGE**

FOREIGN INTERFERENCE AND ALLEGED INTIMIDATION OF MEMBER—  
SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker:** I am now ready to rule on the question of privilege raised on May 2 by the member for Wellington—Halton Hills concerning alleged acts of intimidation by the Government of the People's Republic of China.

In his intervention, the member alleged that he was a victim of intimidation by Mr. Wei Zhao, a diplomat representing the People's Republic of China in Canada, who targeted him and his family. He noted that he was made aware of this information following a report by *The Globe and Mail* the previous day. According to the article, the attempts came in retaliation for a motion that the member moved in February 2021. He asserted that this constituted intimidation of a member in the context of their parliamentary duties and that it also constituted an interference in parliamentary proceedings. He concluded his remarks by suggesting that both these affronts were a breach of the privileges of the House. The member for New Westminster—Burnaby echoed these arguments.

The government House leader, while recognizing that foreign interference is a very serious matter, countered that this question of privilege did not rise to the threshold needed to make a prima facie finding. In support of this assertion, the government House leader made the three following points. First, the member for Wellington—Halton Hills failed to raise the question of privilege at the earliest opportunity, noting that the member could have raised the question of privilege the day before. Second, the alleged intimidation occurred outside of Canada, and beyond the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Canada. Finally, he argued the claim referenced in *The Globe and Mail* article was uncorroborated. In an intervention earlier today, the House leader of the official opposition disputed these arguments.

*Speaker's Ruling*

[Translation]

In considering this question of privilege, the Chair will address in reverse order both the points raised by the member for Wellington—Halton Hills and the government House leader.

The timeliness criteria is an important principle of which all members should be mindful when raising a question of privilege.

*House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, at page 145 sets out:

The matter of privilege to be raised in the House must have recently occurred and must call for the immediate action of the House. Therefore, the Member must satisfy the Speaker that he or she is bringing the matter to the attention of the House as soon as practicable after becoming aware of the situation. When a Member has not fulfilled this important requirement, the Speaker has ruled that the matter is not a prima facie question of privilege.

● (1540)

[English]

Speaker Milliken, on May 29, 2008, at page 6277 of the Debates, explained how the Chair operationalizes this important principle.

In making a prima facie ruling on another question of privilege, he stated:

The Chair has always exercised discretion on this point given the need to balance the need for timeliness with the important responsibility members have of marshalling facts and arguments before raising matters of such import in the House.

Similar to that question of privilege, and given the gravity of the claims made by the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, the Chair does not find the delay before the question of privilege was raised to be unreasonable.

[Translation]

The Chair will now turn to the contention that the apparent intimidation occurred outside of Canada, and that it was not corroborated.

It is not clear to the Chair, based on the information presented, where exactly the alleged events occurred or whether these alleged threats were indeed carried out. However, when the Speaker is making a prima facie finding, he is not making a finding of fact. At this stage the Chair is simply indicating that, on its face, the matter appears serious enough to warrant priority of debate.

A former clerk of the House, when appearing at the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs on February 19, 2002, echoed this understanding, and I quote:

The Speaker's role ought to be explained, and it is that the issue put before the Speaker is not a finding of fact, it is simply whether on first impression the issue that is before the House warrants priority consideration over all other matters, all other orders of the day that are before the House.

[English]

I will turn to the issues raised by the member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

*House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, at page 57, describes the privilege and immunities of the House and its members in such way as to “allow them to perform their parliamentary functions unimpeded”.

It further refers to, at the same page:

“...the powers possessed by the House to protect itself, its Members and its procedures from undue interference so that it can effectively carry out its principal functions which are to legislate, deliberate and hold the government to account.

Threats to intimidate and interfere in a member's actions can impede their ability to freely carry out their parliamentary duties to the benefit of their constituents and the House.

[Translation]

In a past ruling on another matter of intimidation of a member, one of my predecessors noted on March 6, 2012, at page 5835 of the Debates, and I quote, “threats or attempts to influence a member's actions are considered to be breaches of privilege.”

[English]

The Speaker went on to say, at the same page:

These threats demonstrate a flagrant disregard of our traditions and a subversive attack on the most fundamental privileges of this House.

On September 19, 1973, in response to a question of privilege regarding the intimidation of a member, Speaker Lamoureux noted one of the fundamental principles of parliamentary privilege at page 6709 of Debates.

He stated:

I have 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.

● (1545)

[Translation]

The Chair will now to address the claim that the actions of Mr. Wei Zhao, directed towards the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, interfered with the proceedings of the House. The member for Wellington—Halton Hills argued that in the attempt to intimidate him, these actions, by extension, also sought to influence others in the discharge of their parliamentary duties.

[English]

As I said earlier, it is not clear whether the alleged threats were carried out. Indeed, in the present case, the member only became aware of the threats through a newspaper article based on presumed leaks from intelligence authorities, which were subsequently confirmed by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. The member did not indicate how he was impeded in his parliamentary duties, but he nonetheless considered the threats as real.

[Translation]

The Chair has no higher responsibility than to ensure that the rights and privileges of the members, and of the House, are respected. I considered the gravity of the information that has been put before the House, the origins of the information and the potential impact on our parliamentary duties.

[English]

The Chair agrees that the matter raised by the member, that is that a foreign entity tried to intervene in the conduct of our proceedings through a retaliatory scheme targeting him and his family, squarely touches upon the privileges and immunities that underpin our collective ability to carry out our parliamentary duties unimpeded. On the face of it, the Chair believes this matter to be serious enough to take priority of debate over all other parliamentary proceedings.

Accordingly, the Chair finds this to be a *prima facie* question of privilege and invites the member for Wellington—Halton Hills to move his motion.

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC)** moved:

That the *prima facie* contempt concerning the intimidation campaign orchestrated by Wei Zhao against the Member for Wellington—Halton Hills and other Members be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

• (1550)

He said: Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your very detailed arguments and significant ruling. I am speaking entirely extemporaneously because I was not exactly certain how you would rule.

Allow me to gather my thoughts by beginning to say that the fathers of Confederation in 1867 designed a Constitution that has endured for more than a century and a half. To be sure, it has had certain modifications over the years, the most recent and largest of which was the 1982 patriation and addition of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The fundamental structure of the Constitution remains as it was written over a century and a half ago in 1867. That fundamental construct created a division of power between three different branches of the system: the executive branch, the judicial branch and the legislative branch. The essential balance of power in that system is between the legislative and executive branches of government.

As members know, we do not directly elect our government in Canada. The government is appointed. It is appointed by the Crown based on the member of the House that has the majority support of the 338 members of the chamber, and because we do not directly elect our government, as it government is appointed, it becomes even more important that the legislative branch of the system provides for a sufficient accountability mechanism to ensure that Canadians are well governed in between elections.

What has transpired here in recent weeks makes it clear that the executive branch of government has failed in its responsibility to protect the safety and security of Canadians, to protect the safety and security of members of the House and their families. In that context, it becomes even more important for the members of the House and its committees to uphold section 18 of the Constitution Act, which sets in place the rights, privileges and immunities of the legislative branch of our system.

### Privilege

I am very comforted by the fact that Parliament has risen to the occasion to take on its role in defending members of the House when the executive branch of government has failed. I hope when the procedure and House affairs committee examines this matter they will look at the totality of evidence that got us to this place, which involves a person in Canada, accredited by the executive branch of government, with more rights than Canadian citizens because, as members know, diplomats are immune from criminal prosecution.

We all remember the famous case several years ago under a previous Liberal government where a Russian diplomat tragically mowed down, in the streets of Ottawa, an innocent woman and her friend, leading to the death of that woman. We all remember that then foreign affairs minister John Manley, who, under the terms of the Vienna Convention, rightfully indicated that it was not possible for the diplomat to be arrested and charged in Canada with a criminal offence because the diplomat had more rights than ordinary Canadians, as diplomats do. They are afforded the immunities of diplomacy to do their work.

What becomes even more important in that context is that the executive branch outside of law enforcement, outside of Crown prosecution, exercise its prerogatives under article 9 of the Vienna Convention, which makes it clear that the Crown has the right to declare *persona non grata* any person in Canada for no reason who is a diplomat accredited by the Government of Canada. The executive branch of our system failed in that regard when information came to light that this person in Canada, this person accredited by the executive branch, was targeting MPs by trying to gather information about their families in the PRC. Because the executive branch of government failed, it becomes important for the legislative branch to step up to the plate to defend MPs and their families.

That is the wisdom of the constitutional structures that were put in place in 1867, and why I am so comforted, Mr. Speaker, that you have made a decision to find a *prima facie* case.

• (1555)

I will finish by saying this: It is a serious thing to intimidate a member of the House directly or indirectly to affect the outcome of a debate or to affect the outcome of votes in this place. We know, in the last decade or so, that the rise of authoritarianism around the world has put democracies on their back heels, and in that context, it becomes even more important to make it clear that we, as one of the world's oldest, continuous democracies, set an example for all the world to see that we will not be intimidated, that we will not be cowed and that we will stand up for the democratic rights of Canadians as expressed in this place. We will ensure that members and their families are not subject to these foreign interference threat activities.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your ruling. I look forward to the deliberations and ultimately to the report and recommendation of the procedure and House affairs committee.

*Privilege*

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, this is, of course, a very serious issue that I am glad to see the government has finally acted on. However, my concern is that it took weeks of pressure from multiple parties. It took weeks of the member for Wellington—Halton Hills asking for action from the government, yet we did not see this diplomat expelled until just now.

I am wondering if the member for Wellington—Halton Hills could talk about a concern that I have, which is how we would know if there were more diplomats. How do we have the transparency and the confidence that this has not been happening with other diplomats or happening in other circumstances to other members and other people within the House?

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Mr. Speaker, I have asked myself that question many times in recent weeks.

The Prime Minister alone is responsible for the machinery of government, for the organizational structure of the Government of Canada. The Prime Minister is primarily responsible, among all the ministers of the Crown, for national security. The Prime Minister is also primarily responsible for the government's relationship to Parliament.

When we take into account the Prime Minister's two primary responsibilities, one for national security and one for the government's relationship to Parliament, and we take into account his sole responsibility for the machinery of government, it is confounding that the government, over recent months, has not come clean with parliamentarians about the threats to themselves and their families, particularly after the story broke in early November of the PRC's interference and threat activities against political candidates, political parties and subsequently against members of the House. It is inexplicable why, after six months, the government has not gotten a handle on the situation.

It is very concerning what other information the government knows that it has not communicated to those who are being targeted, and what other information they are not aware of that could be a threat more broadly to the safety and security of this country. However, I think this is a much broader debate, which I hope will be taken up by other committees of the House and by the floor of the House because, as CSIS has indicated for many years, foreign interference threat activities are a national threat. They are a serious threat undermining fundamental rights and freedoms. They undermine our economy. They undermine long-term prosperity. These are not small things, and I think the House and the government needs to be seized with it. Clearly, the House is seized with it. I hope that the government begins to be seized with this matter and gets control over it.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured to take part in the discussion we are having.

It is a good thing the member began his speech by saying that he had not really prepared anything and that he was a bit surprised and was speaking extemporaneously. Without any notes, he accurately quoted our Constitution and outlined the fundamental steps of how our country was created. More importantly, he spoke of the democratic protections we enjoy here in the House, precisely because we

are protected by the fact that, in the House, we represent the people, and we must keep it that way.

• (1600)

[*English*]

What we have seen over the last few days is proof of courage. This member has shown, without a shadow of a doubt, that even if we are the target of a foreign country, we have to stay on our feet. This is what the member has shown to us today and through the last weeks, if not for the last couple of years. He has shown us courage.

[*Translation*]

This member, who has been a parliamentarian for nearly 20 years, has clearly demonstrated the courage that can and should inspire us in the exercise of our duties.

On a more personal note, we know that this member is a serious, rigorous and hard-working man, but he is also a family man.

What has this experience been like for his family?

[*English*]

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Mr. Speaker, my immediate family here in Canada is okay. We are fine, but, as I have said previously, I cut off communications with my family in the PRC out of an abundance of caution. Clearly, these events are very public. Like other cases involving Canadians who have family in the PRC, or Canadian consular cases in the PRC, these are difficult things to address and deal with.

With that all said, I know one thing: We cannot be cowed. We cannot be intimidated by these threats. We have to stand up for the fundamental principles and values that underpin this country and its institutions. As difficult as it may be to stand up for those fundamental principles in the face of intimidation threats, we cannot but take that course. To do otherwise is to undermine these foundational principles, undermine our democracy and hand to our children and grandchildren much weaker institutions that are subject to these subversive and coercive forces.

Generations past made very difficult decisions to stand up for these principles. It is our generation's task to do the same thing in the face of a very different threat than previous generations faced.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to salute the courage of the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. He has demonstrated a great deal of dignity given the situation he has been placed in.

As we know, he raised a question of privilege. As a representative of the NDP, I supported his question of privilege. Both of us cited several cases that indicate that this is undoubtedly a question of privilege that should be raised and debated in the House. The member for Wellington—Halton Hills described a situation that clearly demonstrated the importance of this debate.

I would like to ask my colleague a question, in addition to thanking him for raising this point in the House of Commons. Does he believe that this now merits a public inquiry as quickly as possible so we can get to the bottom of this?

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Mr. Speaker, I believe that a public inquiry into the general problem of foreign interference is needed.

[English]

However, I also know and believe one second thing, which is that we cannot allow the process, whether matters have been referred to NSIRA, NSICOP or a special rapporteur, which could lead to a public inquiry, to prevent us, prevent this chamber or its committee, the procedure and House affairs committee, or prevent the Government of Canada, the executive branch of our system, from taking immediate action in regard to threats that are directed to members and their families or directed to Canadians who are members of diaspora ethnocultural communities. We have to be able to do both: take immediate action and, at the same time, look at some of the systemic problems that have been brought to light over the last number of months, as reports about foreign interference threat activities have surfaced.

I say “yes” to a public inquiry, but also “yes” to immediate action, and not delay as a way to prevent action by deflecting to the process of NSIRA, NSICOP or a potential public inquiry.

• (1605)

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I agree with my hon. colleague and the Speaker's ruling that this is a serious matter.

What we have seen over the course of the last several months is a real disconnect between the executive branch and our institutions. Many of these stories have come to light as a result of CSIS and The Globe and Mail. I know my hon. colleague is a staunch defender of our institutions; I have seen it in this place. As a result of the security establishment now having to put this information out there, in the absence of any government or executive branch of government dealing with this matter, how concerning is this to him?

**Hon. Michael Chong:** Mr. Speaker, this is an important question. I am very concerned about the weakening of Canada's national security and intelligence system, the intelligence community, because of what has taken place over the last several months.

I would add that it is not primarily the decision of CSIS whether or not to inform members of foreign interference threat activities. It is primarily the responsibility of the Prime Minister; an open and accountable government is clear. The Prime Minister has primary responsibility among all ministers for national security. The Prime Minister is primarily responsible for the government's relationship to Parliament.

What has clearly broken down here is the direction from the Prime Minister to direct his intelligence community, departments and central agencies to inform members of Parliament and their families, in an appropriate manner, about foreign interference threat activities. He has indicated that this will now happen going forward, but it should have happened as soon as he was appointed to office, in early November 2015.

### Privilege

[Translation]

**Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we are at the point where we have to request a special decision from the House to recognize that a sitting member of the House has been intimidated. That is something. We are talking about a direct attack on democracy. That is where we are.

When did this start? The friends I meet on the street in Trois-Rivières on the weekend often tell me that we have been talking about this for weeks. It has not been weeks. The Liberal government has been totally oblivious to what is going on in foreign affairs since 2015.

The government is not particularly interested in foreign affairs, and has no clear idea of the direction it should take. The government has had four ministers of foreign affairs in seven or eight years, which is not a sign of strong diplomacy, as diplomacy requires continuity. One of my colleagues is telling me that there have been five. Five ministers in seven years is not continuity. It suggests that the government is not concerned about diplomacy. What is diplomacy? It is a form of dialogue between nations intended to ensure peace.

Right now, there is no dialogue between Canada and China. China tells us what to do and we do it. That is unacceptable. The Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, of which I am a member, has been working on the issue of Chinese interference for months now.

It does not stop there. Universities, research centres and the business community often fear that if they look too closely into interference they will lose funding or market shares. Losing our democracy is worse than that, however. This makes no sense. A line has been crossed that I did not even think it possible to approach in the House.

Let us talk about academia. In 2017, the French government conducted a survey that showed that the Chinese regime was courting former politicians to obtain information and derive benefits. That is called elite capture. They can be former politicians who are now sitting on boards of directors, or former faculty deans who hold other chairs in China or who receive various research grants. That is elite capture, and it is a phenomenon that we do not talk about here.

We are hearing a lot of talk these days about the Volkswagen factory that will be opening in Ontario. That company also has a factory in China. Does anyone think that Volkswagen really owns that factory? Volkswagen does whatever the Chinese government tells it to do. The company cannot pull out of China, and it does not control the prices of its cars.

The Chinese regime is philosophically and ideologically diametrically opposed to what we stand for here. It does not recognize the value of democracy and would prefer to do without it.

*Privilege*

China has always tried to sow chaos among its trade partners. What is chaos? Obviously, it is when things go off in different directions, but let us look at what has been going on in the House over the past three months or so. Every day during question period, we ask the government whether it is going to do something about what we are seeing and whether it will continue to justify the unjustifiable for much longer. It is chaos here. Meanwhile, Beijing is jumping for joy.

The same cannot be said of our government. This is terrible. The Chinese regime is bent on destroying all other social systems. We are not on the same page.

I think that the government would be better off learning to play Go rather than trying to play Risk because, right now, it is not working. We need to think in terms of generations.

I will give an example. Around 2013, when Xi Jinping came to power, I was in Paris with the then ambassador of China. One of my colleagues asked the ambassador why the President of China is appointed rather than elected in free and fair elections like in this country. The ambassador carefully explained that, in China, all the children are screened at a very young age, and the ones with potential are singled out to be educated in the best schools, evaluated again and sent to study abroad. Eventually, based on the challenges of the day, the best person is chosen to achieve a given goal. It was very difficult for me to hear, but he told me that what we do basically amounts to a beauty contest. We were approaching 2015 at the time. I could not really argue with him. While we hold beauty contests, people make sure they have the means to achieve their ends.

● (1610)

I think that we are being taught an important lesson in foreign affairs as a result of our lack of interest in recent years, and it hurts.

Today's expulsion of the Chinese diplomat sends the message that we are not the only ones who will be facing consequences. The Chinese government will also have to face certain consequences.

There was an obvious lack of courage in everything leading up to that decision, which was the right decision. It was about time, but the government made the decision with a gun to its head. The government did not really make a decision, it simply no longer had any choice. Its credibility with its partners was at stake. However, this decision sends the message that we are prepared to face the consequences of our choice, because yours was unacceptable.

I do not think we should tolerate the intolerable. We need to stand up, appreciate the value of our system and our democracy and protect it.

[English]

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I sit on the ethics committee with my hon. colleague. He is quite right that we have been studying the issue of foreign interference for some time, and the pathways it is leading us down are quite interesting.

My question to him is one of confidence in our institutions. We heard the previous member, the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, speak about the executive branch of government and the responsibility of the executive branch to keep its citizens, and in fact

MPs, safe. What we have seen is a structural failure in that. It was only because of CSIS and The Globe and Mail that we found out that the member's family and perhaps some other MPs' families had been threatened.

Does my hon. colleague agree with me that there is a structural breakdown in the institutions and the executive branch of government that is allowing this foreign interference to propagate within Canada?

● (1615)

[Translation]

**Mr. René Villemure:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague. I am pleased to be working with him on the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

Yes, the machine is broken. It cannot see beyond its immediate surroundings. The machine is stuck and cannot think beyond its narrow confines. What happens outside its immediate surroundings does not appear to be taken into consideration.

The issue here is trust. Trust is a very fragile thing. It is the ability to rely on something without having to examine it closely. Today we have to examine everything. We cannot close our eyes for an instant and think that things will be done properly.

The opposite of trust, what happens when trust is broken, is distrust. What does distrust lead to? It leads to defiance, which itself often leads to revolt, revolution or, at least, some undesirable action. I think that everything we do today must be aimed at restoring trust in the government, the machinery of government and the House of Commons, because with broken trust, all we will have is distrust and defiance.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we are talking about an act of aggression against our democracy. As the member so aptly put it, we are all targeted. If one member is targeted, we are all targeted by these actions. We are now getting into an extremely important debate.

Last week, I was disappointed with certain members who tried to say or to suggest that the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills was aware of his situation before it was made public.

I would like to ask my colleague the following question: Is it important to stand together, whether we are with the government or the opposition, to send the message that we stand together and united against foreign interference, whether it comes from China or any other country?

**Mr. René Villemure:** Mr. Speaker, it is essential that we stand together.

Solidarity is an interesting word. It comes from the word “solid”, so it has to be strong. Solidarity means standing united to achieve a common goal. I think that we need to determine what this common goal is, what protecting democracy means. When one person is targeted, everyone is targeted.

Last week, a shiver went down my spine when I read the word “MPs” in *The Globe and Mail*. That cannot be tolerated. I think that the initial reaction reported here, that of not believing the victim, at the time the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, is not only hurtful, but an assassination of his character.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have heard through a CSIS report that this is about not only one but a number of MPs. In fact, in 2022, there were 49 members of Parliament, many members of provincial legislatures and even city council members. We also understand that it is not only one country; it is a number of different countries.

Would my colleague across the way agree that it is the broader picture of foreign interference that we need to look at, that it is not just one isolated case and that this is indeed what the priority should be?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. René Villemure:** Mr. Speaker, we are certainly seeing a fundamental shift when it comes to foreign interference. China, Russia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates are involved. A number of countries today have new tools that they are using for nefarious purposes.

However, today's debate is about China. We have reason to believe that it has a slightly different strategy. Russia tends to carry out brutal attacks, but China thinks in terms of generations. China has had a presence in Canada for some time. The Chinese police stations have been operating for some time. They did not just materialize overnight.

I think we need to start trying to understand. Experts on China tell us that it is a bit like erosion. Say I see a river when I am young. Fifteen years later, it will have eroded, yet I walked by it every day and did not see the erosion happening. Erosion is a silent transformation.

Right now we are seeing the result of the silent transformation that we failed to see, failed to monitor or did not want to see, as the case may be. There has been a transformation, and we need to acknowledge it. The global landscape has changed.

• (1620)

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Trois-Rivières for his excellent speech. He is inspiring. He has a lot to teach us, and he is an excellent teacher. I hope that the government will be inspired by his constructive comments.

China's interference is in the spotlight. Last week, we found out that a member was threatened almost three years ago. It took three years for the government to make a decision.

### *Privilege*

I would like to hear the opinion of my colleague from Trois-Rivières. What should the government do to secure public trust in our institutions and in a healthy democracy in our society?

**Mr. René Villemure:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques and congratulate him for his work on French-language science.

Raphaël Glucksmann, chair of the Special Committee on Foreign Interference in all Democratic Processes in the European Union, appeared before the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics the other day and told us that the special committee held 300 meetings on foreign interference, that it put forward numerous options, and that it did nothing. He warned us not to make the same mistake.

I think that it is important to take note of this, to start working in the House and in committee and to do something, because doing nothing is not an option.

[*English*]

**Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, we had a debate on this important issue. Of course, we had a vote today and the vote passed. However, what was most striking was not the vote. It was actually the first 15 minutes of the debate on Thursday, when it was very clear that Liberal members were going to mock and condescend their way through that debate to discredit the member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

Specifically, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, the member for Winnipeg North, made a comment when heckling. He said the member is not credible when talking about the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. We heard the member for Kingston and the Islands reference—

**The Deputy Speaker:** There is a point of order from the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, the member knows full well that the Speaker in the chair at the time indicated that she would look into this and report back to the House. To continue with misinformation on such a sensitive issue does a disservice. The member should be waiting until the Speaker comes back with his ruling on the very issue the member raises.

**The Deputy Speaker:** On the same point of order, we have the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands.

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer:** Mr. Speaker, the member across the way has been asked numerous times to apologize for slugging the integrity of the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. He has not done it yet. I will give him the opportunity one more time to apologize. He should do it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** This is descending into debate once again. It seems like it is the same thing. We keep falling into debate. I know that the Speaker was thinking of coming back with something on this.

The hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin.

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Mr. Speaker, once again, the member sitting in that spot, with three other members from the Liberal Party, was laughing and mocking our Speaker at the time. I was sitting close enough to hear him very easily—

*Privilege*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, the member is now imputing my motives, as if I was mocking the Speaker of the House on Thursday. That is false and wrong, and the member is doing a disservice to, and showing a lack of respect for, the Speaker's chair. On Thursday, the Speaker was very clear and indicated that he would return to the House if there was anything worthwhile to report back to the House.

He is reflecting on a Speaker's ruling from Thursday, and I would ask him to withhold his side comments or, at the very least, get on with his question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** A number of points of order came out on Thursday and Friday, and I know the Speaker is seized with trying to come back with an answer. He wants to read the transcripts and listen to the audio to make sure that what we heard is what we heard. I would rather wait for the Speaker to come back with that decision than continue.

The hon. member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer:** Mr. Speaker, we are still waiting for the member to apologize. We already had a Speaker's ruling. He needs to apologize.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I said that we are done with that.

The hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin.

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Mr. Speaker, I will point out that the other parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, the member for Kingston and the Islands, at the time, said the member for Wellington—Halton Hills was “supposedly affected”. He used those words.

That member of Parliament did unconditionally apologize for his comments, but I want to ask the member from the Bloc this: To what extent does a combative, bullying approach from the government on an issue as important as this one impact our ability to have real democratic conversations in the House?

• (1625)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. René Villemure:** Mr. Speaker, I was not in the House when the altercation occurred, and it is difficult for me to comment on something that I did not witness. However, we voted on the motion today and it was a favourable vote.

This has not been a great day for democracy. It is terrible that we had to vote on that and that the vote was not unanimous.

I think this situation is deplorable, whatever the arguments were.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by pointing out the importance of the motion that was just moved by the member for Wellington—Halton Hills in response to the question on which you ruled just a few moments ago.

The NDP participated in the debate on this question of privilege and gave a number of examples, including one dating back to 1733. Of course, at that time, it was a British Parliament. The reality is

that it was not a real democracy. Only rich, white men were members of Parliament at that time.

A difficult battle was then waged to expand this democracy. All of the groups that were excluded in 1733 were eventually added. Today, this Parliament is made up of women, men, racialized people and indigenous people. All groups of society now have a place in the House. It took centuries of fighting to get to where we are today with a democracy that is open to everyone. That is extremely important. What are we talking about today? Of course, we are talking about our expanded democracy.

[*English*]

I said this in French earlier, and I want to say it in English now. I want to pay tribute to the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. Throughout this entire debate he has conducted himself with dignity and has brought forward an important motion that we are now debating on the floor of the House of Commons.

I want to raise three points.

This undoubtedly needs to be referred to the procedure and House affairs committee. There is no doubt this is an issue that this important committee needs to be seized with. I certainly hope that this will pass unanimously and be referred to the procedure and House affairs committee, which really is the appropriate place for this issue of foreign interference and intimidation of a member of Parliament. This is where that needs to be discussed.

I want to point out a number of things. First, we have seen the information that has trickled out over the course of the last few weeks and how slow the government has been to act. Indeed, today it took steps to declare the diplomat in question *persona non grata*, and that is an important step, but one that was taken slowly. I think the fact that it took so long for that to happen sends a message that perhaps the government is not as prepared to act as it could be.

The fact is that we have not yet had a public inquiry called. I reserve hope. I hope that by the end of this month, when the special rapporteur makes his recommendations, that will be included, given the overwhelming support in this House for the NDP's motion calling for an independent public inquiry. All members of this House, including members from all the opposition parties and independent members of Parliament, with the exception of Liberal members of Parliament, voted for that, so we are hoping to see that happen as well, that a public inquiry will be put into place.

The government needs to act in a number of other areas as well. The motion that was passed earlier today indicates a path to take, including having the foreign agent registry, which is so important and has been useful in other countries. These are all actions the government can take. By trying to sweep it under the carpet, which, whether true or not, is the perception in the minds of so many people, the government has not done justice to the concerns Canadians are feeling about foreign interference. The government has not acted, but rather seems to be stonewalling on a number of these questions. That is unfortunate, because it is time for the government to act.



• (1630)

Certainly, in this corner of the House, the NDP has been very clear about some of the measures that need to be taken. The member for Edmonton Strathcona and our leader, the member for Burnaby South, put forward very important and valuable suggestions. It is important that the government hear the suggestions from opposition parties and implement them, because it is important to act.

Second is the issue of unity. I was profoundly disappointed by some of the comments we heard last week in this House that targeted the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. They insinuated that the member for Wellington—Halton Hills was aware these things were happening and did not come forward or was not prepared to go public. I know the character of the member for Wellington—Halton Hills and I can say very clearly that this is false. Those allegations are simply not true, and yet they were raised on the floor of the House of Commons.

This is the kind of debate where we have to be, all of us, in solidarity. We all have to be acting together. We have to speak clearly with one voice to say that foreign interference in our democracy, in our democratic institutions, is wrong and that regardless of the source of that foreign interference, we will speak with one voice against it. That message was muddled by some of the comments heard in this House last week, which were unfortunate and should be completely, unequivocally withdrawn, because we have to act in concert and in solidarity.

Finally, I want all of us to heed the words of the member for Vancouver East, who spoke so passionately in this House last week about the impacts on her and her family. We know of the impacts on the member for Wellington—Halton Hills and his family. We know there are Canadians of Chinese origin who are feeling that impact every day. This is something we have to be mindful of in the words we use in this House and in the actions we take. All of us have to reflect on what that means for families and Canadians of Chinese origin, who are such incredible contributors to our democratic life and to our country.

We need to proceed methodically. We need to proceed with intent. The government needs to act. All parties need to work together. We need to stand in solidarity.

To end, I would just make a suggestion about things the government can do immediately.

First off, earlier today I asked in question period whether all of the MPs who have been impacted by this intimidation have been notified, and we have not received an answer from the government. The government needs to be transparent about that and it needs to tell us whether there are members of Parliament who are unaware that their family overseas may have been impacted, threatened or intimidated in any way. Those members of Parliament need to know.

Second, a public inquiry needs to be called. We hope that will happen in the next couple of weeks, when the special rapporteur prepares his report and his comments. If his recommendation is in the sense I feel it should be, given the overwhelming support in this House for a public inquiry that is independent, then the government needs to act quickly on that.

### *Privilege*

Finally, we need to work together, all parties, all members of Parliament. This threat to our democracy and to our democratic institutions is felt by all Canadians, and the only way to counteract that is by a message of solidarity, a message of unity and a clear message that Canadians will not stand for foreign interference regardless of the source from which it comes.

• (1635)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last week I indicated in my speech that the member for Wellington—Halton Hills had ultimately known about the report, which gave the impression that it was the same report the Prime Minister received. At least that was the indication. Shortly after that, I stood up and apologized, saying that was not my intent. He had received a general briefing and not the special report.

Members opposite should also have the same principles applied. For example, when the Prime Minister indicates that he first found out about it last week, should the same sort of principles not apply to opposition parties? In other words, if I am to believe one member, we should believe all members and we should be acting as one on this issue, because, after all, it is more than one member of Parliament. There were 49 who received a general briefing in 2022.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, I was in the House in the debate last week. I did hear the comments that I thought insinuated wrongfully that the member for Wellington—Halton Hills had some advance knowledge. The confusion around a general briefing and a specific briefing is one that the government should have cleared up and chose not to. I find that unfortunate.

The question has been asked, a number of times now, how many members of Parliament who have been directly impacted have been advised of that. I am not talking about general briefings. I am talking about specific cases that the government may be aware of and that it then ensured the member was informed of. I would respectfully suggest that the government needs to be transparent about that and let us know if all members have been impacted directly or indirectly by this foreign interference, either targeting their families or any other thing.

Will the government come forward and let us know who has been advised, and if members of Parliament have not been advised, will it move to do that immediately?

**Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to allow the NDP House leader to build upon this. I think he even asked the same question during question period today. It is about this lack of information being shared with all parliamentarians, including senators, especially considering this is something that was in the NSICOP 2019 annual report as a recommendation to the government: to regularly brief, at the appropriate level, all parliamentarians on the risk of foreign interference.

*Privilege*

I would like the member's opinion. Why does he think the current government has refused to do this? This is something it has known about and has been briefed upon twice. It actually goes back to the very first report NSICOP produced in 2018, based on the Prime Minister's trip to India and all the failures that occurred during that trip, for all parliamentarians to have a briefing about foreign interference so that we can do our job as parliamentarians. It would prevent situations like this if everybody knew the risk.

What does the member think of that?

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, I know the member is very learned on national security issues and brings that wealth of knowledge to this debate today.

There is no doubt that there are a number of things the government should be doing proactively, including informing and briefing members of Parliament. I have not seen the government act with the alacrity that is necessary in this case. This has been a slow-motion—

• (1640)

**Mr. John Brassard:** Train wreck.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** “Train wreck” would be a good way of putting it, Mr. Speaker. The government has seemingly held off on getting in front of things, being proactive and being transparent. That has compounded the problems we are facing today. Hopefully this debate will serve to set the government back on track so that, rather than having a train wreck, we are all moving together in the same way, with the same intent of ensuring that there is no foreign interference, whether in votes that we hold in the House of Commons or in elections that we hold nationally, provincially or municipally.

[Translation]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I agree with most of what my colleague said in his speech.

We had this vote today, and a majority of the House has spoken. The opposition parties joined together to pass this motion, which instructs the government to launch a public inquiry and create a registry. If the government fails to follow through, we will be forced to consider it untrustworthy and unwilling to follow instructions passed by a democratic vote in the House.

Will the NDP not reconsider its commitment to support the government until 2025 over a matter as serious as national security?

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, a motion was moved in the House of Commons for an independent public inquiry. The NDP moved it, after having moved it at the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. It was the NDP that did that.

There were procedural problems, as members will recall. The Conservatives blocked the intervention on the motion. I thought that was rather unfortunate, but that is their right. Then, we moved the motion and it was adopted almost unanimously. Except for the Liberal Party, every independent MP and all the opposition parties voted in favour of the motion.

I expect the special rapporteur to take this into consideration when he makes his recommendations in the next two weeks. I ex-

pect that when the special rapporteur makes these recommendations, the government will immediately call a national public inquiry. That is extremely important. That is what the NDP is working toward. That is our role in Parliament, and we will continue to carry out this role.

[English]

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague always speaks so eloquently, and I learn so much from his interventions.

One of the things he talked about was the fact that the interference in our elections and the interference in our political system are not just happening from one country or another. I think that it is very important, when we stand in this House, to be very cautious and very careful with our language. With this particular example, we are seeing a diplomat from the government of China, but we also know that we have had people from the terrorist regime in Iran. We know that Russia has tried to influence Canada. In fact, during the convoy, we knew there was foreign influence coming from the United States.

Could the member speak a bit more about how Canada could do more to protect itself, not just from risks from the PRC but also from other countries around the world that we know are interfering with our political system?

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Mr. Speaker, the member for Edmonton Strathcona is a very strong and powerful voice on foreign affairs and on many other issues in this House. Her wisdom is something we should all listen to.

This is the reality, and this is why, when the NDP brought forward the motion on the public inquiry, we sought to ensure that we were fighting back against all forms of foreign interference. Yes, we know from the CSIS reports that the Chinese regime, the Russian dictatorship, Iran and India all seek to influence our democracy, seek to influence our diaspora and seek to change the direction Canadians want to take together. We have to be mindful of all those things, and this is why we believe that a comprehensive public inquiry into foreign interference is warranted and needs to be put into place.

We have been calling for it now since we brought it to the House five weeks ago. We are hoping to see a recommendation in the next couple of weeks and it being put rapidly into place. This is vitally important, and we cannot dissect one type of foreign interference from the Chinese regime or the Russian dictatorship and say that we are just going to examine one type. All of them have an impact on our democracy, and hopefully, all of us as members of Parliament will want to push back against any form of foreign interference in solidarity. Regardless of which country it comes from, it is unacceptable, and Canadians speak with one voice in standing up for our democracy.

*Privilege*

• (1645)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Before proceeding, it is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, National Defence; the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, Transportation.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it took two years for this government to finally do the right thing to protect Canada's values of freedom and democracy, or in other words, to expel a foreign agent for threatening a Canadian member of Parliament. This is not the first time we have heard about foreign agents threatening Canadians in this way. A Canadian MP and his family had to be threatened for this government to finally decide to do something, not everything it could have done, but something, namely, to declare this diplomat, this agent of the regime in Beijing, *persona non grata* in Canada.

Not only did it take the agent going after a Canadian MP, but the MP also had to raise a question of privilege in the House so that Parliament could clearly indicate to the government that enough was enough and that we would no longer tolerate this sort of thing.

I want to look back at what led us here today. I will explain to people the entire process that led to the diplomat being expelled from Canada and, most importantly, I will talk about the fact that, today, the Speaker recognized a question of privilege regarding the unacceptable and disgraceful behaviour of the regime in Beijing and this diplomat, who was declared *persona non grata*.

This all began in February 2021 when my colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills moved a motion in the House to recognize that the Communist regime in Beijing is perpetrating a genocide against the Uyghur people. The result of the vote demonstrates what happened at the time. The motion was moved, there was a vote in the House, and nearly all members voted in favour of recognizing the genocide of the Uyghur people. All members voted for the motion except for the members who are in cabinet. What this means is that all Liberal ministers refused to vote on this important issue, which had caught the attention of parliamentarians from all parties. The Prime Minister and his government were already sending a strong signal to Canadians that the government did not want to upset the Communist regime in Beijing.

The story could have ended there, but it did not. Apparently, that vote and our colleague's actions did upset in the Communist regime in Beijing. Last week, the media reported on the whole process that has taken place since our colleague's motion, and what the Beijing regime has done to stop him from taking any action that might conflict with Beijing's priorities.

We read in the newspapers that a CSIS assessment revealed back in July 2021 that the Chinese ministry of state security, known as MSS, had taken specific actions to target Canadian MPs who were linked to the February 2021 parliamentary motion condemning Beijing's oppression of Uyghurs and other minorities. The article referred to MPs, plural.

According to CSIS, an agent tried to obtain information about the family members of a Canadian MP who were living under the

Beijing regime. The agent in question, Zhao Wei, is listed in the Department of Global Affairs' record of foreign diplomats as working in China's Toronto consulate. This same person has been declared *persona non grata*.

I am speaking of information passed on by CSIS two years ago. CSIS notified the government about this diplomat's activities two years ago.

• (1650)

On May 2, the director of CSIS told our colleague, the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, that he was the Canadian MP who was targeted, along with his family, by the Beijing government, after he sponsored the motion condemning Beijing's conduct in Xinjiang as genocide, and that Zhao Wei was indeed the diplomat involved.

On May 4, the Prime Minister's national security adviser, Jody Thomas, confirmed to Mr. Chong that the CSIS information about him and his family had been received by the Privy Council Office in 2021. The information revealed by the press had been sent to the Prime Minister's Office and the Privy Council Office in 2021, two years ago.

Last week, we witnessed something absolutely appalling in the House. Certain MPs tried to claim that my colleague, the victim of intimidation by China, had known for several years about the actions of this Toronto-based agent of Beijing. My colleague rose several times in the House to state that this claim was false. He had not been notified that he specifically was being targeted by the actions of this Chinese agent. How can those members side with an agent who is trying to intimidate a Canadian MP instead of standing up for that MP and his family, who were targeted by Beijing?

On Friday, the Prime Minister echoed these statements, also claiming that the member had been made aware of this information. Again, this was denied by the member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

Here we have a situation where the government did not take action and where the member for Wellington—Halton Hills felt threatened, and rightly so. He was probably also very worried about the fact that the government had waited so long before warning him, because it took almost two years. He raised this question of privilege that was received by the Chair, so that we could finally debate this very important question.

It happened the same day that a majority of Parliamentarians adopted a motion that, among other things, called for the expulsion of not only this diplomat, but any foreign diplomat who threatens or intimidates a member of Parliament or a Canadian citizen who is the victim of the actions of such authoritarian regimes around the world. That was one aspect of the motion.

*Privilege*

We expected all members to rise together to condemn that sort of behaviour. The motion did not just talk about expulsion. It also called for the government to immediately do what all security intelligence agencies around the world are recommending, and that is to create a foreign agent registry similar to those in Australia and the United States, as well as to establish a national public inquiry on the matter of foreign election interference and to close down the police stations in Canada run by the Communist regime in Beijing. The Minister of Public Safety claimed that these police stations had been shut down, but in the end we realized that not one of them actually had been. The police said that they had disrupted the activities of these police stations but that none of them had been officially shut down and that no one had been arrested for having engaged in such activities. The motion also called on the government to expel all of the People's Republic of China diplomats responsible for and involved in this intimidation campaign.

• (1655)

We expected all parties to vote in favour of it. The Conservative Party voted for it. The Bloc Québécois voted for it. Even the government's coalition partner voted in favour of the motion calling for action at long last. Unfortunately, one party chose to vote against the motion. It was the Prime Minister's party, the government. Why?

I think the question Canadians need to start asking themselves is, why did the Liberals vote against this motion calling for a national foreign agent registry?

Why did they stall for 24 hours in committee to avoid having the Prime Minister's chief of staff come to speak about foreign interference in our elections? What is the reason, if not their lack of courage to stand up for our values of democracy and freedom, the principles that all Canadians hold so dear?

I listened to the speech by my colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills following the question of privilege. His words were very clear, and I hope to hear them repeated. I remember the gist of what he said, which was that we cannot let ourselves be intimidated, we have to stand up. As difficult as it may be to stand up in the face of these threats, we have to do it for our institutions and for our values. Generations past stood up to protect them. Now, our turn has come to do the same.

The government had a chance to do so today. Unfortunately, it voted against the other tools that we could have used. However, Parliament decided otherwise, and voted in favour of the motion. Now we expect the government to act.

The government expelled a diplomat today because the media forced its hand, because it was caught in a firestorm. That is the only reason the government took any action. If it had not been for the article in *The Globe and Mail* last week, we probably would not be here talking about a diplomat who was expelled this afternoon. He simply would not have been expelled, because the Liberals decided to turn a blind eye to the unacceptable and disgusting actions committed against a Canadian MP and his family over the past two years.

What particularly concerns me is that the measures we proposed today were not intended to protect only MPs. They were meant to

protect all the ethnocultural communities living in Canada that come from these authoritarian countries. We have heard many accounts from individuals whose family members back in their home country have been pressured, intimidated and threatened. It was not until this happened to a Canadian member of Parliament that the government finally decided to act.

There is one thing that strikes me about the report that the government has had since 2021. CSIS did not refer to one MP in particular, but to MPs, plural. In English, the report referred to "MPs" with an "s". Who are the other MPs who were allegedly victims of intimidation by the Beijing government? We have asked the question many times, but we did not get an answer. Were those members informed of this threat? We did not get an answer.

Had it been a Conservative MP and had they been informed, I can guarantee that we would know about it. The MP would have told a friend or colleague. The MP would have told the caucus. Had it been a Bloc Québécois member, I am convinced we would know about it. Since the Bloc Québécois clearly cannot form the next government, there is less interest, but all right.

• (1700)

That being said, had it been one of our colleagues in the NDP, which has also been calling for a public inquiry for a long time, we would know it. They would have said so. It would have been one more argument in favour of a public inquiry, but no.

Is it a member of the government? We do not know. We do not know because we have not heard any talk about it, either. Someone somewhere in the government, in the Prime Minister's Office, in Minister of Public Safety's office, knows. We know that the document, the report in question, was submitted. Unfortunately, the people who are affected do not know it. It is totally unacceptable.

We have to ensure that parliamentarians are protected because they are the voice of those who cannot have a say. Here, in the House, parliamentary privilege allows us to say things on behalf of our taxpayers, the people back home, Canadian citizens, and that is what we are doing. We have been doing that ever since we found out about all these allegations of foreign influence. We are doing this because we know that we benefit from a certain type of protection that allows us to say things that the majority of Canadians cannot say.

Unfortunately, if the regime in Beijing is going after parliamentarians who have this kind of protection, imagine what must be happening to members of the diaspora. Imagine how much power authoritarian regimes have over citizens who come from these ethnocultural communities, who have family in these countries who are still living under the rule of very authoritarian governments. Imagine the impact.

That is why we need a national inquiry into interference in our elections. That is why we need to shut down these police stations. We must not tolerate threats from any country, whether we are talking about the Communist regime in Beijing, Iran or any other country, and I do not just mean threats against MPs, but against all Canadian citizens.

One thing is very telling. Normally, I should not have been able to speak right away. Usually, after a question of privilege, all the parties speak, so my colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills would have spoken, followed by a Bloc Québécois colleague, an NDP colleague, and finally a Liberal Party colleague. However, it did not happen that way.

When it came time for the Liberals to have their say, they remained seated. When faced with such an important question that the Speaker of the House chose to interrupt all other business, the government's entire agenda, to deal with this very specific question about the violation of my colleague's rights and privileges, not one Liberal member from across the way rose to defend him. Not one member opposite rose to say that what happened was an outrage. Despite all the nice words about dealing with this issue in a non-partisan manner, not one government member rose to defend my colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills. That says a lot right there.

There is a reason the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Public Safety and the entire cabinet said that they did not know anything. The reason is that they know full well that they did absolutely nothing to counter foreign interference, particularly from the regime in Beijing.

I commend my colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills for having the courage to stand up and continue standing up to wage this battle to protect our rights, our freedom and our democracy.

• (1705)

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the member were to take the time to read the speech I gave on Thursday, he would find that I stood up for every individual member of Parliament.

My question is more looking at it from the perspective of foreign interference, which has been taking place for many years now. There is absolutely no doubt about that. In fact, if we looked at the 2022 report, we would find 49 members of Parliament, a couple dozen MLAs and even local councillors or reeves.

What might the Conservative Party's policy be in regard to CSIS? We know there were some general briefings provided. Does the member believe that all 49 members of Parliament and those who were in the report should have been better informed? Does he believe that CSIS did not do a proper job of ensuring that each of those members were more aware of why they were being given the general briefing?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Speaker, we just got a clear, simple, frank and transparent demonstration of the Liberal government's incompetence.

The member for Winnipeg North just told us that 49 MPs were briefed because they were allegedly victims of intimidation or interference by foreign regimes, in particular the regime in Beijing.

What steps were taken, what diplomat was expelled and what individuals were arrested in light of the information that the govern-

### *Privilege*

ment has in hand? The member just proved that the government was informed but that it did nothing.

The sad fact of the matter is that the regime in Beijing already influences the government. It is time for the government to realize it, to put an end to it and to implement the measures required, including launching a national public inquiry. That is how Canadians can be apprised of this matter, and not just the part that the government feels like presenting to Canadians.

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable on his speech.

I have a short preamble before I ask my question. The Bloc Québécois's objective is not to form the government. That would be like inviting a vegetarian friend to a pig roast; it makes no sense.

That said, I want to address the subject at hand today, namely, Chinese interference. This is very important. Today, the government took action because of pressure from the media and pressure from the public. Thanks to CSIS, it has known for almost two years now that there has been Chinese interference and even threats from China against a member of Parliament. The government did not take any action for two years.

Now the government is waking up, seeing that this is dangerous, that its image is being tarnished, and wondering what it is going to do. Today, the government is trying to make us believe that everything is under control. As a good Quebec Liberal used to say, everything is fine with both hands on the wheel.

Two years have gone by and nothing. How do we restore confidence? The people I meet every day ask me how this government can build back confidence in our democratic institutions.

What does my colleague suggest the government do to restore once and for all public confidence in democracy, which is fundamental, and in our institutions?

• (1710)

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Speaker, the answer is simple. The best way is for us to beat the Liberals in the next election and form a Conservative government so we can take control of the situation.

[*English*]

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I represent one of the most ethnically diverse ridings in the country. Over 100 languages are spoken in my riding. About 35% of my riding is ethnically Chinese; 15%, Filipino; 15%, South Asian; 6%, Vietnamese; and it carries on.

*Privilege*

History has shown us that the actions of a foreign government, whether Japan or Italy in World War II or the Austro-Hungarian Empire, can lead to impacts on the diaspora population in our country. What are my hon. colleague's thoughts on that and what suggestions does he have for us to be careful and cautious as we explore the malevolent behaviour of foreign governments? How can we make sure that this does not translate into discrimination or oppression against people who may be from those countries by origin, but who are Canadian citizens in our country and communities?

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Speaker, I will try to answer my colleague in English. Transparency is what works all around the world. We can identify the foreign agents in our country and make sure the diaspora knows who they are. Transparency is the best cleaner or sunlight. I do not know how to say that in English, but I think the member understands what I mean.

We need a government that will be transparent and that will really act, answer real questions and give real answers to those people who came here to benefit from our freedom, our principles and our values. We should give them the opportunity to say what they know and to protect themselves, and we should help to protect them. With respect to police officers and CSIS, we should make them work for these people and not for the government.

**Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, earlier, the member for Winnipeg North stood up and did not apologize for some of the comments he made the other day. However, he did acknowledge that when he came into the House on Thursday morning, he did not have his facts straight and that is a start.

If the government does not have its facts straight, it is hard for Canadians to make sense of what is going on. Today, we are debating a question of privilege that has an impact on a member, and in fact all members of this House, as we act in the interests of our constituents.

It is also important to remember that there are Canadians from coast to coast, and some members have touched on this, who are Chinese Canadians and they face this same type of intimidation from Beijing from the Communist government on a regular basis. I think they are watching the debate we are having right now, the debate we have been having for the last several weeks, really closely. The motion we passed today was very clear.

For those Chinese Canadians across the country who may be faced with similar types of intimidation, how important is it for them to see real action moving forward on the substance of the motion passed in the House today?

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Mr. Speaker, I think people expect the elected members of this Parliament to take action to protect them, to act in their interest as Canadians. The elected members of this place are here to protect Canadians, no matter where they come from and regardless of whether they have families elsewhere in any other country. We are here to protect them and ensure they have a place where they can flourish, express themselves freely, live their lives and fulfill their dreams. That is the government's responsibility.

• (1715)

[English]

It is on the government's shoulders to protect them. It is on the government's shoulders to give them hope, freedom, liberty, value principles and make sure they can access that.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**GOVERNMENT BUSINESS NO. 25—PROCEEDINGS ON  
BILL C-21**

NOTICE OF CLOSURE MOTION

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I give notice that, with respect to consideration of Government Business No. 25, at the next sitting of the House, a Minister of the Crown shall move, pursuant to Standing Order 57, that debate not be further adjourned.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I thank the hon. minister for that notice.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Scarborough—Guildwood.

\* \* \*

[English]

**PRIVILEGE**

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE  
AFFAIRS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have been sitting here listening to the debate, wondering what I could contribute that would be useful. I do want to express my profound sympathy to the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. This should not happen to any of us and I identify completely with the difficulties in which he finds himself.

I hope that is true of all 338 of us, that we can readily realize how any one of us could be in this situation. I want to make that point abundantly clear, that I was not sitting here because I did not want to participate in the debate, by virtue of not being interested in the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, but that I wanted to contribute something useful.

I had the opportunity to read the Speaker's ruling, while other members were debating, which is what is before us this afternoon. May I say that it is a thoughtful ruling. I agree with his analysis and I agree with his conclusion. He has made a prima facie conclusion that there is something here. That is what prima facie means. It means "on the face of it". On the face of it, there is something to be addressed here and he made the proper ruling that it be referred to the procedure and House affairs committee.

That is the debate. He made it on three points.

The first point was whether there was intimidation or the appearance of intimidation. He does make the argument, which I think is critical, that he is not making a conclusion of fact, as a judge would. He is simply saying that on the face of it, there appears to be intimidation. He is not, however, concluding that there was intimidation.

On the material that was in front of him, it is clear that there is a case to be made for intimidation and he made the correct ruling on that. He then went on to talk about the timeliness of the report by the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. The events did occur two years ago or appear to have occurred two years ago but only came to the attention of the member recently, by virtue of newspaper reports.

It is a well-settled principle in criminal law and elsewhere that the clock only starts ticking when one becomes aware of the alleged offence. I think the member rightly brought it to the House's attention in as timely a fashion as it could have been brought and the Speaker therefore ruled that it was timely.

The third ruling was whether it was corroborated or uncorroborated, which is an interesting argument. When the PRC and its many minions here in this country carry on what nasty, dastardly things they do here, the nature of the beast is that it is very difficult to corroborate it.

It is not as if they write it out, saying that they are now intimidating member of Parliament X, Y or Z. They operate in the shadows. They operate these police stations where they try to intimidate diaspora members. They operate in universities with Confucius Institutes, where they try to influence or intimidate students from China, primarily, who are studying here in Canada.

Of course, they run these operations, by definition, in a way in which the evidence, such as it is, or even the information cannot be corroborated. Again, I think the Speaker made the correct ruling, that, yes, it is a newspaper report and, yes, there is a lot of back and forth between what the government knew or should have known or did know or did not know.

● (1720)

However, on the face of it there is a case to be made that should be properly made in front of PROC, which I hope will weigh in on this.

I think there is also a larger issue to be addressed here, which is that we are in a new environment. As members know, I have been around here for a few years and like to think I have seen a few things, but I cannot say that I have ever seen anything quite like this before.

I know some of us receive briefings about threats, not so much intimidation, but that there might be activities that would affect us. That is becoming abundantly clear. I am not sure that we have really figured out how to react. We operate in an open society that runs on the basis that we trust each other, that we have a shared understanding of the facts and information in the public discourse, and that we respect each other even if we profoundly disagree with each other. That is anathema to the PRC and other dictatorial regimes. However, when we are attacked on those core issues, we have diffi-

### *Privilege*

culty reacting. I think for many years we have not had to worry about the threat we are facing with the rise of misinformation and disinformation, and it is a threat to our very way of life and doing things.

I have shared with the House before the fact that we were in Taiwan a few weeks ago. We visited quite a number of individuals, but clearly one of the most impressive was its minister of cybersecurity. It has a million attacks a day and does not leave anything to chance, so there are generally triple levels of protection in order to be able to keep the core infrastructure of the nation safe. It does not matter whether it is with respect to the military, security, finances or economics, that is expected.

The other person who was very impressive is with an NGO that is expected to respond to misinformation and disinformation. In Taiwan, the standard response time is expected to be two hours. In fact, it is one hour. It is really quite impressive as to how it responds to that level of misinformation and disinformation. That includes bots and all of the ways in which these massive numbers of attacks produce information that appear to be true, may be true, could be true, but is not true. These NGOs respond in a very timely way to I think keep the level of discourse on the matter of truth as opposed to misinformation and disinformation, which is just generally sidebar truth.

While in my opinion this motion is to be supported, I hope that PROC gets to it quickly. It was a well-founded and reasoned approach by the Speaker. It does occur in the larger context that there is not a person in this chamber who knows what we are facing. We are somewhat in the dark on all kinds of issues. I think we should bring to this larger conversation a huge dose of humility, because it is a profound and existential threat we are facing and we need to be united in how we face it.

● (1725)

I will conclude by saying that I am pleased with the Speaker's ruling. It is an appropriate ruling. There is a prima facie case to be made, and I look forward to the report of the procedure and House affairs committee.

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for his role as chair of the national defence committee. I appreciate his support for the member for Wellington—Halton Hills and for the ruling that was made earlier today.

This situation was originally brought to the attention of the government two years ago, and the government failed to act. We know that the national security adviser at the time in the Prime Minister's Office received this report. We know that the family of the member for Wellington—Halton Hills was targeted by a diplomat in the PRC consulate in Toronto. However, I would like to get the member's opinion on why the intelligence was not acted upon by the government side of the House, where he sits, to address this very scary situation for the family of the member for Wellington—Halton Hills and, more importantly, the attack on democracy.

*Privilege*

How was Zhao Wei allowed to continue to operate here for the last 48 months unimpeded with his diplomatic immunity? How many other Canadians was he able to intimidate over that time?

**Hon. John McKay:** Mr. Speaker, the short answer is that I do not know the answer to the hon. member's question. I am working on the assumption that the facts underlying his question are correct: that the information was available to the appropriate government authorities in a timely sort of way and the information was not communicated to the member in question. I have no basis for disputing those facts.

I also was not there. I was not there to make that judgment. I do know some of the people who would be involved in making that judgment, and I have nothing but respect for their decision. However, it seems me that on the floor of the House of Commons, it is inappropriate for me to speculate on why the inaction taken was not moved on, in hindsight, a lot more quickly.

I would widen the conversation a bit to ask a question that I think members should be asking: Why does China have so many diplomats in this country? I know we have an important trading relationship and important relationship with China, but there does seem to be an extraordinary number of diplomats who have no obvious reason for being here. I think members should be asking that question.

• (1730)

[Translation]

**Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. Expelling this person who has been declared *persona non grata* is good news today. It is too little, too late, but at least it is a step in the right direction to avoid Chinese oppression.

The member for Wellington—Halton Hills received threats and we had to vote on a motion today because of the government's inertia. What about our democratic freedom?

[English]

**Hon. John McKay:** Madam Speaker, we did not actually vote on the Speaker's ruling. The Speaker made his own ruling on a motion presented by the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. There is a conflation of issues here. What we did vote on was a motion put forward by the Conservative Party, and that was successfully passed. I want to clarify that particular point.

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I joined my colleague on the trip he mentioned to Taiwan. I believe it was the Doublethink Lab he was referring to when he was speaking about civil society and the role it played in dealing with misinformation and cyber-attacks in Taiwan.

When we were in Taiwan, we could see that there was a very all-of-government and all-of-society approach to dealing with misinformation and interference. Could the member comment on how that could happen here? It feels to me, perhaps because of the inaction of the government, like we are now in a position where this has become politically fraught. How do we do something that is good for our democracy? How do we work together across all parties to strengthen our democracy and strengthen protections for our vital institutions in an environment that has become so divided, so partisan and so political in scope?

**Hon. John McKay:** Madam Speaker, there is nothing like an existential threat to focus the mind. In Taiwan that is very true. It is under constant intimidation, with a million cyber-attacks a day. When we arrived, the PRC brought its greeting party with warplanes and warships, so they live in a different threat environment than we do.

Having gone to Taiwan for a number of times over the last 20 years, I know that the nature of the threat of the PRC to Taiwan was not entirely unanimous. A number of years ago, President Ma was much more friendly with the Chinese government and had even gone to China just before we arrived.

As for us, I think we do not realize the threat. We have not quite figured this thing out, and we have the luxury of partisanship, which I do not think we will always have.

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Madam Speaker, in particular, the member for Scarborough—Guildwood mentioned the need for a dose of humility in looking at the wider context of this situation. On that note, I wonder if he could comment about having a national public inquiry on foreign interference. Does he have a perspective to share on that? How much more information does he feel is required to support that?

**Hon. John McKay:** Madam Speaker, I look forward to the report of the Hon. David Johnston sooner rather than later, frankly. I hope that he will at least put a report in the public domain that we can debate. I am going to work on the assumption that it will be a fulsome report. The government has committed itself to responding fully to the recommendation or recommendations. Whatever they are, they will be adopted, but whether that in turn will mean something like a full-blown public inquiry, I do not know. I do think there is utility in moving the debate off the floor of the House into the wider public so that Canadians can come to grips with the existential threat that is the People's Republic of China.

• (1735)

**Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member mentioned in his speech that we are in unfamiliar territory with this particular issue. In Newfoundland, we would probably refer to it as uncharted waters. How do we get more familiar with it so that we know exactly what we are doing or what we should be doing?

**Hon. John McKay:** Madam Speaker, as the hon. member from Newfoundland would know, if someone is in uncharted waters and hits a rock, there are pretty serious consequences. I think this is an opportunity for Canadians to weigh in on debate. I think it should be part of a larger discourse on what our response should be.

The ministers are right to point out that every action will have an equal and opposite reaction, with consequences to whatever decision is made. As long as we know what the consequences are and are prepared to deal with those consequences, we can move forward as a nation.



*Privilege*

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise to speak to the motion put forward by my colleague, the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, on the Speaker's ruling and prima facie determination that the member's privileges were breached as a result of tactics of intimidation employed by a diplomat at Beijing's Toronto consulate.

This motion arises from a May 1 report in the *Globe and Mail* in which it was revealed that a July 20, 2021, CSIS intelligence assessment identified that a Beijing diplomat had sought to sanction and intimidate the family in Hong Kong of the member for Wellington—Halton Hills as retribution for the member bringing forward a motion in this House to call out the Beijing regime for its gross human rights violations in East Turkestan and to call those gross human rights violations out for what they are, and that is genocide.

It was an attempt by the Beijing regime to have a chill effect on a sitting member and to interfere in that member's ability to do his job and fulfill his duties as a member of Parliament to speak in this House, to put forward a motion, to stand in his place and to vote on that motion on the basis of principle on behalf of his constituents and on behalf of Canadians. This is about as serious as it gets.

For two years, the Liberals sat on that information. They sat on the fact that a Beijing diplomat was seeking to undermine our democracy by interfering with the ability of the member for Wellington—Halton Hills to perform his duties as a member of Parliament. Not only that, they sat on the fact that Beijing's Toronto consulate was also involved in other intimidation and interference activities affecting members of Parliament.

The Prime Minister claimed that he knew nothing about it and that he learned about it in the *Globe and Mail*. Last Wednesday, the Prime Minister tried to change the channel by blaming CSIS. He said, "CSIS made the determination that it wasn't something that needed to be raised to a higher level because it wasn't a significant enough concern."

Then, on Thursday, the member for Wellington—Halton Hills was informed by the Prime Minister's national security adviser, Jody Thomas, that the Prime Minister's assertion was not true and that, in fact, the July CSIS intelligence assessment had been sent to the national security adviser of the PCO as well as to all of the relevant departments.

The Prime Minister's claim that he did not know anything about it just does not add up. It does not add up based upon what the Prime Minister's chief of staff told committee, namely that he is briefed regularly about national security matters, that he reads everything and that nothing is held back.

● (1740)

The Prime Minister's denial does not add up based on what CSIS told the committee, which is that CSIS definitely briefs the government when hostile foreign governments target politicians, and the Prime Minister's denial that he knew anything does not add up based upon what the Prime Minister's own national security adviser told the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. No one believes the Prime Minister when he says that he did not know. No one believes

him, so he should just stop the charade and come clean that he covered it up for the Beijing regime.

Even though no one believes him, if I were to, for a minute, try to believe him, I would say that it is an equal indictment on the Prime Minister's complete lack of fitness to lead this country. This is a Prime Minister who is the leader of our country. He is responsible for the machinery of government. He is responsible for the broad organization and structure of government, and he has special responsibilities when it comes to national security.

For the Prime Minister to say he did not know is no excuse at all. It is an admission on the part of the Prime Minister that he does not care, is asleep at the switch and is not doing his job protecting the safety and security of Canadians, including sitting members of Parliament, from being intimidated from doing their jobs seriously in the face of an unprecedented campaign of interference by the Beijing regime. This is all taking place under the Prime Minister's watch.

Then the Prime Minister decided to change the channel instead of taking responsibility. In the last eight years, I cannot remember a time he has ever taken responsibility. He is never responsible. What did the Prime Minister do instead of acknowledging that, as the Prime Minister, he is responsible for the machinery of government and has special responsibilities for government? He then blamed the member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

The Prime Minister sent two of his parliamentary secretaries into the chamber on Thursday to falsely assert that the member for Wellington—Halton Hills had been briefed, knew his family was in harm's way, and knew so for two years, but did not tell his family or his colleagues. He essentially asserted that he was misleading Canadians now to make a big deal about what is certainly a big deal.

It was while I was speaking to my motion, to kick off the debate calling for, among other things, a public inquiry into foreign interference and expelling the Beijing diplomat involved in this intimidation campaign, which the Liberals voted against today, that it happened. In the course of that debate, the member for Kingston and the Islands asserted that. I have to admit that I was floored by what I was hearing. I could not believe what he was saying.

Then the member for Winnipeg North doubled down on that misinformation to blame the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. In fairness, the member for Winnipeg North has stated that he did not have his facts straight, which is a start. He should apologize, but it is a start that he did not do the right thing that day. As well, the member for Kingston and the Islands has apologized, but not the Prime Minister. He has not shown some level of class, which the member for Winnipeg North and the member for Kingston and the Islands have demonstrated. No, he has not.

● (1745)

The Prime Minister has doubled down on his misinformation campaign. He directed those members to come into the House to spread misinformation. Then, the very next day, he continued to spread the misinformation and continued his attack on the member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

*Privilege*

Here is what the Prime Minister said on Friday: “I was reassured to see that [the member for Wellington—Halton Hills] had received multiple briefings following the information collected by CSIS to ensure that he and his family were kept safe or would at least know what was going on in the extent that they needed to and they could be briefed.”

The Prime Minister knew on Friday that the member for Wellington—Halton Hills had been briefed once, but he had not been briefed about the particulars concerning Zhao Wei and the efforts to intimidate him by sanctioning his family because of how he had voted in the House. The Prime Minister was aware on Friday that the member for Wellington—Halton Hills had received a briefing of a general nature that had nothing to do with the matter. However, in the face of that, we have a Prime Minister who was spreading this misinformation on Friday. Why would the Prime Minister do that?

Is that a Prime Minister who is genuinely concerned about the well-being of the family of the member for Wellington—Halton Hills in Hong Kong? Is that a Prime Minister who has the integrity to admit that his government did not get it right and that the member should have been briefed? No, it is not a Prime Minister with integrity. It is a Prime Minister who is using every tactic in the book to change the channel to avoid accountability, and in the most disgusting of ways, engage in victim blaming by trying to disgracefully impugn the integrity of the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, a member who I have gotten to know over the last eight years and who many members, in all corners of the House, have gotten to know.

If there is one thing that can be said of the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, it is that he is a member of principle and integrity. He does not deserve this. If the Prime Minister had any integrity, he would apologize and he would apologize now to the member for Wellington—Halton Hills for spreading this kind of misinformation.

This is part of a pattern that we have seen. The Prime Minister covers up issues of interference in our elections by Beijing and intimidation attempts by Beijing diplomats accredited in Canada. It gets reported on in the media, and then the Prime Minister tries to offer up excuses, blame others and say that there is nothing to see here at all.

Nothing that we know about Beijing's interference in our elections or by Beijing diplomats is a result of anything that this Prime Minister has said. CSIS has advised the Prime Minister that the best approach to dealing with matters of foreign interference is sunshine and transparency, but there has been no sunshine. There has been no transparency. There has just been one cover-up after another.

● (1750)

Only now, because the Prime Minister got caught covering up for this Beijing diplomat one week after The Globe and Mail first reported this, did the government, this afternoon, after voting against the official opposition motion, finally send Zhao Wei packing.

It took the government and the Prime Minister two years. I can remember when the Minister of Foreign Affairs came before the procedure and House affairs committee a little over a month ago.

This report in The Globe and Mail had not yet come to light, but there was plenty of evidence that Beijing diplomats, particularly at the Toronto consulate, as well as the Vancouver consulate, had been engaged in election interference activities. In the face of that, I asked the minister why it was that not a single Beijing diplomat had been expelled. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, incredibly, talked about a lack of evidence.

Obviously, the minister and the government did have evidence. They had evidence with respect to Zhao Wei because they knew about it two years ago, but there she was, saying there was no evidence. Now, a week later, after it has been reported in The Globe and Mail, there was finally the evidence to send him packing. Why did it take two years?

By the way, what is the minister talking about with respect to the need for evidence? What is the parliamentary secretary talking about with the need for due process with respect to these Beijing diplomats? There does not need to be due process. When there are findings of interference, article 9 gives the government the unfettered discretion to expel any diplomat, at any time, for any reason. Yes, it is true that making a decision to expel a diplomat could result in retaliatory measures being taken by the Beijing regime. I acknowledge that is something the Liberal government, and any government, would have to weigh.

However, let me also say there is a cost of inaction. I would submit that that cost, in these circumstances, is far greater. It is simply intolerable that we have Beijing diplomats involved in facilitating the clandestine transfer of funding to candidates, targeting Conservative candidates in the 2021 election, and then bragging about the role they played in seeing that certain incumbent members of Parliament, whom they did not like, were defeated. It is intolerable that we have Beijing diplomats responsible for organizing illegal police stations to harass and intimate Chinese Canadians at what are effectively black sites. It is intolerable that we have Beijing diplomats intimidating members of Parliament and their families.

It should not have taken two years. It should not have taken the Globe and Mail report, and it should not have taken a week of pressure from the official opposition for the government to finally send this Beijing diplomat home. When it comes to protecting our national security from Beijing, the Prime Minister is completely incompetent and unfit for office.

● (1755)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am wondering if the member could reflect on the questions he posed during question period.

The Conservative Party knows that last week the Prime Minister made very clear indications—

*Privilege*

**Mr. Bob Zimmer:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, it is really difficult to listen to the comments from the member across the way when he still has not apologized to the member. I wish he would today.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I find that it is unfortunate that the Conservative Party is taking the tactic to try to bully or intimidate me in being able to address the House. I would ask that you, Madam Speaker, take it under advisement and review the number of points of order and the heckling that I get when I stand up to speak. I do not believe it is appropriate. As you can see, Madam Speaker, the heckling is going on right now.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I know that the hon. member raised a point of order asking for an apology. I was not here in the chamber when this issue was before the House. I understand that this was raised with the Speaker. I would just say that at this point in time I am going to allow the hon. member to ask the question and I am sure that the hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton will be able to answer that.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

• (1800)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I am sure that if the member were to reflect on question period and the questions he asked, he made a very clear indication in saying the Prime Minister knew. In fact, the Prime Minister was very clear in indicating that the Prime Minister did not know. Therefore, does the member believe that members should be respected when they say that they did not know and that the member is spreading misinformation by telling people that the Prime Minister did know? The member could maybe reflect on that.

Does the member recognize that in 2022 there were 49 members of Parliament who had general briefings that were provided. Does he believe that 2022 was the only year or that, in fact, that might have been happening for a number of years prior?

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Madam Speaker, I have every reason to believe that the Prime Minister did know. After all, the Prime Minister's national security adviser informed the member for Wellington—Halton Hills that the national security adviser to the PCO and all relevant departments had been briefed and similarly that this information absolutely would have made it to the Prime Minister.

Given the fact that the Prime Minister is responsible for the machinery of government and that he has special responsibilities for national security, if something as significant as this did not reach his desk and if he had set up a government that shielded him from being informed about this, that is no excuse. That is an indictment on this Prime Minister and underscores what I said in the conclusion of my speech, which is that he is completely unfit for the office that he serves and he is completely unfit to protect the national security interests of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the government admits that the Speaker of the House made the right ruling today. It is worth mentioning, but certainly a lot of questions remain unanswered. Why did this take so long? Why did they sidetrack the debate by appointing Mr. Johnston? Why not take the bull by the horns, as the saying goes?

Does my colleague agree that if this had been the case, we could have saved a lot of time in the House and we could have debated several other topics that directly affect our constituents, such as health, seniors, and climate change?

[*English*]

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Madam Speaker, if we had a competent Prime Minister and a competent government that took national security seriously, two things would have happened following that July 21 CSIS assessment. First, the member for Wellington—Halton Hills would have been immediately informed that a Beijing diplomat was targeting the safety and security of his family and threatening his ability to do his job in this place on behalf of his constituents and on behalf of Canadians. Second, that diplomat would have been sent packing to Beijing immediately, and not two years after the fact.

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I have some concerns about how we are going forward with this discussion and how we are building a stronger democracy in Canada. I know the member to be very thoughtful.

Can the member speak about the circumstances where we have to keep things private?

Regarding national security, we know not everything can be public. I am struggling right now. I am sure many people in this House are struggling with knowing where that line is and how we protect that very important public security line, but also have the ability to be transparent and also have the ability to ensure that parliamentarians know when they are at risk and when their families are at risk.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Madam Speaker, the member does raise a point, but I would submit that, under the government, the pendulum is way over on the other side: no transparency and no sunlight. The advice of CSIS to the Prime Minister has been that in order to combat foreign interference, there needs to be transparency and sunlight.

We have a situation so serious that a member of Parliament was being intimidated because of a position they took in this House and how they voted, and that their family was being threatened and sanctioned, potentially in Hong Kong, by an accredited diplomat in Canada.

The member for Wellington—Halton Hills should have been made aware of it, the Canadian public should have been made aware of it and the Beijing diplomat should have been sent back to Beijing then, not two years after the fact.

• (1805)

**Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the diplomat was expelled today, two years too late. He has been operating on Canadian soil for two years and the government knew about it.

Is the government negligent?

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Madam Speaker, I could not agree more with the member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley. The diplomat should have been expelled immediately and the government had all the tools at its disposal.

*Privilege*

Article 9 of the Vienna Convention gives the government the unfettered discretion to expel any diplomat at any time for any reason.

The government did not do that. In doing that, it sent a message to Beijing that Beijing effectively has a green light to interfere in our democracy and our sovereignty to the detriment of the safety and security of Chinese Canadians and all Canadians.

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Madam Speaker, the member for St. Albert—Edmonton spoke about foreign interference with respect to one particular jurisdiction. Colleagues of ours, including the member for Edmonton Strathcona, have called out foreign interference with respect to other jurisdictions as well. Russia is one example.

Does the member for St. Albert—Edmonton feel we should be looking at a full national public inquiry into all matters of foreign interference, regardless of what jurisdiction it is from?

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Madam Speaker, the member is absolutely right that it is not only the Beijing regime that is a threat in terms of interfering in our sovereignty and our democracy. The Canadian security establishment, including CSIS, has been very clear that by far the biggest threat emanates from the Beijing regime.

There are other regimes, such as the Iranian regime that is interfering in Canada and intimidating and threatening Iranian Canadians. There is something the government could do to stop that, and that is to designate the IRGC as a terrorist entity so it can stop recruiting, fundraising and intimidating Iranian Canadians.

However, the government's soft approach, four years after the House voted overwhelmingly to designate the IRGC as a terrorist entity, has not seen fit to do that. It is just another example of the government not taking national security seriously and not putting the interests of Canadians first.

**Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC):** Madam Speaker, on Thursday, while my hon. Conservative colleague was speaking, he was being heckled by members on the Liberal side, particularly the member for Kingston and the Islands and the member for Winnipeg North.

The member for Winnipeg North, in his heckle about the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, said the member is not credible.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** There is a point of order by the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, the last time the member stood up on this point of order, he crossed the floor and threatened—

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

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Could I please hear them member out so I can see whether it is a point of order or not?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, the last time the member stood up on this issue and commented on it, I raised it and then he walked across the floor and threatened me. The member said to me that he was going to continue to rise on this issue until I apologized for something I do not believe I have to apologize for. I do not believe a member crossing the floor and making those types of

verbal threats is appropriate. I would ask that the Speaker look into the matter, as I indicated earlier, about what actions members are taking to try to intimidate members of the government.

• (1810)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I am going to review the Hansard, as I am sure the Speaker said when this was brought forward. We will check to see if the recording is in Hansard. I was not privy to this and we do not always hear everything that is going on in the chamber. I would ask members to be judicious in their language to each other and to be respectful. I know that this is a very important debate that can be very emotional at times.

I would ask the member to ask his brief question so we can get to the next speaker.

The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil is rising on the same point of order.

**Mr. John Brassard:** Madam Speaker, one thing I noticed is that when you were standing up, the member's light was still on. It is convention in this place, in fact it is a standing rule in this place, that when a Speaker rises from his or her chair, the lights are immediately cut off and the debate is ended. I just want clarification on that.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** It all depends on whether I stay standing or not. Sometimes it is still on while I am listening to the member. I take note of it and we will certainly keep that in mind as we move forward.

I would ask the hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin to ask a brief question so we can get to the answer.

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Madam Speaker, the hon. member is correct. I did walk across and said that if he did not apologize, I am going to keep asking the question, and I will keep asking the question—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I would ask the hon. member to ask his question of the hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton. We can leave this other debate to the side so that we can go back and look at the Hansard.

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Madam Speaker, does the member believe the hon. member for Winnipeg North should stand right now and apologize for saying that the member for Wellington—Halton Hills was not credible?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** This is not becoming a point of debate as it is somebody's point of view. I am going to allow the hon. member to answer and then we are going to move on.

The hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Madam Speaker, in short, the answer to my colleague's question is yes.

Do members know who was intimidated? It is not the member for Winnipeg North. It is the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, and for two years the Prime Minister covered it up.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Madam Speaker, before I begin, I want to acknowledge the total hell that the family of our foreign affairs critic, the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills, has been through. I also want to highlight and salute the courage he has shown in the face of threats from a foreign dictatorship. This should never have happened to any MP of any party. All Canadians are with him and his family. We wish them happiness and complete safety.

Unfortunately, a member, with the privileges of a member, told me something. I believe he will allow me to share it with my colleagues. How many families remain silent when faced with similar threats by this dictatorship? We have heard stories about this. Families of Chinese descent here in Canada, patriotic people who care about our country, tearfully asked our candidates, during the election, to go into their backyard, without their telephones, because they thought the regime was eavesdropping on them. Families are threatened by the police stations of a foreign dictatorship that exist across the country. We know that there are still at least two of them in Montreal.

The government has known about these threats for years. The Prime Minister and his government were aware that families were being threatened and that propaganda from a foreign dictatorship was being posted on social media. They knew that Canadians were being threatened. These individuals were being told not to vote for the Conservative Party in elections. Their families abroad were being threatened. The Liberals have known about all of these instances of interference for years. The government did absolutely nothing to stop it.

Instead, if any journalists asked about this, the government said they were racist in order to shut them down and avoid these kinds of questions. Our intelligence services had to leak it to the media. It is inconceivable that our intelligence services felt the need to give this confidential information to the media to inform the public of the Prime Minister's dangerous inaction. Why has the Prime Minister done nothing—and that is being generous—about this threat?

Allow me to list some possible explanations. We now know, thanks to our security intelligence services, that Beijing helped the Prime Minister win two elections. Is he happy to let this go on because the regime is helping the Liberal Party? Is he pleased to see it happen again in future elections because it would give him an edge? Are these the reasons he is doing nothing? Is it because he still admires the “basic dictatorship” of Communist China, to quote his words? Is it because Beijing donated \$140,000 to the Trudeau Foundation, the same foundation whose donors funded the Prime Minister's lavish vacations? Is it because he supports the regime's ideology? As he said himself, he admired Fidel Castro, another communist dictator.

● (1815)

Is it because the Liberal Party has corporate ties, financial ties, that have made members of the Liberal Party, including former prime minister Jean Chrétien, very rich?

We do not know why.

### *Privilege*

What we do know is that after he became Prime Minister of Canada, he went to Beijing. The dictatorship nicknamed him “little potato”. He was very proud of it. His foreign minister announced it to everyone and translated it from Mandarin to English to broadcast the fact that Beijing refers to our Prime Minister as the “little potato”. He is happy to be their “little potato” instead of our prime minister who protects our national security.

What we do know is that nothing has changed. After each and every Canadian learned that a member of Parliament had been threatened, it took one week for the Beijing agent who was responsible for those very threats to finally be expelled.

Then there was a motion in the House—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I must interrupt the hon. Leader of the Opposition. The hon. Minister of Sport and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec.

\* \* \*

### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Sport and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I request that the ordinary hour of daily adjournment of the next sitting be 12:00 midnight, pursuant to order made Tuesday, November 15, 2022.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Pursuant to order made Tuesday, November 15, 2022, the minister's request to extend the said sitting is deemed adopted.

I invite the hon. Leader of the Opposition to continue his speech.

\* \* \*

### PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister learned nothing or does not want to learn anything from these threats and the fact that Canadians found out about them.

Today, the House voted on a Conservative motion to create a registry of foreign agents, those people who are paid by dictatorships to influence and manipulate our policies here in Canada. The Prime Minister and his party voted against the motion. Why?

*Privilege*

If a person wants to lobby for a food bank, they have to register. Why would we not ask the same from someone who wants to lobby for a foreign dictatorship? It makes no sense. These people who are paid to intimidate people and influence our politics can do so in secret. Everyone runs the risk of being approached by these same people because we do not know who they are. If a person working for Beijing or another dictatorship meets us in our offices, we never know if they are being paid by this government to do so. A registry like those that already exist in the United States and Australia would allow us to know who these people are. It is not a crime to work for a foreign government, but people should have to at least register so that we can know when that is the case. The Prime Minister, however, wants this to remain secret.

Our motion called for a public inquiry to get to the truth. The Prime Minister voted against that motion, choosing instead to appoint a former member of the Trudeau Foundation to conduct an investigation. Can we really trust the Trudeau Foundation, which has already received \$140,000 from Beijing? All Trudeau Foundation board members resigned because of problems with that donation. The Prime Minister has appointed two people to investigate foreign interference, two people out of 40 million Canadians. According to the Prime Minister, no one in Canada was qualified to conduct this investigation except members of the Trudeau Foundation, which is funded by Beijing and with which the Trudeau family continues to have ties. Is there no one else capable of conducting this investigation in a country like ours? Of course there is, and that is why we need a public inquiry.

The Prime Minister voted against closing Chinese police stations. If the United States' FBI opened police stations in Canada, Canadians would be outraged, and rightfully so. It is unacceptable for another country, no matter the country, whether it is one of our allies or one of our enemies, to have a police station here. By definition, a sovereign country has the sole authority to use force legitimately and legally on its territory. Police stations must be managed by our system, by our governments elected by Canadians. We want to close Beijing's police stations and we want to do it now.

The primary responsibility of a prime minister is to defend his citizens against foreign threats. That is even more important than the economy and all other issues. Protecting our country and its citizens against foreign threats is the primary responsibility. What we are learning is that the Prime Minister did nothing to protect us. He does not want to do anything. It has been six months since Canada learned of these threats. The Prime Minister has done absolutely nothing to protect us and is incapable of doing so. We need a new government that will protect us, that will make Canadians the priority. That is just plain common sense, and that is exactly what I will do as prime minister of Canada.

● (1820)

[*English*]

Before I begin my remarks in English, I want to acknowledge the total hell that the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills has suffered. I cannot imagine receiving a phone call from a journalist late one night to find out that family members on the other side of the world have been threatened for two years and that my own government knew about it, said nothing to me nor did anything to protect my family, and, worse still, allowed the perpetrator of these

threats to remain in Canada and have immunity from our laws all of that time. It must have been the worst phone call he has ever received, but I have to say that the member dealt with this incredible hardship with grace, dignity and honour. All of us, and all Canadians, stand with him four-square.

What has the Prime Minister learned? Apparently, he has learned nothing. He finally kicked out the operative from Beijing, after two years of knowing about this. CSIS informed the Prime Minister's national security adviser in July 2021, two years ago. He did absolutely nothing. It was not until the media found out that he responded at all, and even then he said he was too afraid to kick this agent out.

This agent not only went after a member of the House, but also, sadly, may have targeted countless other families. The member in question told me, and I think he would not mind if I shared, that what bothers him most is that, while he has the floor of the House of Commons in order to raise these threats, many thousands of other patriotic Canadians of Chinese origin have faced exactly the same intimidation and threats. We hear the stories of members of Parliament, and some who were defeated, who knocked on doors only to have these Canadians in tears, asking them to go into the backyard and leave the telephones at the front of the house so that they could quietly relay the stories of the threats and intimidation they have received: knocks on the door from Beijing's agents and visits to family members who live in China itself, with veiled, and sometimes overt, threats that were not acted upon by the Canadian government.

Meanwhile, there have been foreign police stations on our soil. If the FBI opened police stations in Canada, there would be thousands of people out to protest them. It would be seen as a massive attack by our American friends on our own sovereignty. Are we expected to accept it when it is by a hostile foreign dictatorship? Can anyone imagine a prime minister ceding law enforcement powers to a foreign dictatorship? The Prime Minister can claim he is offended by all this, but he has been briefed and has known about it for years, and he has done nothing except having his public safety minister go out and claim there is nothing to worry about and that the police stations were all closed. We find out now that this was false. At least two stations are up and running, and they have not even been visited by Canadian law enforcement authorities. How many other police stations are out there? How many other aggressive foreign operatives are harassing good, solid Canadian people? We need an answer to that question.

*Privilege*

Why is it that the Prime Minister refuses to take action? Is it because he still admires the basic Chinese Communist dictatorship, as he so famously said? Is it because, as he said, he admired Fidel Castro? Is it because the dictatorship in Beijing gave \$140,000 to the Trudeau Foundation? Is it because he now knows that Beijing interfered in two consecutive elections to help him win, and he is just as happy as a clam to have them interfere one more time to give him an advantage? Is he prepared to put his own electoral interests above our national security? Is that how bad it has become?

We know that he has voted against, in our recent Conservative motion, the creation of a foreign influence registry, which exists in the United States and Australia. It is necessary to register if one wants to lobby for the food bank; why should someone not have to make themselves know if they are taking paid interests from foreign dictatorships to manipulate Canadian politics today? It is just common sense, and that is why we want to bring it home. This would not apply to any particular race, group or nationality of Canadians; it would apply exclusively to people of any race who take financial payment from a foreign dictatorship, and that is something that can be done in a manner that is respectful of human rights.

• (1825)

The Prime Minister knows that, but he does not want the truth to come out. He voted against a public inquiry, instead relying on two former members of the Trudeau Foundation, a foundation that received \$140,000 from Beijing, to do all of the so-called investigating. Out of 40 million people, he expects us to believe the only two people in all of Canada qualified to look into this matter are members of the Trudeau Foundation. That is not credible, especially when it was his own brother who facilitated the donation coming from Beijing.

The Prime Minister voted against closing the foreign police stations. Closing those stations was part of the Conservative motion that he and the Liberal Party voted against, and the Liberal Party voted against kicking out all the operatives who have been attacking our people. The Prime Minister has one principal, primordial responsibility, which is to protect the Canadian people and their democracy. He has put that job aside for the priorities, either ideological or financial, that are driving him in the other direction.

Conservatives, however, will not let up. We will continue to fight to close these foreign police stations. We will stand up against foreign interference in our elections. We will push for stronger laws to detect and prevent future interference in election campaigns. We will continue to call for, and, eventually, when I am prime minister, bring into place a full public inquiry so we can get to the truth in this scandal. We will, every day in every way, call for and demand the end to anyone who has been involved in setting up police stations on behalf of a foreign government. This is the least we can do. Remember that we will bring home control of our democracy, back to Canadians, not to any foreign government. We will bring home security to our country by removing Iran's, Beijing's or any other foreign regime's operatives who are harassing our people on the ground.

Let us make no mistake, as we go forward and do this work: We are not doing this on behalf a group of people who are simply

members of some diaspora. Chinese Canadians are Canadians. Iranian Canadians are Canadians. They are good people, and I want to say to them that we are their allies in defending the reason they came here. I know why they came here; it is because they wanted to work hard, to contribute to this country and to be free from censorship and oppression. They wanted to live their lives and build their dreams, and they should have every right to do that. They are our people. They are part of our home. This is our land. This is our democracy. Let us bring it home for them and for everyone. I thank them very much for standing here as Canadians. We stand with them too.

• (1830)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, foreign interference is something that is not new. The leader of the Conservative Party is very much aware of that, because, after all, he was the minister responsible for democratic reform and he, in fact, had the opportunity to deal with foreign interference. The former prime minister, Stephen Harper, chose to do nothing, like the current leader.

Would the leader of the Conservative Party not recognize that, in 2022 alone, there were 49 briefings provided to members of Parliament? That is not to mention how many would have happened before. In order for us to deal with this, we should actually be trying to depoliticize the tactics the Conservatives have been using for well over a week now. Does he not believe that would be in the interest of Canadians? It is time to stop politicizing the issue to the degree to which the Conservative Party of Canada is doing that today.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Madam Speaker, I do not know what he would have had us do when we learned that a member of Parliament had been targeted with threats against his family by a foreign dictatorship. Would he have had us just stay silent? Would he have had us just sit on our hands? Would he have had us praise the Prime Minister for having done absolutely nothing about it? Would he have had us just take the word of the Prime Minister that he knew nothing, despite all the now publicly available evidence?

We did not politicize it. We stood up for a member of Parliament whose family had been targeted. What is politicization is the fact that the Prime Minister has known about this and other interference and did absolutely nothing about it because he thought it was in his electoral interest to keep it going.

• (1835)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I share the Leader of the Opposition's concerns. In fact, that is why, earlier this year, I went to meet with professors and researchers at the Universit  de Sherbrooke who specialize in cybercrime issues. They were eager to talk to me and share their concerns.

*Privilege*

They shared the results of their research with me. They clearly demonstrated and explained how far behind we are here in Canada. The member mentioned Australia. The researchers told me about the European Union and certain countries in Europe. We are really behind.

By not acting on this issue, what message does that send about the weakness of our foreign policy? How is it that there are some, Liberal and Conservative alike, who have known this has been going on for 40 years and have done nothing about it?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Madam Speaker, Beijing sees the government's inaction as a major vulnerability. According to the intelligence service, Beijing sees Canada as a country that is very vulnerable to its interference because the government does not want to do anything to prevent such interference.

For example, a foreign agent registry is a tool that exists in the United States and Australia but that does not exist here in Canada. The intelligence service pointed out that, in Beijing's eyes, we are uniquely vulnerable to interference because we do not have that tool to protect us.

That is why the Conservative Party called for such a registry during the last election. We will continue to call for one and to exert pressure to make that happen.

[*English*]

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, earlier today in question period, my colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby asked the government if there are any other MPs that it was aware of who may have had threats made against them or their families and who had not been briefed. My impression was that we did not get a straight answer to what I thought was a very straightforward question. I wonder what the leader of the Conservative Party thinks about that, and whether he heard an answer where I could not.

I am also curious about his thoughts about the Liberals' saying that this should not be a partisan circus. I totally agree with that, but I think the answer to that problem is to have a full public inquiry, to convene that quickly and to ensure that members across party lines are comfortable with the person heading that public inquiry. I invite him to reflect on that as well.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Madam Speaker, I agree. In fact, had the government already launched an independent commission of inquiry, we could depoliticize this issue. We need to do that. It would make it possible to have a judge who is respected by all parties in the House rather than simply having another member of the Liberal club. We need someone who has the respect of the NDP, the Bloc Québécois, the Conservatives and the Liberals.

That way, we could have an open process where people would be compelled to testify truthfully. That way, we could get to the truth. That is why we will continue to call for that. It was in our motion, and that is why we will continue to exert pressure to make that happen.

[*English*]

**Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the 2019 annual report from the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians recommended that the government develop a comprehensive strategy to counter foreign interference and build institutional and public resilience.

Why has the government been so negligent in its responsibilities, in its fundamental duties, to protect Canadians?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Madam Speaker, that could be because the Prime Minister admires the basic Chinese Communist dictatorship. He has also said words of praise about former dictator Fidel Castro. It could be because Beijing donated \$140,000 to the Trudeau Foundation. It could be that Beijing helped in two consecutive elections and he is just fine with it interfering once again. What is most disgraceful is the fact that he has made our Chinese population, the people in this country, vulnerable to this foreign threat.

The data shows that, in the 2021 election, it was not that Canadians of Chinese origin went en masse to vote for the Liberal Party; it is that, in communities with large Chinese populations, there was a massive drop in the number of people who actually voted. That is because they were intimidated and threatened about what would happen if they went out and cast their ballot.

Can members imagine that, in Canada, where we have the constitutional right to vote, some people thought that they or their family would be in danger if that vote went ahead, and that their Prime Minister found out about that in briefing after briefing and sat there and did nothing, perhaps because he was the beneficiary of it? It is disgraceful, and it demonstrates why we need a new government that will stand up for our home and native land.

• (1840)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, what is disgraceful is the Leader of the Opposition—

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

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Order. I asked the hon. parliamentary secretary for his question. I would ask members to listen to what the question is. Before he started to speak, there were individuals who started yelling. Therefore, I would ask that they listen to the question. I know the official opposition leader is able to answer.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, what is disgraceful is that the Leader of the Opposition would actually suggest, as he did a moment ago, that the Prime Minister of Canada would willingly and openly allow foreign interference within the democratic process in Canada.



In 2013, when the member was the minister of democratic reform, he received a public document from CSIS stating that foreign interference was here and was something that would continue into the future. For two years, the former Conservative government did absolutely nothing about it. My question for the member is this: Can he let this House know what he did as the minister of democratic institutions in 2013?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Madam Speaker, we passed two laws that held it illegal for foreign bodies to provide any material support in elections. That is what we did.

I find it incredible that whenever the current government gets into a scandal, it asks why the previous government did not pass tougher laws to prevent the Liberal Party from getting into its more recent scandal. It is like it is saying that it is so clever that it is better at scandal than we are at legislating against it.

We are going to get better still. We are going to have a strong platform in the next election that fights all sorts of Liberal scandal, but more importantly, protects our democracy and brings home the control of our government back to the Canadian people.

**Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC):** Madam Speaker, Mark Twain is rumoured to have said this: “History never repeats itself, but it does often rhyme.” With this Liberal government, it is no surprise that what we are hearing today is much more of the repetition that we have seen from a tired, out-of-touch Liberal government.

However, talking of history, in 1970, former prime minister John Diefenbaker made some very prescient comments in this very place. He said in debates, at page 208 of Hansard, that:

All over the world, Canada has a black eye. And now what is the government doing? It has recognized a communist China. Well, I can just imagine the deluge of communist spies who will come in here attached to the Chinese embassy, when it opens. They will all masquerade as diplomatic representatives.

Frankly, I wish that Diefenbaker had not been so forward-looking in his comments, because that is what we saw here today.

Earlier today, after far too long of a delay, the government finally declared Zhao Wei *persona non grata*. However, it should not have taken this long. It should have been done as soon as these allegations came to light. I do not mean last week when it was reported in *The Globe and Mail*; I mean two years ago when the government was informed of these allegations by CSIS. The moment the government knew from CSIS that a diplomatic representative was using influence and intimidation tactics against a member of the House and his family, two years ago, that diplomat should have been expelled and made *persona non grata* on the spot.

What we have heard in the last week and a half is this: First, the government denied ever having received the report; then it came to light that, in fact, the government did receive the report. The national security adviser to the Prime Minister received the report; the Privy Council Office, the Prime Minister's own department, received the report and then sat on it for two years while a member of the House and his family were being intimidated. It is, quite frankly, shameful and disgusting.

The debate at hand today is on a motion of privilege. Now, many Canadians out there may not know the history or the background of

### Privilege

what privilege means in today's context, but at its core, the constitutional principle of privilege goes to the heart of our role as parliamentarians and the voice of the people we represent. I want to talk a little bit about the history of parliamentary privilege. More importantly, I want to talk about why that history is important, why that dusty old history matters today, why that concept of privilege that came about in the era of wig-wearing was more common and why that is important today.

Most parliamentarians have their favourite books, and mine is *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms*, sixth edition. I want to quote the definition of “privilege” at page 11, paragraph 24. It reads:

Parliamentary privilege is the sum of the peculiar rights enjoyed by each House collectively as a constituent part of the High Court of Parliament, and by Members of each House individually, without which they could not discharge their functions and which exceed those possessed by other bodies or individuals. Thus, privilege, though part of the law of the land, is to a certain extent an exemption from the ordinary law. The distinctive mark of a privilege is its ancillary character. The privileges of Parliament are rights which are “absolutely necessary for the due execution of its powers.” They are enjoyed by individual Members, because the House cannot perform its functions without unimpeded use of the services of its Members; and by each House for the protection of its members and the vindication of its own authority and dignity.

That is from Sir Erskine May's *Treatise on the Law, Privileges, Proceedings and Usage of Parliament*, as quoted in the sixth edition of *Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms*.

• (1845)

The history that got us to this place is not linear. For centuries, Parliament and parliamentarians have used their authority in this place to assert their ability to do the work on behalf of the people they are called here to represent. Indeed, we can reflect back to 1621, when King James I refused to recognize Parliament's authority; in retaliation, the House of Commons said this:

[E]very Member of the House of Commons hath and of right ought to have freedom of speech...and...like freedom from all impeachment, imprisonment and molestation (other than by censure of the House itself) for or concerning any speaking, reasoning or declaring of any matter or matters touching the Parliament or parliament business.

That is quoted from the third edition of Bosc and Gagnon.

Instead of recognizing Parliament's privileges, James I retaliated, ordering that the journals of the House of Commons be sent to him. Out of protest, he tore out the offending pages and dissolved Parliament. Therefore, when we talk about parliamentary privilege, we are talking about a history that has long been fraught with challenges from the executive branch of government.

Why does this stodgy old history matter? It matters because parliamentarians need to be able to do their job. We need to speak in this place without fear for our families, without fear of retribution, without fear of foreign entities coming after us.

*Privilege*

In fact, let us reflect on the retribution that was targeted at the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. Why was he being targeted? It was because he was standing up for human rights around the world. He was standing up against the Communist dictatorship in Beijing. He was standing up against forced labour camps and the persecution, forced sterilization and forced migration of the Uyghur population in China. That was what he was standing up for.

He was standing up to protect the members of the diaspora community here in Canada as well. For this strong, straightforward talk from the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, he and his family were targeted. What is worse, the government knew about it. The government knew about it for two years.

It goes against everything that we as parliamentarians ought to stand for. It goes against the principles that we ought to stand for, to see intimidation from a foreign dictatorship.

What is the next step that we need to take as parliamentarians? First, we need a full public inquiry that is independent and has access to all the information that it needs, with a commissioner who is fully independent and is acceptable to all parties in the House of Commons. That is what is needed next. We need to take this and send it to an authority who can get to the bottom of it. Second, we need new legislation in this place that would create a foreign influence transparency registry. Despite such a proposal having been floated for several years, the government has not done this. In fact, its most recent announcement on this was that it is going to hold consultations. It is going to talk about this and maybe, sometime, perhaps get to the point where it could get a foreign influence registry.

● (1850)

This has been talked about already in this House, so I do not need to repeat it, but it makes sense. If domestic entities are required to register in order to lobby government officials, does it not also make sense that a foreign dictatorship ought to do the same? A foreign dictatorship should register to ensure that the people in this place have the opportunity to know who was there, rather than, as we have seen in the past with an entity attached to the Beijing consulate, waiting more than two years before action is taken.

We have known that democracy can only do its work if the people in this place are free and secure to pursue policies and direct the government to take actions that are in the interests of the Canadian people. Erskine May, at chapter 4, reads:

Freedom of speech is a privilege essential to every free council or legislature. It is so necessary for the making of laws, that if it had never been expressly confirmed, it must still have been acknowledged as inseparable from Parliament, and inherent in its constitution.

This is about the freedom of speech of members and the freedom of speech employed by the member for Wellington—Halton Hills in condemning and calling to task the dictatorship in Beijing regarding its persecution of the Uyghur population.

I draw the House's attention to July 12, 1976, when the Speaker presented the first report of the Special Committee on Rights and Immunities of Members. In that report, he stated, "The purpose of parliamentary privilege is to allow Members of the House of Commons to carry out their duties as representatives of the electorate without undue interference."

The next year, on October 29, 1977, the committee presented another report, which stated:

The freedom of speech accorded to Members of Parliament is a fundamental right without which they would be hampered in the performance of their duties. It permits them to speak in the House without inhibition, to refer to any matter or express any opinion as they see fit, and to say what they feel needs to be said in the furtherance of the national interest and the aspirations of their constituents.

As the member for Wellington—Halton Hills mentioned earlier today, we need this motion because of the failure of the executive branch of government. The executive branch of government failed to protect members of the House of Commons from foreign influence. By extension, the government has failed to protect all Canadians from the threat of foreign influence.

Indeed, as both the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Wellington—Halton Hills mentioned, within this place, we have a platform that we can raise these issues from. However, who does not have that platform? It is the thousands upon thousands of Canadians of Chinese descent who are being intimidated on a daily basis and facing repercussions from a dictatorship, Beijing, that is intimidating them here on Canadian soil. They are being intimidated by the presence of police stations of a foreign entity that have been allowed to pop up in at least two separate cities and that, in fact, continue to exist after the Minister of Public Safety claimed they had been shut down.

The government has failed to ensure that members of this House were actively and effectively briefed on the intimidation efforts against them. We know that the member for Wellington—Halton Hills was one such person, but the reports indicate that more than one member and more than one member's family may have been subject to these negative repercussions. One is too many, but more than one is an absolute indictment of the failure of the government to take seriously the threat of foreign influence in Canada.

● (1855)

This should go without saying, but I am going to say it anyway: The member for Wellington—Halton Hills is an individual of the absolute highest integrity. The member for Wellington—Halton Hills has more integrity in his little finger than the entire Liberal cabinet. I do not say that lightly. The fact that members on the side opposite, that government bureaucrats and that entities at the very highest level of government knew and sat on information of such an explosive nature for two years and did nothing is an indictment of the government and of the systems and apparatuses it has set up. They have failed to protect Canadians.

This morning, I was able to bring my children to Parliament Hill. As we did a quick tour, we ran into the Sergeant-at-Arms and the mace. The mace sits at this table in the middle of the House of Commons to show the ability of Parliament to pass laws and conduct its business. Parliament and this House, as one of three constituent parts of Parliament, must be free to undertake their work. It is that freedom, that privilege guaranteed to us by section 18 of the Constitution Act, 1867, that allows us to undertake our work, with the mace being a symbolic representation of that authority.

*Privilege*

Individual members must be, as is stated, “free from obstruction, interference, and intimidation”. That has not happened. The executive branch of government has not fulfilled its obligation to ensure that parliamentarians, but more important all Canadians, are protected from the foreign influence we have seen in recent years.

As I begin to wind down my comments, I want to talk about what happens next.

I have the great honour and privilege to serve as the vice-chair of the procedure and House affairs committee. Should this motion pass, it would be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. What I want to see at that committee is a full accounting of the government's actions to date. What is more, in addition to a full accounting of what has happened, I want to know what action it has taken to ensure that this will never happen again. What changes have been made, both in the Privy Council Office and with the national security and intelligence adviser, to ensure that nothing like this happens again? I also want to see a full accounting of all information related to any individual member of this House who may have been targeted, and want individual members to receive a full briefing from CSIS on what threats were made against them and who was involved. Each and every diplomat who has been involved in nefarious intimidation tactics on Canadian soil must be held to account and, like Zhao Wei, must be declared *persona non grata* immediately upon that information coming to light.

Let me be very clear. This motion today is of the utmost importance. It is about the ability of parliamentarians to do our job, to speak out on human rights abuses internationally and to speak out on behalf of Canadian citizens who are being threatened and targeted by a foreign power. We are here today to stand on behalf of each and every one of those Canadians and each every one of those people of Chinese descent being targeted here in Canada by operatives of the Beijing consulate.

• (1900)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, in his intervention, the member said that the executive branch failed to disclose information and sat on it for two years. Saying that is indirectly saying that the Prime Minister has lied, because when he was in this House, the Prime Minister said that he found out about this last Monday.

We are supposed to treat all members as honourable and take their word. When the member for Wellington—Halton Hills says that he did not know for two years, we believe him. Why do we afford that luxury to some members, but when the member for Papineau gets up and says the exact same thing, that he did not know about it for two years, somehow we are not supposed to believe him?

**Mr. John Nater:** Madam Speaker, despite not wanting to revert to my old days as a professor and lecturer in political science, I will explain to the member for Kingston and the Islands that the executive branch of government includes the bureaucratic arm of the government. It includes the national security adviser to—

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

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Order. When I stand and the light is on, members should be quiet. The hon. parliamentary secretary had a chance to ask his question, and if he has another one, he should stand to see if he can be recognized again when it is time for questions and comments.

The hon. member for Perth—Wellington.

• (1905)

**Mr. John Nater:** Madam Speaker, I have 10 minutes for questions and comments, and I look forward to a follow-up question from the member for Kingston and the Islands.

The fact remains that the Privy Council Office, which is the most senior department in government, a central agency and the Prime Minister's own department, was provided this information. The national security and intelligence adviser to the Prime Minister was provided this information. Katie Telford, the chief of staff to the Prime Minister, testified at committee that nothing is kept from the Prime Minister on security matters.

All this taken together means that there has been a clear and, quite frankly, disgusting failure of the government to hold to account those who are trying to influence Canadians.

[Translation]

**Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I have a question for my colleague. Why does he think the Prime Minister is refusing to call an independent public inquiry?

**Mr. John Nater:** Madam Speaker, I do not know. I do not know why the Prime Minister is not choosing to do the right thing and launch a public inquiry. That is what he needs to do, but he is not doing it. We need a public inquiry to check the information and to ensure that Canadians and parliamentarians will not be targeted.

[English]

This is where we need to go. We need to ensure there is a full public inquiry to get to the bottom of the challenges we see today.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague that we need a public inquiry. We need a foreign influence registry. I agree with him that the member for Wellington—Halton Hills has the highest level of integrity.

Unfortunately, I cannot say that for the leader of the Conservative Party, who I have known for 19 years. He has proven that he will say anything, do anything and burn any house down to score a quick point. For him to claim that the Prime Minister of the country is working with dictators to intimidate Chinese Canadians to suppress the vote in Canada is over the top and juvenile. It would be funny if it were not such a disturbing case of dog-whistle politics.

I have known the Prime Minister for a while and I do not have much time for him, but these are serious issues we are dealing with and we deserve better than the leader of the Conservative Party, who will grandstand and use something as serious as a threat to democracy at this time in order to make outrageous, silly, juvenile comments.

*Privilege*

Does the member agree that while the Liberals have failed to get us a public inquiry, his leader continues to play really concerning games with the future of our democracy and the credibility of Parliament?

**Mr. John Nater:** Madam Speaker, I will never apologize for the Conservative Party standing up for all Canadians. We will not apologize for the Conservatives standing up against the threats to our democracy from a foreign regime.

Our leader and our party are standing up on behalf of thousands upon thousands of members of the diaspora community in Canada who are feeling threatened. We are standing up on behalf of former colleagues, former members and candidates who felt intimidation from China, like Kenny Chiu and Bob Saroya. They felt intimidated by foreign influence from Beijing in Toronto and from the dictatorship in Beijing.

We will always stand up for the people being threatened in Canada to make their lives better here in Canada.

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Madam Speaker, one of the issues that have come up frequently in the course of this debate is the need for an independent public inquiry. We have heard of the connection between the special rapporteur and Mr. Rosenberg as it relates to the Trudeau Foundation. The Trudeau Foundation is actually implicated in this foreign interference campaign by the Beijing regime.

I want the hon. member to speak to the need for an independent inquiry to get to the bottom of foreign interference in this country.

**Mr. John Nater:** Madam Speaker, it is absolutely essential that we have an independent, non-partisan inquiry into foreign influence in Canadian elections. The member raised the Trudeau Foundation. The fact is that the Trudeau Foundation accepted a \$140,000 gift from the Communist Party in Beijing. It accepted \$140,000 in a contribution agreement signed by the Prime Minister's brother. We found out from testimony that the only contribution agreement he signed during his time there was the one linked to the Communist Party in China.

It is high time for a public inquiry. It needs to happen now and the Prime Minister needs to make it happen.

• (1910)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, I would hate for a former political science student to school another former political science student who is trying to school him, but the executive branch is the monarch, the Governor General and cabinet. That is the executive branch.

Nonetheless, I was very glad to hear the member say that he does not believe that the Prime Minister was lying and that the Prime Minister in fact did not know until Monday. Can he confirm that indeed he does believe the Prime Minister when the Prime Minister says that?

**Mr. John Nater:** Madam Speaker, I would never use unparliamentary language. I would say that, on so many occasions, the Prime Minister has been a stranger to the truth.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** You cannot say indirectly what you cannot say directly. I would just ask the hon. member to withdraw that.

**Mr. John Nater:** Madam Speaker, I withdraw that.

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, I think it is unfortunate that the Conservative motion begins by talking only about foreign interference from China. We know that there is foreign interference from many other countries, especially from our neighbours, the United States. Specifically, I do recall that Travis Moore, a cryptocurrency businessman, gave \$17,760.

I wonder if the member agrees that when we are talking about foreign interference, we should not be talking only about China, but about other countries as well that have an influence on the protection of Canadians.

**Mr. John Nater:** Madam Speaker, not to put too fine a point on it, but the member's privileges were violated by the Communist dictatorship in China. This is a privilege motion that is focused on the member for Wellington—Halton Hills and his rights and privileges as a parliamentarian being impacted by the Communist regime in Beijing. That is why we are debating this today. That is why we are here today and that is why this matter takes precedence over all other business of the House.

A question of privilege rises to a level where all parliamentarians focus their minds on the issue. In this case, it is the privileges of the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, who was targeted by the Communist Party in Beijing.

**Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC):** Madam Speaker, this is not about being one with the government. The Liberals have been in power for many years now. To me, it seems unacceptable that the Minister of Public Safety, who has been in cabinet for many years, would not be able to have a proper relationship with all the people to get all the information, the hundreds of people who could have provided him with good information. Time and time again he said he did not know as no one told him.

We need the truth. I wonder what the member for Perth—Wellington has to say about that.

**Mr. John Nater:** Madam Speaker, it goes back to the fact that this has been a breakdown of the entire executive branch of government. The Minister of Public Safety is just one aspect of the Liberal government, after eight years, not putting measures in place to keep Canadians safe, not being able to get the information to where it needs to go and sitting on information for up to two years when members of this House and Canadians are being threatened.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, allow me to start off by indicating very clearly that an attack of foreign interference in any fashion on one member is an attack on all members of the House. I said this last week too. Maybe not in those exact same words, but I said it last week, and I have reinforced it.

As a parliamentarian, I do very much understand the issue we are debating today. I understand the importance of dealing with the issue at hand. I want to cover a few different areas that I have been listening to and highlight some of the things I also said last week.

*Privilege*

The issue of foreign interference is something that is not new in Canada. This is something that has been going on for many years. There are a couple of things people should recognize. Number one, when we talk about foreign interference, influence and intimidation in any fashion, it is important to recognize that it is not just one country causing the problems. There are a number of countries that have been causing the issues we should all be concerned about. It is not one country causing the problem, and it is not one country receiving the intimidation. I would like to think that countries within the Commonwealth, allied countries, countries that have the same sort of values we have here in Canada, would be equally upset and would want to deal with the issue in a very significant and tangible way.

On several occasions, I have had the opportunity to highlight a report that came out for 2022 from CSIS. The report highlighted some very interesting issues. One page talks about the intimidation of members of Parliament, and I have made reference to the numbers. What we are talking about is CSIS briefings to elected officials in 2022. In that year alone, CSIS made the determination that it would give what I believe to be general briefings to 49 members of Parliament. I was not one of those members of Parliament, but what I do know is that there were 49 in 2022.

The content and the degree to which information is released to those individual members of Parliament are determined by CSIS. CSIS is the authority that ultimately makes the decision as to the seriousness of the potential threat and the circumstances around why there is a need to meet with the member of Parliament.

It is not just members of Parliament. The same report states that there were 26 provincial briefings. I assume “provincial” means members of a provincial legislature. Not only did it hit provincial, but it also went municipal. That could be anyone from a councillor to a mayor or a reeve. There were 17 of those, and again, that was in 2022 alone.

The report from CSIS states:

In an increasingly dangerous and polarized world, Canada faces multiple threats to our security, sovereignty, national interests, and values. CSIS is committed to keeping Canada and Canadians safe from all threats to our national security.

- (1915)

In doing so, CSIS investigates activities that fall within the definition of threats to the security of Canada, as outlined in the CSIS Act. Specifically, CSIS is authorized to investigate espionage and sabotage, foreign interference—

I underline “foreign interference”.

—terrorism and extremism, and subversion. Importantly, CSIS is prohibited from investigating lawful advocacy, protest or dissent—except when it is carried out in conjunction with activities that constitute a threat to the security of Canada.

The next part is what I would like members to appreciate:

In undertaking its work, CSIS reports on these threats by providing advice to the Government of Canada, including through the production of intelligence assessments and reports. In 2022, CSIS produced over 2,500 intelligence products.

There are 2,500 reports. We know there were 49 members of Parliament, 26 members of provincial legislatures and 17 mayors, councillors or Reeves, based on the report. What we do not know is the context of what was conveyed to those individuals. To that end, we have to respect what we are being told.

We often say that all members are honourable members. There does seem to be a double standard that comes from the opposition. They feel that they can say anything they want and they can mislead all they want and there is no consequence because, after all, they are in opposition. How many times have I used the words “character assassination”, coming from Conservatives toward government members? We never ever hear apologies from the other side when they make these bogus claims of misinformation, even when they know there is no merit to what has been said. They do not have qualms about doing that.

We have been very clear that the official opposition has chosen to make this a political issue. All one needs to do is look at the questions the official opposition has been asking and some of the statements that have been made today. There is no problem at all in terms of attacking the integrity of members on this side of the House, but when practical issues are raised about members on the other side, how defensive they get. Talk about a double standard.

As I said to one member, sometimes it is not advisable to throw a stone in glass houses, and that really needs to be applied.

**Mr. John Brassard:** You made that up.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, no, I did not make it up. It came from the Manitoba legislature, and I thought it was a very good point. I was in opposition at the time. I can say that, at the end of the day, there are a lot of Conservatives throwing rocks in glass houses. I suggest that they need to dial it down, that there are alternative ways.

We were the only country out of the Five Eyes countries that did not have a parliamentary review standing committee. One of the first things we did was establish that committee. There are parliamentarians on each side, all political parties, who get to participate in that group. This is a group of MPs who can listen and hold accountable organizations like CSIS. We do not know what is being said at that committee, but every party has representation on that committee and I suggest that they too, as a committee, are looking at this issue.

- (1920)

One member stood and said that PROC is a wonderful committee. Yes, it is a wonderful committee. I sat on it for a number of years. Nothing prevents the opposition parties and the government from saying that, at the procedure and House affairs committee, they would like to look at foreign interference and study *x*, *y* and *z*.

Today we saw that there is a great deal of support to have studies of that nature occur at standing committees. In particular, PROC has all sorts of mechanisms with which it can ensure a study takes place. We could be looking at the broader picture there because an attack on one is an attack on all, and it even goes beyond this chamber. I understand the dynamics of the large communities and the foreign interference that takes place within them.

*Privilege*

Not that long ago, I was at a local restaurant where some members from one community were so fearful of being caught meeting with me that they did not want to see anyone taking pictures because they were scared for their family members at home. We are not only talking about this country with respect to this issue. We need to realize that it is more than one country. We need to understand and appreciate that there is not one member in the House who would, in any fashion whatsoever, tolerate international interference, whether it were the Prime Minister, the leader of the official opposition, the leader of the Bloc, the leader of the NDP or any other member. I believe that to try to imply that is not the case would be dishonest.

The Prime Minister found out about this for the very first time last week. Conservatives would know that if they listened to the questions and answers. Imagine the misinformation some are putting out there trying to give the false impression that he knew about it. Then they say that, if he did not know about it, he should have. It is as though they are somehow trying to justify it that way. They will say that it is a failure of the government to protect us. There were 49 cases just last year. Are they that naive to believe that 2021 and 2022 were the only years this happened?

My colleagues raised the issue of what took place while the current leader of the Conservative Party was the minister responsible for democratic reform when Stephen Harper was prime minister. The Conservatives were told about it. They knew about it. Could any members on the Conservative side stand up today, with their integrity intact, to tell the House that, under no circumstances whatsoever, was there any intimidation or interference respecting a member of Parliament during the Stephen Harper era? I suspect not.

Does that mean that Harper was an absolute failure? Does it mean that he was dishonest? I am attributing some of the incredible comments that have been coming from the official opposition toward the Prime Minister to Stephen Harper. As the prime minister at the time, he decided to not do anything. Therefore, I do not think it is appropriate to heckle or raise those types of comments toward the Prime Minister, especially given the actions we have taken to date. As a government, we have moved on a number of files to recognize this issue, so the Conservatives should not try to give the impression that there is a member inside this chamber who is not sympathetic to the impact that foreign influence has had on the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. We are all concerned about it, each and every one of us. I would like to see this as a possible agenda item so we can think about it and talk about it.

● (1925)

Members can think about what the purpose of foreign interference is, at least in part. It is to cast a shadow of doubt to make it look as though we have lost control of the issue.

We can take a look at the Conservative Party's contribution to making a lot of those foreign actors happy when they see what is taking place in the chamber and in the media. There is a phenomenal amount of false information and misinformation being espoused by members of the House on such an important issue. We have recognized that.

I will point out a few of the things the government has done. I made reference to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians. As I indicated, members of all political stripes sit on that committee. They get to hear everything, and I understand foreign interference is one of those things they are hearing about. Are members saying that those members of Parliament do not know how to do their jobs? Are they going to reflect on that?

Maybe they want to reflect on CSIS as an organization that has the decision authority. The Conservatives say that they do not know what it is doing when it has those general briefings by not explaining more. We do not know what they are saying because we have confidence in those general briefings. They are giving a general briefing because there is a need. Something has happened to cause them to provide that general briefing. We are all afforded the ability to ask questions, I suspect. I do not know for sure because I have not had one, and I am grateful that I have not.

Reinforcing confidence in CSIS is also important. The National Security and Intelligence Review Agency, made up of the top independent experts, strengthens independent scrutiny and accountability of the national security agencies in Canada. These are incredible individuals who are there to ensure that the best interests of not only members of Parliament, but also all Canadians, are being taken into consideration and, in fact, acted upon.

This government established the critical election incident public protocol, a protocol that is administered by a panel of the most senior federal public servants. They work with national security agencies and are responsible for communicating with Canadians in the event of an incident, or a series of incidents, that threatens the integrity of a federal election.

We created the security and intelligence threats to elections task force, which is composed of officials from the Communications Security Establishment, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Global Affairs Canada. The SITE task force works to identify and prevent covert, clandestine or criminal activities from influencing or interfering with the electoral process in Canada. Because of a lot of the work we have done in the last number of years on this issue of foreign interference, we established a rapid response mechanism, the RRM, at the G7 summit to help G7 countries identify and respond to diverse and evolving foreign threats to democracy.

In his speech, the leader of the Conservative Party was critical, saying that we do not care about a foreign influence transparency register. On March 12 of this year we announced the launch of a consultation to guide the creation of a foreign influence transparency registry in Canada to ensure transparency and accountability from people who advocate on behalf of a foreign government.

At the end of the day, this is a government that has acted on the issue. We are suggesting that it impacts each and every one of us, and it is time to dial it down to make it less political in its partisanship. Let us wait until we get the report from the former governor general, and then we can follow the recommendations, even if it means having that public inquiry.

*Privilege*

• (1930)

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the member opposite keeps on invoking article 5 of the Washington treaty, but refuses to pay the dues. How is it that 49 people supposedly getting a CSIS briefing in 2022 absolves the Prime Minister of refusing to have CSIS act on a report, which he knew of, that a member of the House had been intimidated and the family back home had been threatened? How is that family in a restaurant the member talked about afraid of talking because of what might happen in the old country?

The Prime Minister is using willful ignorance to justify his executive deniability. We did try to pass a bill, the foreign lobbyist registration act, that would have taken care of this, but the member voted against it.

• (1935)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, the member makes my point on misinformation and outright false information. Some members of the House will go outside the chamber to use their social media. They will talk to other individuals, knowing full well that they are, in fact, misleading Canadians.

With respect to the 49 members of Parliament I referenced, what did the Prime Minister actually do? When he first heard about it, he made arrangements for the member in question to make sure he had the proper briefing on the issue—

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Two years later.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member had an opportunity to ask a question. I would ask her to listen to the answer. She may not like it, but this is out of respect.

I would ask the hon. parliamentary secretary to wrap it up so I can go to the next question.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister also indicated that he wants to know from this point forward when an MP has reached that much lower threshold so we are much more aware of it.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Winnipeg North for his long speech. He clearly has a solid understanding of the objectives of foreign interference.

However, he started his speech by discussing the importance of resolving this issue. I agree with him completely, but I think that the reason we are bogged down with this issue today is that the government utterly failed to take action, even though the member for Wellington—Halton Hills started asking for a robust plan as far back as 2020.

If not for the government's inaction, we could have spent the day talking about inflation, health, seniors or climate change. Instead, because of the government's inaction, we are stuck discussing this issue. I doubt the member will agree with my statement.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, the member is right. I do not necessarily agree with her conclusions or her thoughts. I do

agree with the idea that we could have been talking about a wide spectrum of different possible issues, but it is not to take away from the critical issue that we have at hand.

It is important for us to ultimately recognize that the Prime Minister found out about it, just as I and I assume most, if not all, others did, just last week. If we look at what has transpired between last week, when everyone found out about it, to today, we see that a great deal of action has taken place. If one believes the Conservative spin, one could easily draw the conclusion of being somewhat disappointed. However, I would suggest that they should not believe the Conservative spin because a lot of that spin is not true.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I will start by saying that I certainly agree with the member that the level of politicization of these issues has not been helpful in getting to the truth. However, I would also say, which was reflected in my vote earlier and the vote of the New Democrats, as it has been at various times when we have presented motions and voted before for a public inquiry into this matter, that the best way to depoliticize the issue is to have a public inquiry.

I would say further, for those of us who are genuinely concerned about the level of politicization of the issue, that it was frustrating today, right after question period, at which this was the subject of much debate and questions, to have the Minister of Foreign Affairs tweet out during our vote on the motion that the government was expelling the Chinese agent whose actions are in question and who is the subject of the motion.

It feels as though, if the government were really trying to remove political gamesmanship from the issue, the minister would have been here for question period and stood up to inform the House directly of that decision during question period. Pardon me—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** We have a point of order.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, the member just referenced the absence of a minister from the House at a particular time. Perhaps he would like to rephrase that.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I did not catch that, but I am sure the hon. member caught himself. I would ask him to please be careful not to mention whether someone is or is not in the House.

The hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona could please wrap it up.

• (1940)

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Madam Speaker, I apologize for the error. It was an absent-minded error and was not intentional.

However, it was an important announcement that the government tried to make from a point of order after question period, which it could very well have made during question period if it wanted to take some of the political gamesmanship out of it. I would ask the member why it was that the government made that decision around the timing of that announcement.

*Privilege*

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I do not necessarily want to indicate that I fully understand the timing and the way in which things ultimately unfolded. However, I would like to pick up on the member's comments in regard to the public inquiry.

At the end of the day, I believe that we have an incredible individual, who was an appointment by Stephen Harper as the Governor General of Canada, an individual of impeccable credentials, who has now been assigned the task, as special rapporteur, of looking into the whole issue of foreign interference, influence and so on, and coming back with a report. I think everyone in the House has had the opportunity to express their thoughts about the public inquiry. The commitment from the Prime Minister is that, if the report comes back with that recommendation, a public inquiry will, in fact, be taking place. I would not underestimate the impact that the NDP has had on the issue.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, let us just recap for a second.

In 2013, the Conservatives and the former democratic reform minister, the member for Carleton and Leader of the Opposition, received a report from CSIS saying that election interference was real and was going to continue. He did nothing for two years and literally sat on the report.

Later on, in 2017, after we came into government, we introduced Bill C-76, which limited funding from foreign actors. The Conservatives voted against it. We introduced Bill C-22 shortly before that, to create NSICOP. Conservatives would not even let it go to committee. They voted against it after the first or second reading.

I am wondering how the Conservatives can actually stand here and try to claim that they have any credibility on the issue of foreign interference, when they did nothing and routinely voted against every measure that we brought forward.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I think the member is sharing a little bit of the frustration of when we look across and see the leader of the official opposition, the Conservative Party, on this particular issue, given the fact that foreign interference and influence have been taking place for many years. Even when the leader of the Conservative Party was the minister responsible for the issue, he, let alone the prime minister at the time, chose to do nothing. That is what I mean about throwing rocks in glass houses and looking in a mirror before they make some of the statements they make inside the House.

At the end of the day, we should try to wind things down in terms of the politicization we have witnessed over the last little while on this issue and resolve it.

**Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it takes a stunning level of audacity for the member to give a lecture to the House on politicization and throwing stones in glass houses. On Thursday, he and his friend from Kingston and the Islands undertook a blatant strategy to discredit the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, in order to defend their incompetent government—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** On a point of order, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

I want to remind the member that we went through this a while ago, so I want him to be judicious with what he is going to say.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, on that point of order, I apologize if I was not here at the time, but on Thursday, after question period, I rose to clarify my comment and apologize, not only to that member but also to all members of the House and to the Speaker. I would, therefore, appreciate the member's withdrawing his characterization of me at this time.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin.

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Madam Speaker, on that point of order, I did not actually reference any comments that the member made—

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** He said, “Kingston and the Islands.”

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** This is becoming a point of debate again. I would ask the parliamentary secretary to wait until I am finished.

The hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin.

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Madam Speaker, he did withdraw two words that I am not referencing at this point in time, but the entire strategy that they undertook is what I am taking issue with right now.

• (1945)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** This is all becoming a point of debate.

I know the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona also was rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Madam Speaker, on a separate point of order, I noticed that, in his remarks, the member for Kingston and the Islands made reference to his presence or absence in the House, and seeing as he is a member of the House, I think he may—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** We can mention that we are in the House, but we should not mention who was not in the House.

We are going straight to the question at hand. The hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin.

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Madam Speaker, I will note that, through the course of the debate, both of those members had to step back from the incorrect remarks that they made. We have a chance today—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Again, I would ask the hon. member to ask his question. I have looked at Hansard, and from what I can see, it is all in the interpretation. The discussion being had right now is all on debate.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.



**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, I unreservedly apologized, and I clarified what my intent was. Anything else the member is trying to suggest is just factually inaccurate and actually goes to my integrity as a member, by his continuing to say this after I apologized.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** If this continues, I am just going to end the debate, because we are going to run out of time.

The hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin.

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Madam Speaker, we have a chance tonight, at the end of this debate, to right that wrong. Will the member support the motion to have PROC study this point of privilege from the member for Wellington—Halton Hills?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I am going to take very seriously the approach of the member across the floor, which is to threaten to stand up on points of order every time I speak. I would ask that the member come and apologize to me. It was not very parliamentary for him to do so. If he is not prepared to do that, I do not feel I have to answer his questions.

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am certainly happy to rise, although three minutes late because of some of the shenanigans arising in this place this evening on this very important issue.

Before I begin, I want to thank the Chair for the ruling today on the question of privilege from the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills. This is an extremely important issue that we are debating here tonight. It has far-reaching consequences, not just for the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, but also for those Canadians in the Chinese diaspora who have felt the threats of intimidation, the harassment and the fear of the Communist regime in Beijing's interfering in almost every aspect of their lives.

We are here tonight not just because of the question of privilege, but also because there are questions that need to be answered. The hope is that the motion presented by the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, to have the PROC committee look into this, will find some of those answers. Some of those questions are these: Who knew, when did they know and what did they do about it?

With recent reports in the media, particularly in *The Globe and Mail* with information that is seemingly being provided to it by the security establishment, there are many facts related to this case that are indisputable. First, we now know that the government knew about these threats almost two years ago. We know that there has been foreign intimidation of Chinese diaspora members for several elections now. We also know, according to the national security adviser to the Prime Minister, that the government did receive a report from CSIS saying that the member for Wellington—Halton Hills and his family were facing threats. They were facing threats not just here in Canada, but were facing threats also, by extension, in Hong Kong. Those facts are indisputable. There is no amount of standing up and elevating our voices that will dispute those facts.

Therefore, the question remains: What, if anything, did the government do about it? We found out today, and over the course of the last week, through lines of questioning, that it has done nothing about it. It has done nothing with this information over the course

### *Privilege*

of the last two years. The impact of that is significant, not just for the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. He is a member of Parliament and enjoys certain privileges as a member of Parliament, not the least of which is the expectation of security being provided by the government. All Canadians should expect that.

If this can happen to a member of Parliament because of a position they have taken with a vote or multiple votes, what about the members within the Chinese diaspora in Canada who come to this country to be free of intimidation, to be free of fear and to be free of harassment? We have heard that there are many members of the Chinese community, Chinese Canadians, who are being intimidated and harassed, and who, quite frankly, are afraid. We have also heard of the interference of the Chinese regime with respect to cultural associations within this country, infiltrating and setting up police stations within this country to keep track of those in the Chinese diaspora, to promote fear, to intimidate and to harass them.

The consequences of what we are discussing today are far-reaching. Let us think about this: A member of Parliament, or any Canadian, for that matter, wakes up in the morning on a Monday and finds out through *The Globe and Mail*, through reports from our intelligence infrastructure, that the person's family, for over two years, has faced threats, intimidation and harassment. Think of the fear this instills in anyone, not just a member of Parliament. Think of the fact that the member has children. What if the Chinese consulate and this now-exiled Chinese diplomat had conducted a campaign of gathering information on his family and his children, having access, perhaps, to his Internet and his family's Internet?

● (1950)

This is why this is so egregious and why we are seized with this issue tonight. The member's privileges have been breached. I hope that the procedure and House affairs committee can get to the bottom of this and find out exactly what is going on and what happened to this member and to his extended family in Hong Kong.

As I mentioned earlier, it is not just a member of Parliament. There are countless stories, thousands within the Chinese diaspora, among those who came to the country to flee persecution and fear, to be able to practise their own faith and political freedom in this country. They are dealing with the same issues as the member for Wellington—Halton Hills; maybe they are not doing so as publicly, but they are dealing with them.

One thing that we are doing at the ethics committee is studying the issue of foreign interference. One of the first panels of witnesses we had involved those within the Chinese diaspora who are facing this harassment, these fears and these intimidation tactics by the Chinese government. This is how we got to this point with the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. If we recall, in February of 2021, there was a motion put before the House to declare the human rights abuse of the Uyghur Muslim community in China as a genocide. It received majority support in the House. In fact, some of the Liberals voted for it. However, can we say who did not vote for it and actually abstained? It was the entire cabinet of the government of this country. Marc Garneau sat in this place and abstained on behalf of the cabinet.

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I am going to call it for what it was. It was a gutless move. When the government had a chance to stand up for human rights and call out the Beijing Communist regime for the human rights abuses of the Muslim Uyghurs, it hightailed it out of this place. It did not even have the decency to vote. However, who voted for the motion? It was the member for Wellington—Halton Hills and every other member of Parliament, with the exception of cabinet. For that, the member was targeted; he faced a campaign of harassment, fear and intimidation. Who carried out this campaign? It was the very person who got kicked out today.

The government has known about this for two years. It had two years to act; however, with diplomatic immunity, this agent of the Chinese Communist regime was able to run amok around this country.

We know about the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, about the intimidation and the fear that he faced. How many other Canadians faced the same tactic by this diplomat over the course of the last two years? By extension, in other countries, such as Hong Kong, how many other family members were intimidated?

When we had that panel come to the ethics committee, it was sobering. We heard a former colleague, Kenny Chiu, talk about this fear and intimidation tactic on the part of Chinese Beijing officials. He talked about this misinformation and disinformation campaign that was executed against members of this place during the last couple of elections.

We heard from Mehmet Tohti, one of the foremost defenders of human rights of Uyghur Muslims in China. He lives in this country, and he told us a story of phoning his relatives in China and having Beijing Communist officials picking up the phone. They just wanted to intimidate him and to let him know that they were there, in case he wanted to continue this campaign of speaking out against human rights abuses toward the Muslim community in China.

● (1955)

This is what we are dealing with. This is the reason for this debate tonight. It is why it is so important for the procedure and House affairs committee to deal with this issue. It is why the ethics committee is dealing with foreign interference. There is another committee of Parliament dealing with foreign interference, and I cannot for the life of me understand why the government will not launch an independent inquiry about this. I have sat through most of this debate today, since the point of privilege was read out by the Speaker. I have heard members from the government side talk about the politicization of this issue. However, one way to politicize this issue is to have an independent public inquiry so that we can get information on the depths, the infiltration and the impact that foreign interference from the Beijing Communist regime is having on this country. This is something the government does not want to do. However, it is time for the truth to be known.

We have put forward motions. They were approved of by opposition parties in this place. However, the government voted against them. I have the utmost respect for the former governor general, Mr. Johnston. In the eight years of my time here, I have gotten to know Mr. Johnston. I travelled to Vimy Ridge for the 100th anniversary of Vimy with him. He is a decent man, and I do not think anybody should be impugning his character. However, Mr. John-

ston is too closely connected to the family and to the Trudeau Foundation to have any sort of independent view on whether a public inquiry should be had. It is not just opposition members who are speaking about this. A majority of Canadians are speaking about the same thing. We need an independent inquiry, and we need the Prime Minister to call it now.

This pandering to the Chinese Communist regime on the part of the Canadian government seems to be a pattern. It effectively started, as we are finding out through our study in committee, when the Prime Minister won the leadership of the Liberal Party, well in advance of his becoming the prime minister. There was a \$140,000 donation that was procured and negotiated by the brother of the Prime Minister, Alexandre Trudeau; he actually signed the cheque. We had him at committee last week, and it was the first time in the history of the Trudeau Foundation receiving a cheque that the Prime Minister's brother was actually involved in it. Therefore, he had a lot to do with it and a lot of say in the \$140,000 donation.

A question has arisen about the receipt that was issued. The receipt was issued to an individual in Beijing, yet the donation was made through a company located in China. We started seeing a pattern of influence and infiltration by the Chinese Communist regime at around the time the Prime Minister won the leadership of the Liberal Party. The donors of those cheques had access to the Prime Minister shortly after he became the Prime Minister. Therefore, a lot of questions are being raised about the connection between the Liberal Party and the Chinese Communist regime. Of course, it has been well documented that the Prime Minister said that he had a basic admiration for China and the Chinese regime. We started to see very early on, when he won the leadership of the Liberal Party, that the pattern of pandering and infiltration was starting to work its way through the Liberal Party. Therefore, it is not surprising to me when we see the evidence starting to mount about this.

We have also seen some other things related to China. Members will recall the Winnipeg lab incident, the information related to that and how the government fought so hard to make sure that this information was kept under wraps. It required a court challenge on the part of the Speaker to get that information.

● (2000)

I mentioned the Trudeau Foundation and the failure to recognize cabinet stepping away from its obligation to stand up in this place and be counted, actually abstaining from a vote on the Uyghur Muslim genocide. We have illegal police stations that are still operating in this country. We have donations to election candidates. We saw over \$70,000 donated to one riding in this country within a 48-hour period. The donations came from right across the country; they were not even part of the riding.

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We have heard stories through CSIS and, again, through *The Globe and Mail*, where these donations were actually paid back by the Chinese consulate. We have CSIS documentation, CSIS reports, through *The Globe and Mail*, about involvement in choosing candidates. Of course, we have heard about what happened in the 2019 and 2021 elections. It was well documented in 2021. We have had former members of Parliament talk about their experiences during those campaigns and how difficult it was to get their message out. People who had traditionally supported them within the Chinese community were now not supporting candidates because of the level of disinformation and the misinformation campaign that has been directly attributed to those consulates. They were acting to undermine not only our democratic institutions but also the electoral process in this country.

Today, and I would like to say as a result of the motion that we put forward, we saw the government act. Over a week after the news came out about the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, we finally saw the government act and consider a Chinese consulate official *persona non grata*, expelling this official two years too late. When this information first came out two years ago and the government was made aware of it, as the national security adviser told the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, there should have been no question about what the government was going to do with this individual.

He should have been expelled. As I said earlier, he has had two years now to continue this campaign of harassment, intimidation and inciting fear, not just in terms of the member for Wellington—Halton Hills and perhaps other MPs in this place, but also in terms of the Chinese diaspora in this country. Those citizens of Canada who have come here from China do not have the platform that we do, as members of Parliament. They do not have the platform of the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. They cannot stand up in this place and ask the Speaker to rule on a point of privilege based on newspaper and CSIS reports.

From what we have heard at committee, many of them live in fear. They do not participate in the electoral process because of the fear of retribution by those agents who are acting in this country on behalf of the Beijing Communist regime. What kind of country have we descended to when we cannot even protect, not just our own citizens, but a sitting member of this House because he or she stands for what is right, standing up against human rights abuses in China? It is a sad indictment that we are actually at this point.

It is sad that the government does not see the seriousness of this issue, where they would call an independent public inquiry to get to the bottom of it. That is what is needed. We need somebody who is not connected in any way, shape or form, to either the family or the foundation to make that decision.

We are seeing more stories, more accusations and more pathways that our committees could go down. We are going to see those things over the next little while. However, the only pathway that they lead to is an independent public inquiry to get to the bottom of this so that we can deal with the issue of foreign interference once and for all.

• (2005)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):**

Madam Speaker, the member said at least three times that the government knew about this and sat on this information for two years. It is factually incorrect. As a matter of fact, the member for Wellington—Halton Hills has recently said, in an interview that he gave outside this place, that he was informed by the national security adviser that both the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister's chief of staff knew nothing about this until last week.

I asked this same question to the member for Perth—Wellington and he stepped back from that because he realized that he was going beyond where reality was. Therefore, I will ask this member the same thing: Is the member saying that, when the Prime Minister stands in this House and says that he did not have that information prior to last week, he is lying to this House?

**Mr. John Brassard:** Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister is accountable for his own words and his own actions. I have the utmost faith and the utmost belief in the member for Wellington—Halton Hills and the information that he received from the national security adviser.

Members will recall that when Katie Telford appeared before the procedure and House affairs committee, she said that there was nothing that the Prime Minister does not see, including all of the security briefings and all of the security reports. All of it, he sees. We have no reason to believe that the Prime Minister did not see this information two years ago. He should have. If it went to the Privy Council Office, as was stated by CSIS, then the Prime Minister would have surely seen this information but he failed to act. For two years, this individual ran around Canada, intimidating—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Questions and comments, the hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, with whom I have the privilege of serving on the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics. I have always admired his sense of public interest and his perspective on our debates, which is very helpful.

All the examples he just gave, such as the police stations and the Trudeau Foundation, and everything he said in his speech, show that democracy is under attack.

In his opinion, how did we get here? How did we get to the point that we have to vote on such an issue?

• (2010)

[*English*]

**Mr. John Brassard:** Madam Speaker, I truly believe that it is a question and a matter of weakness. The Chinese Communist regime has certainly infiltrated or tried to infiltrate other parts of the world; namely, Australia and United States. They have stood up to it. They have had a foreign agent registry that they have enacted.

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However, I think that China sees our Prime Minister and the current government as weak. It goes back to when the Prime Minister said that he has a basic admiration for the dictatorship in China. It goes back to their trying to have influence and access to the Prime Minister through donations in the Trudeau Foundation of \$140,000. Many of these Chinese operatives have been at cash-for-access fundraisers. They have actually worked their way into the current government because of weakness and that really speaks to the root of the problem with the government. The lack of initiative to provide security for its citizens is critical.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I deeply appreciate the tone of the member's speech this evening. As a member of PROC, I look forward to having this come before our committee. This is essential work. There are a lot of questions. Over the last few months, Canadians are growing increasingly concerned and afraid. I especially think a lot of the Chinese Canadian population in this country have been warning Canada and different levels of government for a long time that this is a huge concern and that it is not just during elections but it is in between elections. It is looking at all of the realities where interference is taking place.

I wonder if this member could talk a bit about his thoughts about how Chinese Canadians have been standing up, the racism and discrimination that they have experienced because of this and what that means for them when they are not consulted on the actual process of foreign interference. The media only seems to focus on asking them specifically about how it feels to be Chinese Canadian, instead of asking, "Where do we need to move as a country to really deal with this issue?" They have a lot of expertise. I just wonder how the member thinks about this.

**Mr. John Brassard:** Madam Speaker, that is a very interesting question from the member for North Island—Powell River. I was listening intently to the member for Vancouver East the other day when she spoke about this particular issue during our opposition day motion, which was passed by all opposition parties and the government voted against it.

Everyone that we have spoken to, every witness who has come to committee, has spoken about the need for a foreign agent registry and the ability for us to track those foreign nationals who are lobbying the government, who are meeting with ministers and who are perhaps attending cash-for-access fundraisers. Every single one of them has spoken about the need for a foreign agent registry.

They have talked about examples like Australia and the United States that have implemented a foreign agent registry successfully. Every single one of them, despite the government's contention, does not feel it is racist at all to implement such a registry if it means that we are going to keep track of those agents and those regimes that are intimidating, inciting fear and doing things to our citizens that should not be done, as the government has an obligation to protect them.

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Madam Speaker, there are a lot of issues at play here with this privilege motion. One of the ones we need to talk about more is trust and the trust that Canadians should have but do not have in the government. Trust is declining in the institutions around Parliament and the government in general here in Canada.

Can the member elaborate on how properly dealing with this motion here today can help rebuild trust in the institutions that Canadians have? It is because they know the opposition parties are working closely together to make sure we get the best possible outcome from a motion such as this today.

● (2015)

**Mr. John Brassard:** Madam Speaker, that is a good question. The challenge right now is to instill trust in a government that, in my opinion, is distrustful. It is showing a lack of trust with Canadians, particularly on the issue of convening an independent inquiry on this particular issue.

This is a government that, though its eight years in office, has continually proven to Canadians that it is great at talking about stuff, but very poor at implementing things. We have the security establishment in this country that is feeding information to The Globe and Mail. I would suggest the government is not doing enough, not just to protect Canadians, but to protect our country as well.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, in attempting to answer my question, notwithstanding the fact that he did not, the member said that according to Ms. Telford, who came before the PROC committee, the Prime Minister received and looked at everything. That is not what she said.

What Ms. Telford said was that she shares everything that she knows about and sees with the Prime Minister. We also know that she did not receive this information, nor did the Prime Minister, as cited by the member for Wellington—Halton Hills just outside this building in a media interview.

I will give the member another opportunity to try and answer my question. Why are we supposed to take all members at their word in this House, except when it is the member for Papineau? Why is he not afforded the same luxury that we afford to everybody else?

**Mr. John Brassard:** Madam Speaker, if that is in fact the case, and the government has shown a propensity to misinform Canadians many times since it has been in power, I think the hon. member just gave a perfect example of the failures of the government and the lack of seriousness in priority by which it takes national security.

If the Prime Minister's chief of staff, as he is alleging, or the Prime Minister, as he is alleging, did not see this information given to the Privy Council Office, then that is a complete abdication of their responsibility to govern. They should step down, call an election and let a government that is serious about national security, protecting its citizens and protecting those of Chinese diaspora in this country, Iranians and others who are facing the same fear and intimidation tactics by regimes—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Resuming debate, the hon. member for South Surrey—White Rock.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC):** Madam Speaker, we are at a pivotal moment in our democracy, because the threats we talk about, the threats to our core institutions, our members of Parliament and this very institution, are real. They are playing themselves out on a daily basis and there is no greater priority, or should be no greater priority, from a national government than our national sovereignty, than the safety and security of all our citizens.

It really does not matter when one became a citizen and whether one is a citizen by birthright or if one came here later on in life, maybe as a child with one's family and became a citizen or if one became a citizen as an adult. Having made the difficult decision to either leave or flee from one's country of origin, one became a citizen of Canada. As a citizen, this should mean something. What it should primarily mean is the government of one's new country, of the country one is now proud to say one is a citizen of, is there to protect one's interests, whatever they may be. This could be safe streets in communities at a very local level or on the macro level we find ourselves debating tonight, with threats from foreign governments or foreign entities, those who are adverse in interest to Canada.

I still am a lawyer, I confess, but in my active law practice days, we often would say that it was very important in any form of litigation, negotiation or mediation to understand who is adverse in interest to someone, or if one is a representative, adverse in interest to one's client. It is only with understanding that can one look to motivation, intent and how this may play itself out. We find ourselves in these kinds of moments here.

There are a couple of arguments I keep hearing put forward by government members. One is that the earlier government, the government of former prime minister Stephen Harper, the Conservative government, has known all about this. They say that it knew this was going on and did not do enough. We certainly did not know, and how could we know, there were specific threats against the families of members of Parliament or that there were members of Parliament who CSIS, which is charged with our international security, at the time was concerned about being so compromised by a foreign country that they really should not be running as a candidate in an election or should be somehow more thoroughly vetted.

We did not have those kinds of situations brought before us at the time. Did we know there were foreign actors out there often adverse in interest to Canada who might play out their extraterritorial ambitions through proxies, money or through compromising Canadian citizens? Yes, we knew those general things.

Just before the 2021 election, I was one of the members of Parliament who had a general defensive briefing from CSIS. I received a call one day and someone said they wanted to meet me in my office. I asked if this was a secret meeting. They said no but that it was an important meeting and they wanted me to make myself available, which I did right away. That briefing, frankly, was not that detailed. It was a briefing about foreign governments attempting to influence our elections and our governments, and how they might go about doing that.

It might be something that seems like just a social invitation to go have dinner with a new friend. It might be through one's staff

### *Privilege*

who they might befriend, and then that person might volunteer in one's campaign or have a paid position in one's campaign and then seek to have a position in one's constituency office or maybe one's Hill office, where they might have access to sensitive information.

● (2020)

Of course, depending on our role here in this Parliament or any other, the information one has coming into one's office may be more or less sensitive. I assumed at the time that they were speaking to me because we have in my area a large diaspora that came from or has the ethnicity of India and China. Those were two of the countries mentioned, as was Iran. These are places that may seek to influence what happens here in Canada because they are not our natural allies.

With that information, they asked me to speak to my staff to inform them about and give them these broad parameters. I did that. I understand now, from disclosures in this House, that approximately 49 MPs had these same kinds of briefings, but certainly on nothing specific at all.

What I saw play out in the 2021 election, and was aware of in the 2019 election but not to the same degree, was that citizens of Canada of Chinese ancestry in my riding and in neighbouring ridings around mine, where I was helping on campaigns, felt very much under threat from their country of origin. It was not even necessarily those born outside of Canada. Some had parents who were born outside of Canada but were of ancestry from China in particular.

They are very proud Canadians. I have often said that some of the proudest Canadians are those who have come here and become Canadians. They are very proud of the country they have come to, and they are very proud to say, "I am a Canadian." That is how they see themselves. They do not see themselves as dual citizens and they do not see themselves as citizens of other countries. They see themselves as citizens of Canada, with all that that should entail.

It was an event that happened to me in my riding in particular that brought this home to me. In fact, our leader alluded to it in his speech earlier. We were asked to turn off our phones and go outside into the backyard of one of my constituents. With tears in his eyes he said he could not talk to me inside his home because he believed his home was being monitored. That was very upsetting because I could see the pain this man felt. He said he had voted for the Conservatives in the past, but he simply could not in that election because his family was under threat and he believed they would know if he voted Conservative.

I was also sent translated screenshots from WeChat where it was made very clear that even the idea of a foreign lobby registry was being painted as an attempt to register everyone of Chinese ethnicity in Canada, because it was our intent to round them up, just as Japanese citizens were rounded up in World War II, and confiscate their assets. That was the long-term plan.

*Privilege*

I am also aware from other campaigns that there were people of Chinese ethnicity standing outside polling booth areas watching and even taking pictures of people of Chinese ancestry who were in line to vote. Some of those people turned around and went home. It is hard to brave that kind of intimidation.

A foreign government does not even actually have to do all those things. It just needs to make people believe that it can or it will. That is enough to make people afraid, enough to bring a grown man to tears in his backyard and enough to get to citizens of Chinese ancestry who are trying very hard to fit in here in Canada and become part of our life here. It is easy to have them think this is possible.

● (2025)

I have another example. We have a group in my riding, an educational group that is actually an incorporated society, made up of people of Chinese ancestry. They invite speakers from all parties. They have heard from all federal, municipal and provincial parties about how government in Canada works, what our various jurisdictions are and how we go about our business, that sort of thing. I was told, first, that they have disbanded their WeChat group because they felt it was being monitored, and they now communicate in another way. Second, two of their board of directors stepped away because they felt families were under threat simply because they were engaging in educational activities to learn more about their new country.

I had a volunteer on my 2021 campaign who was Uyghur. Just before the campaign, his mother went back to China because her father was ill. She felt it was her familial duty to go back, even though there were some dangers involved, in order to tend to her ailing father, who passed away at some point. When she got there, everything was taken away from her: her ID, her documents and everything that showed her citizenship status in Canada.

When she went there, she had permanent resident status but had not yet had her citizenship ceremony. As we know, during COVID, a lot of them were suspended. She was waiting to hear the date of her citizenship ceremony, but when she arrived in China, all her documentation was taken away. She had no way to appear for her citizenship ceremony in Canada. She had no way to leave China. It was very difficult to even communicate with her family back in Canada, who were all waiting for her return. What was supposed to be a six-month trip turned out to be an almost three-year trip by the time she was able to find a way to get some place where she could be communicated with in order to get the documents to get back to Canada.

These are real examples of how the Chinese government in particular is affecting what we do here.

When a threat is made against a member of Parliament, as chief opposition whip, it is my heightened duty to stand up for all members of Parliament, but particularly those in His Majesty's loyal opposition. I stand up for their privilege in this House and their right to vote and to exercise all the requirements of their duties as members of Parliament. The member for Wellington—Halton Hills is suffering through this, but then added to that is government members suggesting that his general briefing two years ago, which was the same as mine, should have somehow put him on specific alert about his family members. That is a false narrative. It is impossible

to put those two things together. That is victim-blaming in the classic sense, or gaslighting, as we often hear the term used now.

The very person who is under threat and told that the exercise of his franchise in this House is somehow compromised is being told that he should have done something about it, he should have brought it to the attention of the House and he should have done more. Well, we can only do more if we actually know that we have something to deal with, and he did not know that until last week through a news article.

I am not surprised CSIS is frustrated and talking to the press, and I know the government has had a strong reaction to that. Its reaction was to try to figure out who the whistle-blowers were in CSIS and go after them. Instead of praising the whistle-blowers and saying there is a problem here and that it needs to get on it as a government to protect our citizens and do more to protect members of Parliament, it was upset that the stories were getting out.

I go back to a report by Liberal member David McGuinty—

● (2030)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The member knows that we cannot mention current members of the House by name.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** Madam Speaker, I go back to a report from the chair of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians. It was submitted to the Prime Minister on August 30, 2019, so in our 42nd Parliament, before I returned to this place.

A study was done and recommendations were made. I would like to read some of those recommendations, because they alerted this Parliament to some of the problems we are seeing roll out now. The report reads:

In the interest of national security, members of the House of Commons and Senate should be briefed upon being sworn-in and regularly thereafter on the risks of foreign interference and extremism in Canada.

That does not happen.

It continues:

In addition, Cabinet Ministers should be reminded of the expectations described in the Government's Open and Accountable Government, including that Ministers exercise discretion with whom they meet or associate, and clearly distinguish between official and private media messaging, and be reminded that, consistent with the Conflict of Interest Act, public office holders must always place the public interest before private interests.

It continues:

The targeting and manipulation of ethnocultural communities is the primary means through which these states control messages and seek to influence decision-making at all levels of government.

This was two and a half years ago.

It goes on to say:

Some individuals willingly act as agents of a foreign power for a variety of reasons including patriotism or the expectation of reciprocal favours. These states also co-opt individuals inside and outside of ethnocultural communities through flattery, bribery, threats and manipulation.

It goes on:

A great deal of foreign interference has the goal of creating a single narrative or consistent message that helps to ensure the survival and prosperity of the foreign state.... However, ethnocultural communities are not homogeneous and individuals or groups may not want to get involved or do not support the foreign state's goals. Therefore, foreign states utilize a range of tactics to enforce a single narrative. Those tactics include:

- threats;
- harassment;
- detention of family members abroad; and
- refusal to issue travel documents or visas.

Many ethnocultural community members are also monitored for what the foreign state considers to be dissident views or activities.

It also says:

States engage in foreign interference activities to support their national interests. These interests include regime protection and domestic legitimacy; strategic advantages and spheres of influence (such as their economic, political or security agendas); projection of power and deterrence....

It continues:

PCO and CSIS assess that Canada is a target due to its global standing; robust and diverse economy; large ethnocultural communities; membership in key multilateral organizations such as the Five Eyes, G7 and NATO; and close relationship with the United States.

It goes on:

The PRC utilizes its growing economic wealth to mobilize interference operations: "with deep coffers and the help of Western enablers, the Chinese Communist Party uses money, rather than Communist ideology, as a powerful source of influence, creating parasitic relationships of long-term dependence."

The report goes on and on in the recommendations to point out that, yes, these are very real risks.

In a general sense, of course, we know that there are foreign countries with adverse interests to ours that try to gain influence here through money, through relationships, through threats and through intimidation. However, to do so specifically against a member of Parliament based on a vote taken in this House, particularly a vote on human rights, is outrageous. That is why we stand in support of the question of privilege by the member for Wellington—Halton Hills asking that our PROC committee study this and look at it. It is also why a motion was passed in the House today asking the government to create the foreign registry that I spoke of earlier, to establish an independent public inquiry on the matter of foreign election interference, to close down Beijing-run police stations and to expel other operatives, not just the one we were told about today.

● (2035)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, foreign interference has been reported publicly through CSIS since as early as 2013, when Conservatives were in power. The member for Carleton, the Leader of the Opposition, was

### *Privilege*

then the minister responsible for receiving that report. Conservatives did nothing for two years.

Since then, we brought in Bill C-76, the Elections Modernization Act, which tightened up rules around donations to campaigns, specifically limiting foreign donations. We brought in Bill C-59, which established NSIRA, the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency. We brought in NSICOP, the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, to oversee national security.

Conservatives voted against all of that, everything, and at times they would not even vote to let the bills go to committee. How is it they can come in here and be so interested and speak so passionately about protecting democracy against foreign interference when they have routinely and systematically voted against every single initiative?

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** Madam Speaker, I first want to thank the member for the unreserved apology he gave last week. When I brought up a point of order with respect to him victim blaming the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, he got up and apologized, which his colleague did not do. I thank him for that.

With respect to the—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. parliamentary secretary is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, although I am very appreciative of that recognition, I did not apologize for victim blaming. I was not victim blaming anybody, and the member is impugning my character by suggesting that.

● (2040)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** This is a play on words to provoke and to bring up things that were not said. Let us just stick to the thanks. It was very much appreciated.

The hon. member for South Surrey—White Rock.

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** Madam Speaker, I can correct that, if I have used the wrong turn of phrase. However, the member did apologize for suggesting that the member for Wellington—Halton Hills knew of the specific threat two years ago. I appreciate his apologizing unreservedly for that.

*Privilege*

With respect to the comments on what we have done and what they have done, we are where we are today because, no matter what long list or short list the member comes up with, the current government has not done enough. It has not done enough on a specific threat that was made to a member of Parliament, something that goes to the core of our democracy, which is the ability to debate and vote in this House. We know now, even after the Prime Minister and the Minister of Public Safety denied that they had any prior knowledge, that those reports at least reached the Prime Minister's national security adviser. Therefore, if the mechanisms are not in place in the government to have a serious matter of national security go from the national security adviser to the Prime Minister and in fact go to the Prime Minister, then there is something very wrong with the way they are administering the government.

[Translation]

**Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her very enlightening speech. I am listening to my colleagues discuss this matter, and I am wondering what explanation there could be for the government's weakness or laziness in responding to such events.

Can my colleague explain that?

[English]

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** Madam Speaker, I wish I could explain it. It makes no sense to me, because the number one priority of any national government is the safety and security of its citizens and the defence of our national sovereignty. If we do not have that, we really do not have a country. I do not understand. Whether it was laziness, lack of interest, incompetence or just not paying attention to the signals that were there, the mechanisms that needed to be there to protect us were not there.

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, I would like to thank the member for contributing to this important debate.

There is a part of the motion that we have not heard very much about; this is the foreign agent registry, which would be similar to what Australia and the U.S. have. Could the member describe the effectiveness of the registries in these other countries and how such a registry would protect Canadians from foreign interference?

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** Madam Speaker, the foreign agent registry is extremely important.

We demand and require that lobbyists register when they come to the government to discuss matters that might influence members' decisions. This relates to any member, but particularly to members of cabinet. We have been doing that for a very long time.

As the Leader of the Opposition mentioned earlier today, if someone wants to lobby on behalf of a food bank, they have to register. The whole idea of this registry is for people who are here attempting to influence our government on matters that are in the interest of another country to be registered. It is not the whole answer, but it is one measure of control that allows us to know who is talking to whom, when they are talking to them, in what context and in what way.

We need to know these things as one measure of protection for all of us and for all citizens of Canada. That is why these other

countries have adopted similar legislation, and it is working in those countries.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC):** Madam Speaker, two years ago, in June 2021, I sat with the member for Steveston—Richmond East right here. He was giving a passionate speech in the House of Commons, in which he talked about being targeted. That member is no longer here. In fact, he has come to committee a couple of times, talking about what he thought was Beijing interference.

We do need an inquiry. We do need a registry. We have more than one MP who was here in 2021 and, quite frankly, is not here today. I can think of Alice Wong, Bob Saroya and Kenny Chiu.

It is about democracy. Before the last election, the member from B.C. was standing right here, in the middle of June, talking about interference from Beijing. Does the member from British Columbia want to comment on this?

• (2045)

**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** Madam Speaker, I know that former member very well. He is in a neighbouring riding to mine. In fact, I used to represent his riding in another configuration, before redistribution.

I know the riding and its makeup well. I saw a lot of the comments that were made in the last election about that former member, on various platforms, such as that he was a traitor to his own ethnicity.

Currently, there is a campaign in British Columbia and nationally to call the request for a foreign agent registry “Chinese exclusion 2.0”. Nothing could be further from the truth. That is not what we are talking about in this request. However, these are the kinds of allegations that were thrown against the former member. He had a very hard time combatting them, because it was so pervasive that a lot of voters of Chinese ethnicity simply stayed home. They were too afraid to vote and certainly too afraid to vote for him.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for the response to my last question. She indicated that the Prime Minister and his chief of staff did not know, and she questioned why on earth this information would not have made it up there, as it relates to any MP.

I think that is a very good question and something that, when this gets to committee, the committee could seek to clarify and understand. I certainly do not think it is something that just started. It is not as though the Prime Minister told CSIS not to bother telling him about anything that has to do with an MP. There were obviously thresholds and benchmarks that CSIS determined it needed to meet in order to elevate things to certain levels.

There may be other avenues we could explore to further enhance our protection and ensure that interference like this does not occur. In the vein of trying to better protect members of Parliament in relation to these types of activities, could the member comment on other avenues that the PROC committee might want to explore when doing their work?



**Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay:** Madam Speaker, it is an excellent suggestion that it go to this particular committee, because this committee has dealt with these issues and similar ones before. Of course, I do not suggest what questions they would ask, but they need to explore how this all came about in the first place, where the gaps are in knowledge, why those gaps exist, why steps were not taken when they needed to be taken and what mechanisms need to be in place to make sure that the decision-makers know what they need to know to protect us in this House.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** Madam Speaker, exactly 182 days have passed since November 7, the date on which Global News reporter Sam Cooper informed the public that China's united front work department had attempted to influence the 2019 election. Then, we learned from other media outlets that China had also attempted to influence the 2021 election.

I cannot emphasize enough how serious these allegations are. The cornerstone of our society is that we are a strong, proud democracy that has thrived for over one hundred years. There are 338 MPs in the House of Commons, and we represent the people.

I am a sovereigntist who serves as a member of a Parliament that I do not really want to serve in because I want Quebec to be independent. Everyone knows that. If I am in the House today, it is because our democracy is mature enough and healthy enough that I can stand before you and be heard without being booed or removed because I am free to speak my mind, just as all members in the House should always be. What is happening right now? Where are we at today?

We know that a whistle-blower, who is said to be a Liberal, felt he had to disclose information to the mainstream media because he was concerned that the government was not doing enough. This CSIS official is watching the debates—especially now, with everything that is happening with respect to my colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills—and can see how the Liberal Party is treating this file with disdain.

This official knows the truth, the quality of the information provided and the fact that the highest levels of Canadian government are not taking this seriously. We see that even though his agency alerted the Prime Minister 100 times, nothing is being done. Yes, ministers did come to the Procedure and House Affairs Committee, of which I am a member. They told us nothing. At best, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities and the Minister of Public Safety told us that everything was fine and that they knew nothing prior to this. Afterwards, they told us that they did know and they took action. They have been telling us that, since 2015, everything is fine and that the system works.

I see this as a house under construction. Before, there were walls; then, in 2015, the government decided to install windows and doors. However, the roof is a nice tarp. Yes, they did something, but the rain still gets in.

I want to highlight the work of Robert Fife and Steven Chase who, frankly, remind me of Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein.

### *Privilege*

They were the ones who wrote about the Watergate scandal, the story that was the downfall of Richard Nixon. I am just saying.

It took the work of a journalist, we know how it goes, to find sources, analyze what was said and understand the system. This was all done for the common good and in the collective interest. Knowing all that, I cannot look my constituents in the eye and tell them that I am reassured by the defence of our democracy. I cannot. I am saying this with an abundance of partisanship, as if we engaged in a lot of partisanship in the Bloc Québécois. Yes, I am a partisan supporter of safeguarding democracy. There, I said it.

For weeks now, the opposition parties have been calling for an independent public commission of inquiry into foreign interference in our democratic process. The government is turning a deaf ear. We are being told to wait until May 23. We will see.

• (2050)

The government tells us that the Rosenberg report does not point to any serious breaches or highlight any areas of concern. Then, at the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, Morris Rosenberg demonstrated to us that he is definitely not the right person to analyze the issue of Chinese interference in Canada.

At the same time, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, or CSIS, is leaking documents to the press because the government is not taking the threat seriously. That said, it was not through leaks that we were informed that a member of Canada's House of Commons, who was duly elected in a democracy that claims to be healthy and mature, is being watched by an agent of the People's Republic of China. We did not know that.

Is this a road show? A comedy act? It feels like a bad spy movie where no one knows how to do their job.

I think that now would be a good time to launch an independent commission of public inquiry, rather than waiting for a possible May 23 announcement from the special rapporteur, Mr. Johnston. Looking at the big picture, one has to wonder how it is that Morris Rosenberg and CSIS did not come to the same conclusion. Mr. Rosenberg found that the threshold, the infamous threshold, for launching a public inquiry had not been met. As for the CSIS agents who are supposed to protect the country, they had to turn to the media because nobody was doing anything. Is anyone on the government side actually concerned? Do any of them see this as urgent?

It is not just Quebec sovereigntists who are concerned. We have learned that the Americans have been interested in China's activities on Canadian soil for 20 years, because the United States considers these activities to be a threat to the security of the North American continent, pure and simple. Our closest ally, our neighbour, is worried about our ability to keep those who wish us harm at bay. For 20 years, the Americans have been worried about the presence of disruptive united front agents. Canada has had four prime ministers in the past twenty years.

*Privilege*

One has to wonder what these four successive governments have done since 2003 to ensure Canadian sovereignty. It is crazy that a Quebec separatist is worried about Canada's sovereignty. It is laughable.

This is not just a national issue, but a continental one as well. We are responsible for securing our part of the continent. Of course, that includes physically defending it through NORAD, but also defending those things that may not be tangible but are just as important, namely, our system of laws and our democratic system.

We are talking about defending the continent but also about our standing with our Five Eyes allies. I bet that if the United States is worried, then Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom likely are as well. Are we the weakest link in the group? I would like to know.

Just today, we learned from Robert Fife and Steven Chase that the government wants to join AUKUS, the military alliance between the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. We were excluded. Why? Perhaps it is because we cannot be trusted. The answer is obvious.

I do not want to know just to get on the government's case. I want to know because, as legislators, we need to know the truth about how deeply Chinese spies have infiltrated our system.

• (2055)

We need to get to the truth in order to work together on building a 21st century defence against disruption attempts by states that want to harm us. Australia has the Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme. The United States has the Foreign Agents Registration Act. The United Kingdom has its Foreign Influence Registration Scheme. In Canada, all we know is that the clerk of the Privy Council advised the Prime Minister to put such a registry in place. She told us that in committee.

We even know, again thanks to the journalists, that the Prime Minister had an exchange on the subject with the Australian Prime Minister in June 2022 and nothing was done.

In the European Parliament, a special committee on foreign interference was launched in 2021. The report was tabled a year ago. The facts are all there: Russia and China are among the biggest threats to western liberal democracies. The ties of high-ranking European politicians were cited in the report as being a systemic problem. Diasporas are manipulated, misinformed, used and diminished. We need to protect them.

It has been 182 days of water torture for the government. How is it managing? I do not know. The Liberals have been changing their tune for 182 days. They know, they do not know. For 182 days they have been telling us that they took action in the past. Yes, I do have the document. We would not be here today if all was well. Action must be taken to protect democracy. This prompts me to ask, what are they going to do starting now?

At the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs we have been hearing for weeks that Canada's defence system is not robust enough. David Mulroney, former ambassador to China, told us that Canada's defence system is the equivalent of the Maginot Line. For context, the Maginot Line was an array of defence struc-

tures comprised of fortifications and trenches along France's eastern border between Belgium and Italy. It was supposed to protect France from an attack from the east. How did the Nazis invade France in June 1940? They entered via the Ardennes, where the French believed there would be no threat.

Then the government members say that everything is fine. They might as well laugh in our faces. The Liberals can laugh at me all they want; I can take it and I will get over it. However, laughing at our constituents is highly problematic.

Let us get back to the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. If this ever happens to me, I hope the government, CSIS or the RCMP would tell me that I am a specific target of a foreign government, that my family is at risk. In a democracy, freedom of expression is fundamental. Still, the government is allowing an openly hostile state to intimidate the family of a Canadian MP. Is it honestly allowing this to happen because it is an opposition concern, so it is not a big deal?

I sincerely and perhaps naively thought that, across party lines, we were all democrats. This government must have the courage to act. It needs to act swiftly and firmly. We know that the government, the party in power, has been lax. How is it that an individual reported by CSIS as having close and worrisome ties to the consul general of the People's Republic of China in Toronto was allowed to run for office like everyone else who sits here and is elected as a member of a political party?

Candidates have to win the nomination for their party. At the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, we saw that, at the returning officer's office, candidates must have in their possession a declaration from their party leader indicating they are officially the candidate for that party. My question is this. Why did the leader of the Liberal Party of Canada sign a document allowing a man close to China's spy network in Canada to run for the Liberal Party?

• (2100)

The Prime Minister and his government will pay a high political price for their inaction and lack of consideration for voters' concerns. What is most worrisome is the heavy burden that will be placed on Canadian democracy. Democracy is being abused throughout the western world. I am very concerned and I know other people are too, but something can be done.

Everywhere, the far right is trying to restrict the right to vote, take away free speech, silence opponents. I have no desire for that here. As a legislator, I cannot betray the oath of allegiance that I personally swore to democracy and the values it represents.

Once again, Canada is falling short. Once again, Canada disappoints. Once again, I say to myself that Quebec would be so much better off if Quebec's National Assembly took the reins of our nation's destiny. The situation is critical, the allegations are serious, and subversive action is being taken against our citizens.

First, I call on the Prime Minister to immediately launch an independent public inquiry to fully and completely explore the issue of foreign interference. Second, I call on the government to introduce foreign interference legislation. Third, I call on the government to establish an independent office of inquiry into foreign political activity. Fourth, I call for the establishment of a foreign agent registry to ensure that no member of the House is ever again intimidated by a foreign state and that meaningful steps are taken to protect members of Parliament.

Finally, with respect to everything I have just said, we truly cannot wait any longer. We must act with conscience and dignity. The Prime Minister must shoulder his responsibilities. The government must shoulder its responsibilities. From this point forward, the government must act for the future.

• (2105)

[English]

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I note that both Conservatives and the Bloc are calling for a national inquiry into the foreign interference. I am just wondering what she thinks the government is waiting for before it calls this national inquiry.

[Translation]

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** Madam Speaker, from what I understood, they are trying to buy time. If there was any real desire to shed light on this and confidence in what has been done, they would act quickly so as to set the record straight for our constituents. Only those who are not sure whether they are sure and who now know what they did not know before need to buy time.

That is why the government delegated all this to a special rapporteur selected by the Prime Minister. The special rapporteur is being left with this responsibility and being asked to report on it. The House is being told that we will talk about it again on May 23, and until then maybe we could work on other things since there are so many other, more pressing matters. Now, however, we wait. We keep going because the situation is critical. One thing leads to another, week after week, we keep finding out more.

My answer to my colleague is this. When someone is confident that everything is fine, they have no qualms at all about calling an independent public inquiry as soon as possible to reassure the public.

[English]

**Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, we are having a very important debate tonight. We have been discussing the topic of foreign interference for a couple of days and the importance of protecting democracy. During these days, I have heard heckling across the floor and name-calling. At a time when we see threats to our democracy, now is not a time for that. Now is a time for all of us to come together to protect democracy but also to protect each other as members of Parliament.

We have a right to do this job and be safe, and I certainly would not want to see any violence perpetrated on any of my colleagues. This is not partisan for me, which is one of the reasons why the NDP, and certainly the member for Vancouver East, called on the leaders of all parties to come together to pick an independent per-

son, to pick somebody who could oversee an independent public inquiry.

I am wondering if my hon. colleague agrees with me that we need an independent public inquiry and that the person to oversee it should be chosen by all parties so that we can work together across party lines to protect democracy.

[Translation]

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** Madam Speaker, that was the very essence of what we recommended.

When I speak to my children, I tell them that if they want impartiality, they must agree to choose a person who will get to the bottom of things. Otherwise, if one person chooses someone, there is something fishy going on. It is possible that everything will be fine in the end, but there is too much ambiguity.

Had we in the House chosen from the outset an independent person to get to the bottom of things, we would already have introduced a bill and worked on it to create the registry. We have been wasting time and that has affected people's trust. It is going to take a lot to recover from this, because this situation has been dragging on for 182 days.

• (2110)

**Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I have the pleasure of serving on several committees with the hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle. I would like to ask her a simple question. She said that she would have preferred to see the Prime Minister launch a public inquiry. Would she have been on board with the idea of the Prime Minister determining the parameters of that public inquiry she is calling for?

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** Madam Speaker, there are many worthwhile suggestions, but if the government wants to instill confidence, then it needs to be more neutral. If the government wants to show that what it is doing is not partisan, then it needs to be as neutral and impartial as possible for the sake of democracy and for the sake of all Quebeckers and Canadians. In order to do that, the first step is for the House to choose an individual that everyone can agree on.

Then, the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs or another committee can look at the rules regarding state secrets, because it is only appropriate that they be respected. If the government had done it this way from the start, we would not be here tonight until midnight.

**Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Laurentides—Labelle for painting such a clear picture of the doubts that unfortunately prevail in the House. As she indicated, the government has certainly taken its sweet time on this.

*Privilege*

We were told that Ottawa could not act quickly because of the potential consequences. Obviously, every action has consequences. They are actually part of the action itself. It seems to me that any government must be prepared to accept the consequences of its action or inaction in terms of protecting democracy. I would like to know what the government will have to do when it gets to that point. It has appointed a so-called independent rapporteur, so at least it has begun to take action.

What can the government do to really remove all doubt?

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** Madam Speaker, in my opinion, and I believe in the opinion of many leaders who have walked this earth, humility is about saying what is going on, presenting the facts and indicating what needs to be done, while respecting the wishes of the House of Commons.

Each party has made proposals. As I have said several times in question period, I look forward to getting another registry because I am very concerned, as are our constituents. Frankly, an independent public inquiry would be the first step to having other recommendations, such as legislation to create a foreign agent registry. From the outset, if the government is worthy of a true leader, it will say what is going on and it will describe exactly what will happen in the coming weeks, in all humility and in the name of our democracy.

[*English*]

**Mr. Arnold Viersen:** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for her interventions on this, and I want to reference the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. He has been here for a very long time. His experience as a parliamentarian is something we all look to. His defence of democracy has been profound.

Does my hon. colleague have any comments about her relationship with the member for Wellington—Halton Hills?

• (2115)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** Madam Speaker, given what is happening here tonight, the situation is critical.

I have been here since 2019. Unfortunately, every time this government has taken real action to ensure that Canadians continue to have confidence in our institutions, it was because we made every effort to keep the issue in the spotlight and make sure that the government could not avoid it.

Unfortunately, I feel like I am reliving the WE Charity events of 2020 with what is happening today. That was my first experience. They filibustered for over 40 hours until the noose tightened, and then they chose to prorogue. I had no idea what it meant to prorogue a Parliament. I came to understand that they were putting the lid on a pot that was about to boil over.

We need to act now before we are forced to tell our constituents that something has happened, that the pot was about to boil over. We still have a few weeks left. We can do it before June 23. We need concrete results so that we can reassure our constituents.

[*English*]

**Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise, and it is always a pleasure to see you

in the chair. I will ask for the Chair's indulgence for a brief 30 seconds, before I start my remarks on the substance at hand, to recognize the Ramara Chamber of Commerce, which held its annual AGM tonight, and to recognize some wonderful businesses and organizations in the community. Lagoon City Pier One Resort, the Ramara Public Library, Casino Rama, Ramara Quilting, Spray-Net Northern Ontario and Orillia & Lake Country Tourism are businesses and organizations in the Ramara region that have done a lot in the community.

However, we are here to talk about a very serious issue, and that is the question of privilege raised by my colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills about potential threats and harassment that members of the House or their loved ones have been subjected to based on some of the actions taken in the House.

One of the things we have actually lost in the debate, given everything that happened last week, is that the report out of CSIS allegedly refers to multiple members of Parliament, not just one member of Parliament. There may be members in more parties, and perhaps even in the governing party, who are asking themselves whether the government is taking the necessary actions to keep them and their families safe or to keep them free from intimidation and harassment. This is why the question of privilege is important to explore. It is also why all members of the House, in many of the speeches tonight, have indicated their support for the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs to explore in greater detail the questions raised by the member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

I heard many great speeches here tonight, but the member for Scarborough—Guildwood also imparted some wisdom to us in terms of keeping some humility. There are lots of things about this situation that we do not know. There may be some things we will never be able to know because of national security, but it is the Prime Minister's job to set up the apparatus or machinery of government, to set in place a system through which the Prime Minister will be informed of the most serious matters.

It is not a defence, in a Westminster parliamentary system, to put up a shield and say that one did not know about something. However, in the greater context, we have been losing this thing called “ministerial responsibility” over the last number of years. In parliamentary democracies, or in Westminster parliamentary systems, ministerial responsibility is very important. What we have seen recently from the government is that ministerial responsibility no longer exists. All one has to do is stand up in the chamber and say, “This result is unacceptable and we are working really hard to change it”, but I am not really sure we are getting the results we need or that there is accountability for actions of the government.

Time and time again, unfortunately, it is the same playbook with the government. How many times have we heard, “The story in The Globe and Mail is false”, “The conversations never happened the way the Globe reported them”, or “We didn’t know of that happening”? Then, when more information comes to light, the story changes to “Well, those might have occurred, but they didn’t happen the way they were reported.” Then we learn a little more information and it is revealed that, actually, the issue in question did happen or the conversation did occur the way it was reported. Then, at the very end, time and time again we are told, “This has been a learning experience for all of us, and we will do better next time.”

Let us just recap how we arrived here in just one week. On Monday, the government would not confirm when it had become aware of the allegations in The Globe and Mail.

• (2120)

These are pretty simple questions. Either the government knew or it did not. It waited three days before acknowledging whether it knew and when it knew. I will note that not only is it a very simple question, but that the government confirmed, not in this chamber for Canadians, based on questions from parliamentarians, but in a scrum to the media. Why is it always that a simple question cannot get answered in the House, but government members will freely give some fact to the media when asked directly?

On Monday, the government also said that any individual who contravenes the Vienna convention would be expelled.

On Tuesday, there was no information given; there was no expulsion.

On Wednesday, the Prime Minister said that he was unaware of the allegations until Monday, and that was the same for any of the other members of the executive branch. That was also the day when the Prime Minister said that the briefing note did not leave CSIS. “CSIS made the determination that it wasn’t something that needed be raised to a higher level because it wasn’t a significant enough concern.” There was still no expulsion.

On Thursday, a really important day, the narrative began to change. The Prime Minister and senior government members appointed to senior parliamentary posts engaged in what anyone else would describe as gaslighting. In fact, they implied that it was the member for Wellington—Halton Hills who actually knew about these allegations two years ago from a briefing. We know that is categorically false.

On Thursday, we also learned that in fact the alleged briefing document did, indeed, make its way out of CSIS and into the government apparatus. The national security adviser at the time received this note, as did other government departments. There was still no expulsion on Thursday, but the government summoned the ambassador to the People’s Republic of China and asked what the consequences would be for expulsion. That is a little bit bizarre to me. How on one hand could the government take the position that there were actually no actions that rose to the level of expulsion but then ask what the consequences would be if an expulsion occurred? Was the government just trying to figure out the minimum that it could do to make this issue go away?

### *Privilege*

Friday was a very important day as categorically false implications were made about the character and recollection of events by the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. The Prime Minister himself got in on the gaslighting game. “I was reassured to see that Mr. Chong received multiple briefings following the information collected by CSIS to ensure”—

• (2125)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I remind the hon. member that we do not refer to names of colleagues in the House.

**Mr. Adam Chambers:** My apology, Madam Speaker. I will paraphrase appropriately.

On Friday, the Prime Minister got in on the gaslighting action. He said, “I was reassured to see that [the member for Wellington—Halton Hills] had received multiple briefings following the information collected by CSIS to ensure that he and his family were kept safe or would at least know what was going on in the extent that they needed to and they could be briefed.” The last part was a little jumbled, but I believe the implication and the only conclusion one can draw from listening to that quote is that the Prime Minister’s comments are that the member for Wellington—Halton Hills was aware of the interference.

I do not know if anyone from that side of the House just parachuted in from another planet, because there is no one in the Milky Way who believes that these two things can be true. Nobody can believe that there was not serious enough action to be taken. That was one story. Then Liberals say that the member himself was made aware of the allegations. Then they also say that CSIS told the member, that he was made aware of these allegations, but we never knew. It is an impossible thing to have actually happened. They cannot, on one hand, say that because it was so serious, the member was made aware, but the government did not know. There is no possible way that CSIS would brief a member of this House on a serious issue without making people in the national security apparatus aware.

Why do we need further investigation? The government’s favourite game seems to be who knew what when. We always have to play that game with the government. We had to play it during SNC-Lavalin. We had to play it during the investigation of the Nova Scotia shooting. We had to play it during the WE Charity scandal. We will never know where the idea originated for the government program for the WE Charity to disburse \$1 billion of government funds. We also had to play it last week with respect to the Trudeau Foundation donation that was linked to the Chinese Communist Party.

*Privilege*

There are allegations that donations to the foundation that bears the Prime Minister's name were made to influence the government. These are in reports. These allegations are very serious. Now we have evidence that the government either sat on some information, was unaware of it or was not curious enough to find out about certain interference actions. We know that there were not enough inquiries made with respect to the political donation scandal from just a few months ago that was revealed, where CSIS again produced reports, documents and evidence that suggested there was money being funnelled through a People's Republic of China official or consulate in Toronto to various political candidates from multiple parties, I would add, yet we have seen virtually no action on that front, no arrests, no expulsions with respect to that scandal and there have certainly been no fines related to or levied by Elections Canada. It should concern all members when there are accusations of improper and illegal donations for campaigns and political parties. Should all members of this House or all potential candidates not know who they should not accept funds from? That would be very important, I would think.

I mentioned there are allegations that donations made to the foundation were done in a way to influence the government. I give full credit to a minister of the Crown for being transparent with the fact that Liberals summoned the Chinese ambassador to ask what the consequences would be. I cannot believe we asked what the consequences would be if we telegraphed that hostage diplomacy works, that we are worried about the repercussions of the expulsion of a diplomat because of what has happened over the last couple of years to Canadians in China.

• (2130)

Today, we learned that the government has finally expelled the individual in question, which is interesting. Is it because the government got assurances from the Chinese Communist Party that the retaliation would be small in nature and that the government could take this action and that it does not think it rises to the level of expulsion but it is under a lot of pressure to do so? The government actually has not come out and said why the individual was expelled or that it believes the individual did anything in question. We are only left to go with what the government actually said last week, which was that it did not think that the actions that were taken rose to the level of expulsion.

On my way here, I bumped into the member for York—Simcoe, who I know you like very well, Madam Speaker. He would like to speak tonight, but the spots were full. We were having a discussion about a similar question: Did the government have to give anything up? Does the government know what the retaliation is going to be already? Is it going to be transparent with Canadians? Is there some discussion about a tit-for-tat that is acceptable and that we accept as a country and so we can take this expulsion?

Even the Chinese Communist Party has said that Canada is a good target for election interference because the consequences of being caught are not that serious. That is the level of respect that the Chinese Communist Party has for Canada. I submit that Canada is not viewed as a partner; we are a means through which they will accomplish their objectives. We have resources that they are interested in. We go along to get along. We are always worried about

our standing in the world, so we do not want to take too aggressive foreign policy positions.

However, the other thing that is very interesting is that we know the global power imbalances are shifting and we are funding them. We are using taxpayer dollars to fund the global realignment. We spent \$256 million and funded the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Against the advice of basically every national security individual expert, we used \$256 million of Canadian taxpayer money so that the Chinese Communist Party could grow its influence in the world. We have paid to undermine the global order that we enjoyed for a long time. That is a complete shame.

The government does not like to talk about its investment in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. It had not said much about it, but the last government refused to make that investment and the current government could not make it fast enough when it first took power.

Why are we talking about all this? It is clear that we need to learn more about what happened. We also have hanging over our heads the potential for an inquiry. Let me just say this about the inquiry. Nobody says here, or at least I certainly do not say here, that former governor general David Johnston is a bad person. He is an eminent Canadian and an incredibly qualified individual. It does not make him a good choice to recommend actions to the government. It is the Prime Minister's own words that say that Mr. Johnston is a very close family friend. It is the Prime Minister's own assertions of how close the former governor general is to his family. In addition, he was so linked and such a prominent figure in the Trudeau Foundation.

• (2135)

That does not make him a great choice to give the government advice on this matter. The test is actually quite simple. The test is whether a reasonable person would believe there is a reasonable apprehension of bias? An actual conflict does not need to exist. Just the mere perception of a conflict is enough.

There was some discussion earlier about whether or not we are to just take the Prime Minister at his word that he learned of the allegations on Monday. I believe in the height of the Cold War, it was Ronald Reagan who said, "Trust, but verify." That is what we are going to do at the committee.

Canadians deserve more. Thank heavens we have a member in the member for Wellington—Halton Hills who has the honour, the integrity and the principled approach to stand up in this place to face down his critics.

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, I really appreciated the history and timeline the member provided.

Since I was elected, there have been two times when I felt our democracy was under threat. The first time was during the so-called "freedom convoy". Those were intense times. The second time is now, with this debate, and what happened with the member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

It seems that, when our democracy is under threat, the government does not take it seriously enough. I wonder if the member could share with us what the potential implications could be internationally, and why the Liberal government needs to be more active in ensuring that our democracy is protected?

**Mr. Adam Chambers:** Mr. Speaker, that was a very thoughtful question.

I share the member's concern about the future of democracy. I would also just reiterate that the briefing note alleges there were multiple members of Parliament. We actually only know of one that has been public. It is possible that there are other members in this chamber who have actually experienced a similar thing. It should concern all members.

As for the government's delayed response to some of these issues, I would say that we are hanging a sign out for the rest of the world that tells them what would happen if they meddle in our democracy, and we better be very clear about the signal that we send. We better make it clear that no amount of meddling is appropriate.

Let us be honest, there have been countless times over the course of history where governments, maybe even Canadian governments, have gotten involved in the politics of other countries. We should be thinking before we do that. However, I will say that, when it happens here, we pride ourselves on transparency. Now that we know, we must dig more. We owe it to Canadians to dig into this more. We owe it future Canadians and to our democracy to take the sign out that says no meddling is welcome here.

• (2140)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, which was enlightening, as usual.

I have been watching this situation unfold for weeks, even months, and I wonder: Is this an error, a mistake or negligence on the part of the government?

I will be precise here. An error comes from the verb "to err". That is when someone loses their way. A mistake is when someone does something wrong. Negligence is when someone knowingly does something wrong.

I ask my colleague, was it an error, a mistake or negligence that allowed the situation to deteriorate like this?

**Mr. Adam Chambers:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague.

[*English*]

My hon. colleague has another thoughtful question.

Is it a mistake, or is it an error? Could it be negligence? It could be all of the above.

We cannot set up a system where we insulate ourselves from very important issues and then try to use that as a shield to say, "I did not know, and I cannot be held accountable for that." Westminster parliamentary democracy has a thing called "ministerial accountability". I actually cannot remember the last time there has been a lot of ministerial accountability in this chamber. Apparently,

### *Privilege*

all they have to do is stand up to say that they think what is happening in a relevant department is unacceptable and that they are working to change it.

Do we think that passports would have been issued quicker if ministers were losing their jobs? Maybe they would have. Do we think the backlog at immigration would get faster if ministers were held accountable for the performance of their departments? Maybe.

Can the Prime Minister stand in the House and say that it is reasonable that he did not know of the allegations? It is entirely possible that he is being truthful and he actually did not know until Monday, but is that an acceptable way to manage the affairs of government? We are setting ourselves up for a precedent to say, "If you shield yourself from information, you cannot be held accountable." Surely, I do not think that is the road we want to go down.

**Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Simcoe North, a person whom I have come to know. He is an hon. member, certainly, but I found his speech lacking because of the many examples he offered. If he were concerned about getting to the nub of the issue, he would look towards the testimony that we have had in committee when we had allegations floating around. When we get to the nub of it at committee, we discover that things that were painted a certain way were certainly not so.

For example, I think of the allegations around the Trudeau Foundation and foreign interference. When we started having people come to committee and being put under question, we discovered that there was no foreign interference. There was no quid pro quo for donations. Then that leaves us with the issue that it is just a question perhaps of bad management, which I think is something that is well worth exploring.

I guess the real point I am trying to tell the member is this: Is it not worth, on a serious allegation such as we are facing, to take the time, with cool heads, to investigate further to see where the problem was before we just lay out a number of unproven allegations, some of which I heard, disappointingly, in the hon. member's speech?

**Mr. Adam Chambers:** Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member is quite right. We need to thoughtfully think about allegations of foreign interference, and we need to examine them very closely. Do members know where we would be able to do that? It is in a public inquiry, for which the government seems very reticent to admit.

Now, this hon. member, whom I respect greatly, says that we learned at committee that there was no interference. However, I did not see a report coming from PROC that said there was no interference with the Trudeau Foundation. The hon. member also says there was no quid pro quo, but let us look at the facts. Money went to the Trudeau Foundation, for which it was reported as an effort to influence the government. The government's action since taking government seems to be not very aggressive on dealing with China. I do not know. What is a quid pro quo?

*Privilege*

● (2145)

**Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member on his speech. It would be a speech I would give on the topic if I were speaking to it tonight.

The member worked as a staff member years ago for Jim Flaherty. I think the excellence that Jim would have demanded from his staff, and the briefings he would have demanded, is why this member is so right in his speech.

There is just something that does not add up here. There is something that does not add up with the public safety minister and the Prime Minister. They will know for sure which cabinet ministers through the years have had special security detail. They will know that. Why is that? It is because they were briefed, and they knew it. They should have known the same thing about members of Parliament who are not in cabinet.

We are humans as well. We have families and extended families, and we are owed the same level of respect and security. This is what we really need to get to, which I think is what the member is getting to, and I would like him to comment on that.

**Mr. Adam Chambers:** Mr. Speaker, I think the member for Huron—Bruce makes an excellent point. This is exactly why the question of privilege was raised.

This also affects every other member in the House. That is why we need a further thoughtful study at committee. I look forward to the results of that study and whatever comes from it. Tomorrow is another day, and we are sure to learn new information.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I have to thank the citizens of Louis-Saint-Laurent for giving me the chance to sit here in the House of Commons. Unfortunately, I would prefer not to be here today. What we have to address during debate tonight is so serious, so tough and so sad. It is important for us to be very clear when we talk about it, and when we talk about the institution and the future of this institution.

[*Translation*]

We are gathered here tonight for an urgent debate. Unfortunately, this has brought us to the realization that our parliamentary system and we, the members, are all in a very grim position. One of our own was the target of despicable attacks by a foreign power while carrying out his duties.

Just because a sitting member of the House, irrespective of party affiliation, voted on an issue affecting China's Communist regime, that regime harassed the member and his family. When one member is attacked, all members and Canada's democracy are attacked.

Therefore, we are gathered here because one of our own has been attacked. These events did not occur yesterday morning, but date back years. First, let us have some context. The Communist regime in Beijing 20 years ago was not the same one in power today. For the past seven or eight years, this dictatorship has been acting more aggressively at home and around the world, including here in Canada.

During the election, we realized that this Communist regime was interfering in our elections, which resulted in CSIS intelligence officers focusing more on Chinese interference in our electoral pro-

cess. That is why CSIS issued a directive on September 10, 2019, stating that, if a foreign power ever interfered politically in the electoral process, then CSIS would inform the government.

Two years ago, CSIS, which was confident in its work because it is a serious and rigorous organization led and run by serious and rigorous people, discovered that the Communist regime in Beijing was directly influencing the electoral process by threatening a member of the House of Commons, his family here in Canada and his family in Hong Kong during the election campaign. In accordance with the directives, two years ago, CSIS informed the government of the situation.

Who knew what when? As one of my colleagues stated so well earlier, that is exactly what we need to know. When did the government learn that the Communist regime in Beijing had interfered in the life of a member of the House of Commons and attacked his family?

Two years later, this situation came to light. On Monday, *The Globe and Mail*, a newspaper that deserves the utmost respect because heaven knows it has uncovered some sensitive situations, no matter the party or government, published a veritable bombshell for our political system. *The Globe and Mail* reported that for two years, the MP for Wellington—Halton Hills was the target of threats and intimidation from the Communist regime in Beijing by means of the consulate in Toronto and a so-called serving diplomat.

● (2150)

I want to reiterate why I say “so-called”, just as I did earlier in question period. It is because when someone carries out attacks of this magnitude, when someone orchestrates attacks on an elected official, that person is anything but a diplomat. That is why, even though it is the title bestowed on that individual, I use the phrase “so-called diplomat”.

Last week, *The Globe and Mail* reported a story that was major news for all Canadians: A member of the House of Commons was the target of influence operations led by a so-called diplomat who works for Beijing's Communist regime at the consulate in Toronto. The Prime Minister immediately said that he had learned about it that morning from the newspaper. There are many people who do not believe that. Take this weekend, for example. There was a big Liberal Party rally, a convention that takes place every two years. There were 4,000 Liberals there, including former senior ministers, such as Ms. McKenna and Mr. McCallum. Both of them said that just about everyone in the know in Ottawa knew that the MP and his family had been targeted by the Communist regime in Beijing. Are we to believe the Prime Minister did not know? Come on, let us be serious. Everyone in Ottawa with any influence knew it, except the Prime Minister? As I said in question period, there is a word that comes to mind when I hear that, but I cannot say it here. I am not going to say it, but everyone can be sure that I am thinking it. I doubt I am the only one thinking it, either on this side of the House or on the other side, for that matter.



We learned that, for two years, the family was being hassled by the Communist regime in Beijing. This happened to his family members in Hong Kong and his family members here. The member firmly maintains that he was unaware, and that he only found out on Sunday night when the reporter called him to ask him for a comment. That is how he found out, and I believe him. I will have an opportunity in a moment to introduce the member in question and explain how he can inspire all parliamentarians in the House. When he says something is white, I believe him and would never argue that it is anything but snow white.

For a week, the Prime Minister said that he was unaware and knew nothing about it. Again over the weekend, he said he did not know, even though the member had confirmed it in the House. Unfortunately, I cannot ignore the fact that last week, two parliamentary secretaries, experienced members in this House, made some very odious insinuations about the member. Those remarks should have been withdrawn and should have been recognized as wrong. Unfortunately, their attempts at clarification did not get to the bottom of it, which is a shame. I believe that this institution is not well served when someone says one thing when the opposite is true. We should have the honour and the dignity to acknowledge that.

Today we are having a debate, whereas last week, we had a motion calling on the House to vote on the possibility of having this government take meaningful action against the foreign threat to our democratic system. Unfortunately, the government did not vote in favour of that motion. That is too bad. It is very rare to see the Bloc Québécois, the NDP and the Conservatives speak with one voice for the good of Canada, with the Liberals the lone holdouts. We know that we are worlds apart from our friends in the Bloc and our friends in the NDP, but when it comes time to show Canadian unity in the face of a foreign power, this government shirks its responsibilities.

Now we are having this urgent debate today because we believe that Canada is under attack from a foreign power that is directly attacking one of our MPs. We are also faced with the reality that the Prime Minister says one thing when many people think the opposite of his real actions. What is more, we are currently in a situation where the regime in Beijing has published very harsh statements about Canada. This is not new. I have no lessons to teach anyone. I am just a private citizen. However, in diplomacy, as soon as someone so much as bends the knee, they are bound to give way entirely.

● (2155)

In contrast, if someone stands strong in the face of adversity, they command respect. That is not exactly what this government did. That is why, on the weekend, the regime in Beijing said that Canada needed to stop this farce, as if we were fooling around here and this was not serious. It is serious, and the facts are troubling.

Today, after our motion was adopted and after the government finally realized a week later that it had to expel this so-called diplomat, China said that Canada was going to pay for this. That is what a power struggle is. As soon as we start to give way, the giant gets excited, anxious to crush its adversary even further. We need to be careful of that.

I would like to remind members that, on this side of the House, we have been asking for the so-called diplomat to be expelled since

### *Privilege*

The Globe and Mail article was published last Monday. That is a no-brainer. It took three or four days for the government to take the baby step of summoning the ambassador and giving him a warning. Then, a week later, while the vote on our motion calling on the government to take action on the matter of the Communist regime in Beijing was taking place, the so-called diplomat was expelled. It took a week for the government to understand something that was a no-brainer.

I will choose my words very carefully now. I have a great deal of respect and esteem for the Minister of Foreign Affairs, both personally and professionally. This has absolutely nothing to do with the individual who holds the position. However, unfortunately, none of this government's ministers have much credibility with respect to international affairs, particularly in a debate about the Beijing government.

Why am I saying this? First, let us remember that when the current foreign affairs minister was appointed, she was the fifth foreign affairs minister to be appointed by this government in its six years in office. We had five foreign affairs ministers in six years. How can Canada be taken seriously by other countries if the minister changes every 15 or 16 months? I am sorry to put it this way, but they were not stupid people, they were quality people. They included the Hon. Stéphane Dion, the current Deputy Prime Minister, the current Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, the Hon. Marc Garneau, an astronaut, senior government minister and seasoned member of Parliament. They were quality people, but the Prime Minister changed ministers every 15 or 16 months. How can anyone take us seriously?

There is another thing. When the people in Beijing saw that the government seemed to be flexing its muscles and puffing up its chest against that regime, they knew very well who they were dealing with. They were dealing with this Prime Minister, who has never hidden his admiration—I am using the exact word he used at a party fundraiser—for the Communist regime in Beijing.

That is not to mention the 15th prime minister's trip to Communist China in the 1950s, of which he was very proud. That is also not to mention the eulogy that the current Prime Minister gave following the death of the dictator Fidel Castro, a eulogy that was embarrassing and shameful for Canada. The PM's tribute was what I would call a bit clumsy, to put it politely, with respect to human rights. Need I remind the House that the Prime Minister's brother also wrote a book in which he expressed nothing but admiration for the Communist regime in Beijing? I will come back to that.

How can officials in Beijing take us seriously when we are governed like this, and especially when they see how the government has been handling foreign affairs? It does not help matters.

*Privilege*

I touched on the issue of the Prime Minister's brother. Let us look at the issue of the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation. The foundation is also at the heart of the affair because the Communist regime in Beijing tried to influence it.

First, I have absolutely nothing to say about the objectives of the foundation. Every foundation has a worthwhile and important mission, and the Trudeau Foundation is no exception. However, there is a slight difference between the Trudeau Foundation and other foundations. When the Trudeau Foundation was created, the Canadian government contributed significantly, to say the least. An endowment of \$125 million from the public purse was given to the Trudeau Foundation. That is a lot of capital. Not every foundation gets that.

● (2200)

In my opinion, the Trudeau Foundation has good people and an important mission. They are somewhat more accountable to the public than other foundations, however.

What happened with this foundation? It also received \$140,000 from the communist regime in Beijing, not to mention that the Liberal association of the Papineau riding, led by the current Prime Minister, also received some money from people in this regime. We are talking close to \$70,000 in just a few days.

The foundation received \$140,000 from people connected to the communist regime in Beijing and, in response, nearly every board member walked out. That is a major development. In fact, the CEO told the parliamentary committee that what had happened at the foundation, especially with regard to the donation from Beijing, was an outrage. People I know well left the foundation. They walked out and want nothing to do with it anymore because they did not like what was going on there.

Then, last week, the Prime Minister's brother came out and slammed the attitude of the leaders who had walked out. He explained in great detail how he thought everything was fine.

I will be careful, because we always need to be careful when a politician's family is involved. I will tell members something about myself. I have a brother who is an engineer and another who is a professional musician. Members will understand that they are not involved in my job at all. Because of our last name, people obviously figure out pretty quickly that we are related, but my brothers have nothing to do with my job.

In this case, Alexandre Trudeau, the son of one Prime Minister and the brother of another—and members obviously know which one is which—played a direct role in the foundation. He is not being attacked because he is the Prime Minister's brother. He is under scrutiny because of the role he played in the foundation. That is why we think it is too bad that he attacked those who spoke out about the foundation accepting and using funds with connections to the regime in Beijing.

With regard to the foundation, it is really too bad to see that two great Canadians, Mr. Rosenberg and Mr. Johnston were used, and I am choosing my words carefully here, as a shield by the current Prime Minister to say that everything is fine, everything is perfect.

Mr. Rosenberg was used by the Prime Minister to look into whether any foreign countries, including China, interfered in the elections. That was bad timing because he was a member of a foundation that received \$140,000 from the regime in Beijing.

No one is questioning Mr. Rosenberg and Mr. Johnston. We find it unfortunate that these people have done the Prime Minister's dirty work. Mr. Johnston, a great Canadian, was asked to take the time needed, to study what needs to be done about what happened in the last election, to determine if there was interference. That is not responsible. It is far from responsible. It is an absolute conflict of interest. This once again leads Canadians watching to have very serious reservations about this government's credibility.

Let us not forget that every time there was some controversy surrounding a trip, the Prime Minister said that everything was all well and good. In the case of the Aga Khan, the Ethics Commissioner ruled against him twice.

Then there was WE Charity. The Prime Minister said that everything was fine, that there were no ties, that it was not a problem, but WE Charity gave a contract of almost half a million dollars to the Prime Minister's immediate family members. The Prime Minister gave almost half a billion dollars to WE Charity. He said it was not a problem.

When the parliamentary committee was studying that case, things were going so badly for the Prime Minister that he decided to prorogue Parliament to shut down debate.

Need I mention SNC-Lavalin? This is truly the worst election stunt I have ever seen in my career. "We need to get reelected" is what the Prime Minister's chief political adviser argued when Jody Wilson-Raybould was saying that things were not right and that legal action needed to be taken against the company.

There is plenty I could say about that. I am sure that my colleagues' questions will give me the opportunity to do so.

● (2205)

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent. It is always a pleasure to hear him speak. We agree on some things but not others.

I like to look to the past because it tells us what to expect in the future. In his speech, my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent talked about many things, including credibility and flip-flopping. I would like to remind my colleague of a few things.

We are talking about the government's credibility, but I would like to talk about the Conservative Party's credibility for a moment. I think the debate we are having today is important. Of course, it is essential to protect our democracy, but here are the facts.

One of the candidates in the last Conservative Party leadership race, not the one from 30 or 40 years ago, was a certain Jean Charest, who my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent knows very well. That Jean Charest worked for a company called Huawei.

How much credibility or confidence does my colleague think we can have today in a party that accepted someone who worked for a company that has been blacklisted by several countries? When it comes to credibility, confidence and Chinese interference, is the Conservative Party in any position to give lessons on foreign affairs matters, especially Chinese interference?

The colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills who was targeted actually sponsored a motion in the House in November 2020 on the issue of Huawei. Again, I am struggling to understand, so I would like my colleague to explain how much credibility, how much confidence, we can have in the Conservative Party, given that it allowed a former Huawei consultant to run for the party leadership.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member should know, the former Quebec premier, a former Conservative leader and former deputy prime minister of Canada, the Hon. Jean Charest, clearly stated during the leadership race that there was no way Canada would continue to have trade agreements with Huawei. He said so himself. Furthermore, throughout his post-political career, so for the last 10 years, he always said that he had never questioned or jeopardized any ambition or situation whatsoever concerning Canada, including Quebec, quite the contrary.

It is sad to see the Bloc Québécois completely deflect attention and become so sanctimonious on this subject. I think it is sad, because it is one of our members who is being attacked right now. While we remain focused on that, the member is arguing with the popcorn vendor in the back corner of the arena.

I invite the member, and really all Bloc Québécois members, to draw attention to what is actually going on, as those who spoke before him did. One of our members was attacked. It took the government a week to do something about it. We are still waiting for a clear explanation from the Prime Minister who, unfortunately, refused to answer any questions again today.

• (2210)

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, but this is difficult for me, so I will speak in English tonight.

[English]

My struggle tonight is that I am trying to figure out that balance between holding the government accountable and finding a solution so that our democracy is protected going forward. One of the things I am very concerned about is that the Conservatives are very partisan on this issue, and I do not see a way forward when they keep this very partisan. I understand why that is the case. Like the member who just spoke, I have high regard for the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. I think everyone in this place should, but I look at the Conservative Party, and I recognize that in 2014, under Stephen Harper, they put some very secretive trade deals in place with the Government of China, trade deals that implicated Canada for 31 years.

I am wondering what pieces were in place when Stephen Harper and the Conservatives were in power that actually protected our democracy, because I know of some examples where the Conservatives, in fact, gave away our sovereignty and our rights to the Chinese government. Granted, I understand it is a different Chinese

### Privilege

government than what we are seeing now, but they locked us in for 31 years. I am wondering how the member can stand there, and perhaps he can tell me exactly what pieces were in play so that our democracy was protected under Stephen Harper and the Conservatives.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank my colleague for the fact that she spoke a few sentences in French. It is very appreciated.

Maybe my colleague has not had a chance to listen to our leader, the member for Carleton and leader of the official opposition. He said clearly a few hours ago here in the House that in 2013, while he was a cabinet minister, he tabled and had adopted two pieces of legislation to make sure that if there was any foreign interference in our electoral system, we would have some safeguards.

[Translation]

We would be able to intervene if necessary.

We had laws, introduced as early as 2013, to deal with foreign interference. Unfortunately, things have gotten worse over the years. As the member was saying, and as I was saying just a little while ago, the current regime in Beijing is not at all the same as it was 10, 15 or 20 years ago. Everyone recognizes that. However, as early as 2013, when the member for Carleton was the minister responsible for this file, Stephen Harper's Conservative government passed two laws precisely in case, heaven forbid, foreign interference was detected in our electoral process. It was a matter of giving ourselves the tools to deal with this situation.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on the question from my colleague from Edmonton Strathcona, because it is a key issue. This government and the Liberals are not the only one who have made decisions that go against Canada's interests and are in China's interest.

As my colleague said, Stephen Harper signed a legally binding agreement with the People's Republic of China. This was the result of a vote in Parliament, not at all. It was a decision made by Mr. Harper's cabinet. It gave the People's Republic of China the right to secretly sue the federal and provincial levels of government in Canada and the governments of indigenous peoples, and there is no way out of that agreement until 34 years after Mr. Harper's decision.

I am so concerned about the decisions of the Liberal and Conservative governments. We must have a non-partisan approach to this threat.

• (2215)

**Mr. Gérard Deltell:** Mr. Speaker, I think that the key to a non-partisan approach is the veracity of the facts and the acknowledgement of those facts. We have here a government that has known for two years that one of the members of the House of Commons was attacked by the Communist regime in Beijing. The Prime Minister is still in denial, but two of his former ministers have said that everyone in Ottawa knew about it. Are we to believe that absolutely everyone in Ottawa knew about this except the Prime Minister? Come on. How can we work together on anything meaningful as long as the Prime Minister is going to take that approach?

*Privilege*

I would like to remind the House that this is the same approach the Prime Minister took when it came to WE Charity, SNC-Lavalin, the Aga Khan and Jody Wilson-Raybould. He said that it was not true, that it was false. Then, the government attacked the journalists' sources and lectured everyone about journalism. When something comes out in the media, the government says that we need to go after whoever said it and that what is happening does not make sense, but then later, the government acknowledges that it was, in fact, true, but that the Prime Minister knew nothing about it and that he was not properly apprised.

Let us not forget that these people managed to get rid of the first indigenous female justice minister because she wanted to administer justice while others wanted to get re-elected. That is shameful.

[*English*]

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to start tonight by saying that I hope my colleagues will indulge me in taking a moment to send all of my best wishes to Alberta right now. There are 30,000 Albertans who have been displaced by the wildfires affecting our communities. We know that there are a number of indigenous and Métis communities that are particularly hard hit. We also know that the firefighters have stepped up to do some of the most dangerous work possible to protect Albertans. I just want to make sure that I express my deep, heartfelt thanks to them and send my prayers that the communities stay safe. My husband was kind enough to let me know that it has started to rain in Alberta, so fingers crossed that the rain continues and that communities stay safe.

I missed part of today's debate because I had to step away. It was not because I do not think this debate is very important. It is probably one of the most important debates that we can have in this place. It is rather that I am a member and vice-chair of the Canada-China committee and we had a committee meeting this evening, so I am coming from a committee meeting where we looked at Chinese investment funds and how they are investing in China, how they are investing in Chinese companies. We have some deep concerns about some of those companies: whether they are implicated in forced labour, environmental degradation or, perhaps, harms to indigenous peoples and human rights abuses.

I am coming to the debate tonight with that lens, with the idea that this is all part of a bigger conversation that as parliamentarians I think we need to have, but also as parliamentarians, perhaps, that we have left too long. The world is changing. How the world works is changing. We saw that on February 24, when Russia invaded Ukraine. We saw that there is a change in the way our world works. I feel that this place has not kept up as well as it should.

That brings me to one of my important points on tonight's debate, which is that what we are talking about tonight is Chinese interference in our elections, the Chinese government interfering in our democratic institutions and interfering with members of our House of Commons. However, for me it is vitally important, and I will probably repeat this a number of times tonight, to remember that this is not just about the Chinese government interfering in our electoral system, in our democratic institutions and in our country. It is about many different countries interfering. It is about foreign interference from many bad actors.

I think we can all agree, with what we are seeing out of Russia with Putin and the Russian Federation, that there is a very clear attempt to use disinformation, to use social media channels and to use the convoy in order to change the conversation, to change the way Canadians see our democratic institutions. We can see some of the things that have come even from the Russian social media. There are official channels that are very disruptive, which I think we need to be aware of and keep in mind as politicians.

We are seeing the influence of Iran. We do have a terrorist regime in Iran that is influencing Iranian Canadians and putting them in terrible situations. We do have that situation, and we have examples of foreign interference from the Government of India.

I know that the United States is one of our closest allies, an ally that every Canadian cherishes. However, I have to say that to ignore the fact that there is interference in our democratic institutions from the United States is a mistake. Honestly, I was looking at some of the numbers related to the funding for the convoy, which was so disruptive for our democracy and so disruptive for our country in the winter of 2022. There was a funder who was in charge of cryptocurrency. He was another cryptocurrency king. He gave \$17,760 to the convoy. He was an American. His goal was to impact our electoral system, to impact our democracy.

• (2220)

I want everybody here to be very clear that what we are talking about tonight is not just the impact that China and the Chinese government have had on our democratic institutions. It is very important that we keep in mind that we need to up our game. We need to be much stronger and much better on foreign interference from a number of different places.

That said, I also want to say how sorry I am that this has happened to the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. It is a testament to what an incredible member of Parliament he is that members from every party have stood in this place and spoken about his integrity, his knowledge and his skills as a parliamentarian. It is in fact that skill, that integrity and that voice he has as a parliamentarian that put a target on his back. It is his raising issues on the protection of our democratic institutions that has put a target on him. It is because he is such a strong parliamentarian that he is now the target of the PRC.

For us, that is particularly damaging and dangerous, because it basically says that if a member is really good at their job, they are more at risk of being a target. That is not what Canadians want from their parliamentarians. We do not want weak parliamentarians so that they do not become a target of the PRC. That is a terrible thing to institute.

I was a member of the international human rights subcommittee that was, two years ago, banned from China. We were told we would be sanctioned and that if we had any assets in China, they would be seized. This is because the subcommittee had done a study on the genocide of the Uyghur people. We brought people in, heard testimony and produced a report making it very clear that what was happening to the Uyghur people in Xinjiang constituted a genocide. That report came to the House of Commons, where there was a unanimous vote and the Parliament of Canada agreed that this constituted a genocide.

I look at that and think what we have now is the use of threats, the use of misinformation and the use of intimidation to stop our democratic processes. I do not want to go to a meeting on a Friday of the international human rights subcommittee and worry that we cannot make decisions we need to make because some government may interfere with our democratic processes. I do not want that to happen. We need to do everything we can as parliamentarians to protect that.

When I sit on the Canada-China committee, I do not want to think that I have to be careful with what I say about how our pension plans are invested around the world. I want to be able to ask the questions I need to ask so I can get the information I need in order to make the decisions that I need to make as a parliamentarian. That is at risk if we are not cautious with how we move forward on this.

As horrendous as this must be for the member for Wellington—Halton Hills and for many other members, it is also important to note that the House leader for the New Democratic Party today stood up in question period and asked if all members who had been the target of foreign interference by the Chinese government had been notified. We did not receive an answer from the government. The government did not provide us with an answer. I do not know about the rest of members, but when I do not get an answer, I assume the worst. I assume the reason we are not getting a clear answer is that the answer is not something we would want to hear or the government would want to tell us. We already have a situation where we do not even know how many other members of Parliament may be impacted, and that is terrible, because we are the legislators. We are the people who have been entrusted to hold the government to account.

What else is terrible is that this is not just happening to members of Parliament. This is not just happening to those of us in this place who make laws. This is happening to Chinese Canadians across this country. It is happening to Iranian Canadians. It is happening to Ukrainian Canadians. It is happening to members of other levels of government. That, for me, is the piece that says we really have to do something to protect the safety of Canadians.

● (2225)

This is not new. We are in this place and are seized with this issue right now. Those are the vagaries of how this place works. Things come and go and whatnot. However, we have heard from witnesses who have testified at committee about being intimidated and suffering at the hands of the Chinese government for decades. We have been told that this has been happening for over 30 years in this country. It is really important that we consider that and think about the fact that, yes, absolutely this is coming to a head right now and is something we need to deal with. However, if there were ever a time to recognize that we have let this go too long, that we have not taken this threat seriously and that we have not looked around the world and recognized how vulnerable and precious our democracy is and how important it is that we fight to maintain the safety of Canadians and our institutions, it is now. The fact is that they have been calling for us to pay attention for 30 years. That is a lot of Liberal governments and a lot of Conservative governments, and we have not seen a lot of solutions.

### *Privilege*

There is another thing that I want to raise for members' attention. We have been talking about foreign interference, and today I think we were all pleased to know that the diplomat who was responsible was listed as a *persona non grata*, albeit it was very slow. However, I looked into something that a colleague of mine mentioned earlier in the debate, that is, how many diplomats from China are here in Canada right now. We have 176, from what I can count. I could be wrong, because of course when we start counting sometimes we make mistakes, but we have 176 in Canada right now.

I do not know that we have a good sense of what those diplomats and those staff people are doing in this country. However, one thing I found was even more shocking: We have 81 Russian people in this country right now. We only have 25 people from Ukraine. We are the country that has the most Ukrainians in it outside of Ukraine and Russia, yet we only have 25 people from Ukraine who are part of the diplomatic staff and diplomatic corps, and have 81 people from Russia. I am concerned about how we justify this. What is the rationale for it? What is the thought process behind it?

I struggle when I stand in here because I know that national security is not something we can take lightly; it is not something we can underestimate. It is also not something that necessarily can always be brought up in public in the House of Commons.

In our committees, we have in camera meetings. We understand that some things are not for public consumption. I have never been a member of the government, but I can assume that there are certain things we need to keep secret and that we need to keep private. We have NSICOP for that purpose, and this is how we manage the balance between making sure we are keeping Canadians, members of Parliament and our democratic institutions safe while ensuring that we are protecting things that cannot be made public. I think most Canadians understand that. However, I think most Canadians will say that the balance is very skewed at the moment, when we have a member of Parliament who has been at risk for two years and was not told and when we have a member of Parliament whose family was threatened. I think most Canadians will recognize that the scale is now very skewed.

I also think we can all agree that the government has mishandled this particular situation. It has dragged its feet. It has acted only when forced to do so. However, I asked a question earlier of a member from the Conservative Party, and I am not certain that I got an answer that explains what the Conservative Party would have done differently, how the Conservatives acted differently before they were elected and how they were ensuring that our democratic institutions were protected any better. Absolutely the government needs to do more, but I am looking at a 2014 agreement that set Canada up for 31 or 34 years of secret, backroom deals and of things that we do not even have the ability to get information about. Yes, I am concerned about what the Liberals are doing, but I am not 100% sure I believe the Conservatives would have fixed the problem.

*Privilege*

• (2230)

Knowing I will run out of time at some point, I do have some suggestions, because that is what we should be talking about tonight as well. What is the solution? What do we do now that we know our fragile democratic institutions are at risk? We all want to protect them, and I have to believe all of us want that. We have a situation where things have not been done properly. How do we make sure going forward that things are done properly?

There are some very clear things we can do. We need the government to put in place stronger measures to identify foreign influence by introducing new reporting and transparency mechanisms. There has to be a better system so those mechanisms do not fail again. We need to make sure those are updated.

We need a public inquiry. There needs to be a public inquiry into foreign interference. We have called for this. That is because at this point, that level of trust is broken. Believe me, I do not think our elections do not have the right results or anything like that. The results that came from our elections are fair and Canadians can be confident of that. However, what I want is for Canadians to be confident going forward. I want Canadians to be confident in the next election, and a public inquiry is the only way that is possible.

Obviously, the government must shut down the police stations targeting Canadians. I think every Canadian recognizes that they are not something we want on our soil. It is not something that should be happening. I am disappointed to hear things like we are “seized” with it, we are “concerned” about it or there are “thoughts” about stopping it. This is not strong enough. Those need to be shut down, and any of the diplomats who are illegally acting within these police stations need to be expelled.

That brings me to the next thing. When we know that diplomats are spying on Canadians, intimidating Canadians or misusing their position, a position in which they have more rights than the Speaker and I have, they need to be expelled. To me, it makes sense that we expel anyone who is threatening Canadians. That is another thing we can do.

As New Democrats, our focus going forward is going to be on how we make sure we are protecting our institutions. What mechanisms do we need to put in place to make sure that what is happening and what has happened do not happen again? Let us make sure Canadians can feel confident that their government is protecting their safety and protecting the democratic institutions that all Canadians should be very proud of.

• (2235)

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague brought up the fundamental debate. We are looking at intimidation campaigns against members of Parliament, and one of my Conservative colleagues said that it is like Canada is holding up a sign. The Prime Minister said years ago that he admires the basic dictatorship of China because that allows it to get things done. Then there were the cash-for-access fundraisers, where thousands of dollars went to the Liberal Party. There was the \$140,000, and I could go through the list of police stations.

It seems the government is not taking this seriously. There is a fundamental choice we have over the next few days, and all of us have to come together and say that these things are unacceptable.

Could the member elaborate on the importance of the government taking this seriously right now? It is not just about members of Parliament. Chinese Canadians and Canadians of other countries who come here are being intimidated by foreign governments. When do we actually say stop and that enough is enough?

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Mr. Speaker, listen, if I had my way, there would be no dinners that are pay to play. There should be no \$1,000-a-plate dinners. However, come on. Let us not pretend that the Conservatives do not do the same thing. Let us not pretend there is not fundraising being done on the backs of bills like Bill C-11, and that there is no politicization of them. That is not accurate.

In terms of making sure the government acts seriously, I have to say that I agree with the member on that. It feels to me like the government has had to be dragged to do the right thing, kicking and screaming. We brought the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the foreign affairs committee, and basically she had to be dragged kicking and screaming to do the things that are so easy to do, like expel this diplomat. Frankly, this diplomat is not expelled, of course. He has just been listed as *persona non grata* and is no longer protected. However, for these things the government should be taking action on, it is not. It is not acting fast enough. It is not participating in building a stronger democracy in ways I would like to see.

[Translation]

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's remarks, and there is a lot to worry about. That is what I said earlier today.

Although we still have several hours of debate ahead of us, I have a question. Holding an independent public inquiry is an essential condition. Will the NDP stance be aligned with its core values when there are votes in the House? Will the NDP stand behind democracy and respect its values down the line? I would like to know the party's position with respect to upcoming votes.

[English]

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Mr. Speaker, I am not one hundred per cent sure what coming votes the member is talking about, but obviously, we would determine how we were voting on something based on which vote it was. That is generally how that works.

I think what she might be referring to is the supply and confidence agreement, where we were able to get the government to move forward on certain things because they are very important values that we hold. We will continue to push the government to do things such as make sure that there is affordable housing, dental care for Canadians and all of those things.

*Privilege*

When the government is doing things that we disagree with, I think we are a very effective opposition at being able to hold it to account to make sure that it recognizes it has to take those actions. The fact that we have a diplomat that has been expelled is because all parties in the House were able to do that.

Today, in fact, a vote on the motion was brought forward that we were able to vote on, along with my colleague from the Bloc and, in fact, with the Conservatives, which I guarantee is not a normal state of affairs. We were able to vote as, I guess we can call it, a coalition of the three other parties.

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, first, I want to thank my colleague from Edmonton Strathcona for her great leadership here in the House, certainly on this issue, and at the foreign affairs committee.

She highlighted something that really stood out to me as a member of Parliament, that we still do not know if there are other members of Parliament that have been targeted by foreign entities, not just China, but possibly Russia or Iran, in the House. We did not get an answer from the government today.

Could my colleague speak to the importance of a public inquiry and also whether she thinks that the Chinese government would have taken this long to expel a Canadian diplomat if the shoe were on the other foot?

• (2240)

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague's work in the House on mental health for Canadians is really unparalleled, and I think we all benefit from having him here and the work that he does.

With regard to the public inquiry, as I said in my speech, I think it is really one of the only ways that we can ensure that Canadians are able to get that confidence back in our system. I certainly hope that when the special rapporteur comes back with his report, that is one of the things he tells us that he needs. Certainly, that is something I am expecting and looking forward to. The scope of that public inquiry is very important.

Another thing that we have talked about is the foreign registry and how important the foreign registry is. If we do not do it right, and if we do not do the foreign registry, it could actually be more dangerous than not. I think there are a lot of ways that we have to look at this. One of them is that we have to make sure that we are as transparent and as open as we possibly can be. We have to ensure that we are recognizing that this is not an issue that is just one country. This is an issue that is for multiple jurisdictions. I think there are ways we can get there if we all choose to work together.

**Mr. Garnett Genus (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on the issue of responding to interference by foreign diplomats. Of course, foreign interference does not always involve diplomats, but it often can and the government has been way behind on disciplining or expelling any diplomats, none up until today.

This is in a context where the member pointed out some of the anomalies, in terms of the numbers of diplomats here. She mentioned there are 176 from China and 81 accredited diplomats from Russia. Meanwhile, Poland has 26 accredited diplomats. Germany

has 50 accredited diplomats, and the U.K. has 51 accredited diplomats. There are more Russian diplomats here in Canada than German and Polish diplomats combined. There are more than three times as many diplomats from China as there are from the United Kingdom.

This suggests that, when we have these large numbers of diplomats from countries that we do not actually have a particularly warm relationships with, without the same level of trade relationships, people-to-people exchanges and so forth, we should be concerned about what those diplomats might be up to, yet the government has allowed very high levels of accredited diplomats from states that have interests that are contrary to our own, and they have not been responding to clear instances of foreign interference.

It seems that one issue we should be looking at in responding to foreign interference is asking what the appropriate number of accredited diplomats is. Should it be, in some sense, proportionate to the number of Canadian diplomats in the other place? Should it be proportionate to other aspects of the relationship, and is this an indicator of something else? Further, do we need to be setting limits so that somehow they are proportionate to what the relationship actually is?

**Ms. Heather McPherson:** Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member, which again, does not happen very often. I am also very concerned about some of the levels of diplomatic corps we have within this country.

I will say that our diplomatic corps was absolutely decimated under the Harper Conservatives. We never built back after the number of embassies that were closed under the Harper Conservatives and the selling of our embassy in the U.K. People wonder why we do not have the same number of diplomatic staff in the U.K., but we sold the building. The fact that it was decimated under Harper, and the Conservatives are standing up to say that they wish we had more diplomatic corps for some of these countries, is a little rich.

That said, I do agree with the member. I do not understand the numbers that we see for China, Russia and some of these countries. Really, we should have serious concerns about their interference in our democratic institutions.

**Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last week The Globe and Mail uncovered a 2021 report from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service outlining how Canada had become a high priority for interference by the Chinese Communist government. It highlighted how my colleague, the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, had had his family in Hong Kong targeted in retaliation for his vote on a motion in the House that recognized Beijing's genocide of Uyghur Muslims in the Xinjiang province.

Since that time, the Speaker has ruled that a prima facie case of contempt concerning the intimidation campaign orchestrated by a now expelled diplomat against the member for Wellington—Halton Hills indeed took place. That is what brings us here tonight.

*Privilege*

Thinking back to that vote on the Uyghur Muslims, the Minister of International Trade, the member for Markham—Thornhill, was so concerned about voting against the Conservative motion, which outlined the genocidal acts of China, that she called into the Speaker's chair remotely to change her vote. I remember fondly and sadly that the entire Liberal cabinet refused to stand up for Uyghur Muslims and abstained from the vote.

Opposition motions have consequences. I think if we were to think of one that has had a major consequence, it is this one. Since that vote, the member for Wellington—Halton Hills has had his family targeted for standing up for what he believes in. As a Canadian, it pains me to think that a member of this chamber was intimidated by a foreign government for taking a stand in our country. That is shameful.

As I mentioned in the House of Commons last week, I believe some of the challenges we have faced with respect to foreign interference could have been better handled by the current government, which has been in power for seven and a half years. Indeed, the member for Kingston and the Islands has repeatedly stated throughout the debates over the last week that if only the leader of the official opposition had acted in 2013, if only Stephen Harper would have done more, we would not find ourselves where we are today. The fact of the matter is that it was the current government that created the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians.

In 2019, it released a report which outlined a number of concerning facts in “Chapter 2: The Government Response to Foreign Interference”. It notes, that while “Canada's allies have identified interference as a significant threat and have initiated various countermeasures...foreign interference in Canada has received minimal media and academic coverage, and is not part of wider public discourse.”

I will note that since the release of this report in March of 2020, things have changed quite substantially in Canada, but it bears repeating that this non-partisan committee, which only issues statements if all members of the committee agree with it, was able to outline a number of serious threats which completely relate to the prima facie case against the member for Wellington—Halton Hills when his family was threatened by a foreign government.

Finding eight specifically in the report states, “Some foreign states conduct sophisticated and pervasive foreign interference activities against Canada.” Two countries that were repeatedly referenced were China and Russia. The report goes on to note, “Those activities pose a significant risk to national security, principally by undermining Canada's fundamental institutions and eroding the rights and freedoms of Canadians.”

Finding nine in the report states, “CSIS has consistently conducted investigations and provided advice to government on foreign interference.” Finding 10 states, “Throughout the period under review, the interdepartmental coordination and collaboration on foreign interference was case-specific and ad hoc. Canada's ability to address foreign interference is limited by the absence of a holistic approach to consider relevant risks, appropriate tools and possible implications of responses to state behaviours.”

• (2245)

The issuance of this report was really not too far off from when we had the vote condemning the genocide in China against Uyghur Muslims. Finding 11 in the report states, “Foreign interference has received historically less attention in Canada than other national security threats.”

Finding 12 states:

Government engagement on foreign interference has been limited.

With the exception of CSIS outreach activities, the government's interaction with sub-national levels of government and civil society on foreign interference is minimal.

Paragraphs 256 and 267 state this directly.

Finding 12 continues:

Engagement is limited in part by the lack of security-cleared individuals at the sub-national level.

There is no public foreign interference strategy or public report similar to those developed for terrorism or cyber security.

Those points can be found at paragraphs 289-291.

Finding 13 in the report states, “Canada is working increasingly with its closest allies and partners to address foreign interference.” This, of course, is essential, but in the case that we are debating here tonight, it did not come soon enough. The committee made a number of recommendations on actions the government could take to combat foreign interference; however, not a single one of them has been comprehensively addressed since this report was tabled in 2020.

The fifth recommendation suggests that:

The Government of Canada develop a comprehensive strategy to counter foreign interference and build institutional and public resiliency. Drawing from the Committee's review and findings, such a strategy should:

- a) identify the short- and long-term risks and harms to Canadian institutions and rights and freedoms posed by the threat of foreign interference;
- b) examine and address the full range of institutional vulnerabilities targeted by hostile foreign states, including areas expressly omitted in the Committee's review;
- c) assess the adequacy of existing legislation that deals with foreign interference, such as the Security of Information Act or the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act, and make proposals for changes if required;
- d) develop practical, whole-of-government operational and policy mechanisms to identify and respond to the activities of hostile states;
- e) establish regular mechanisms to work with sub-national levels of government and law enforcement organizations, including to provide necessary security clearances;
- f) include an approach for ministers and senior officials to engage with fundamental institutions and the public; and
- g) guide cooperation with allies on foreign interference.

The sixth recommendation suggests that:

The Government of Canada support this comprehensive strategy through sustained central leadership and coordination. As an example of a centralized coordinating entity to address foreign interference, the Committee refers to the appointment and mandate of the Australian National Counter Foreign Interference Coordinator.

This is an example of what Canada could be doing.



*Privilege*

I will note as a side point that the committee even found it necessary to re-highlight the egregious actions of the Prime Minister during his visit to India in 2018, calling on cabinet ministers to be reminded of the expectations described in the government's own "Open and Accountable Government" document that it tabled in 2015.

In conclusion, the government spent the entire week blaming the member for Wellington—Halton Hills and peddling a false narrative that the member knew what took place and that he was somehow guilty for what happened. I am glad that Parliament has ruled in favour of the member for Wellington—Halton Hills and found that, indeed, his privileges as a member of Parliament, which I know all of us in this chamber hold sacred, were challenged.

• (2250)

NSICOP has outlined comprehensive steps, as I have tried to remind the chamber tonight. We have a lot to do, but until the government seriously considers taking these steps, we will not see comprehensive action or have the abilities, as legislators in society as a whole, to combat foreign actors when they try to intervene in Canada's personal affairs.

• (2255)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member referenced that I was pining over the fact that the member for Carleton or the previous government had never done anything about this. However, that was just the context I was using to set the stage for telling members about all the things we did do, as well as all the things we have done since becoming elected, that Conservatives have routinely voted against, including this member.

Bill C-22 created NSICOP, which he now speaks so highly about. Conservatives voted against it. Bill C-59 created and established NSIRA. Conservatives voted against it. Bill C-76 limited foreign ability to influence elections through monetary contributions. Conservatives voted against it.

Conservatives have routinely voted against initiatives that the government has brought forward to combat foreign interference. The fact that the previous Conservative government did nothing is just the context to set in order to highlight everything that we have done.

Could the member share with the House why he and his colleagues voted against all those measures?

**Mr. Brad Vis:** Mr. Speaker, specifically on the NSICOP measure, although the report has been able to reach some necessary conclusions, this parliamentary committee does not report to Parliament. It reports to the Prime Minister's Office. What the Conservatives called for from day one was an independent committee that reported to this institution; at the end of the day, it is this institution that Canadians vote for and are worried about. It is this institution that foreign governments are trying to undermine. They do this by threatening members of Parliament based on the members voting as they see fit on behalf of the communities they represent.

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his speech. As a fellow British

Columbian, I always appreciate working with him on the protection of wild salmon.

In terms of the topic tonight, we know the problem of foreign interference is not just about China. Canada needs to do way more when it comes to combatting foreign interference from all countries, from illegal police stations to election fraud, attempts to spy on our airspace and threatening members of Parliament here in this House.

Canadians are rightly concerned about foreign interference by the Chinese government, as well as other governments. It is up to the government to defend Canadians from threats to our democracy. Right now, the government is letting Canadians down. We need a foreign registry, a public inquiry into foreign interference, better contact points for Canadians being threatened and intimidated, and better protection from foreign spies.

Does he agree the government needs to take swift action in dealing with foreign interference and spying, extending beyond China?

**Mr. Brad Vis:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague is right to point out that it is not simply China that is trying to interfere in the affairs of Canada. The report specifically mentions Russia as well. Indeed, Canada needs a foreign registry similar to what Australia and the United States of America have.

Canada needs to establish a national public inquiry on the matter of foreign election interference. Canada must close down the police stations run by the People's Republic of China in Canada. Thankfully, the government finally had some courage today to expel a diplomat who was threatening Canadian members of Parliament.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask my colleague a question, and I would really like to hear his personal opinion. The foreign agent registry he referred to a short time ago has been implemented in Australia. At the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, we heard testimony that this registry was not working, that there were flaws in it and that the objectives in question had not been achieved.

I wonder if my colleague could comment on what he might suggest to ensure that such a registry achieves the objectives that are set.

• (2300)

[*English*]

**Mr. Brad Vis:** Mr. Speaker, respecting the design of a registry in Canada, I am glad the committee the member serves on is looking closely at what is taking place in the United States. I would defer any design of such a registry to officials at CSIS and the RCMP. I am not an expert on the design of a foreign agent registry.

*Privilege*

We do know, in Canada, that the best medicine is often sunshine and transparency. When we design any reporting requirements on behalf of the Government of Canada, be it for Canadian citizens or foreign actors, the best method is always to make sure that information is outlined in a clear and tangible way. Thus, law enforcement agencies across Canada would be able to use the registry effectively and, ultimately, Canadians would be protected from foreign actors seeking to interfere in the business of this House.

**Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to join in this debate tonight, although it is somewhat sad to have to talk about this topic.

I find that the Liberals' reaction to the situation with the member for Wellington—Halton Hills is quite disturbing. First, a couple of days ago, the Liberals had two of their members attack the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, saying that he should have acted more quickly because he had been briefed two years ago. Second, at the Liberal convention this weekend, the public safety minister was attacking CSIS, saying that CSIS should have directly reported to the Prime Minister, briefing him on the situation.

It is not the job of CSIS to read the report to the Prime Minister. Even his top security adviser said that the report went to Privy Council, but they did not read it.

My question to my hon. colleague is as follows: When are the Liberals going to run out of people to blame? What does the member think happened?

**Mr. Brad Vis:** Mr. Speaker, since elected, I have really gotten to appreciate the hon. member's advocacy for the agricultural sector and his amazing hockey skills.

To the question specifically, it is one I have actually been pondering for a number of nights. A report lands on the desk of a CSIS agent, stating very clearly that a member of Parliament has been targeted by a foreign government. What is that CSIS agent going to do? My understanding is that a security and intelligence officer would probably want to move that up the chain of command very quickly. A threat to a parliamentarian is a serious matter.

The excuses given by the government so far, in the last week of discussing this matter, do not seem to add up. The fact of the matter is that this was likely brought forward to the Prime Minister. That is exactly why I asked the Prime Minister, today in question period, when he would stop misleading Canadians about what actually happened. We need some transparency on this matter.

I hope the debate we are having over this question of privilege continues to expose the lack of concrete action by the government. In fact, in some cases, it may be that negligence was shown to the member for Wellington—Halton Hills by not taking the appropriate action to move forward and provide the protection required to him and his relatives in such circumstances.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's willingness to talk about the other countries we need to look into.

I remember the first time I heard in the media, and others around the room may recall this as well, that Hillary Clinton's people were making the claim that Russian interference had something to do

with the leaks that damaged her campaign. I thought they were really reaching there, and I wondered if it was at all plausible. Now we know that not only was it plausible, but it happened. We have seen interference from a number of actors in particular.

I voted for the motion for a full inquiry, for shutting down the police stations and for moving forward. I just want to share that I did not want us to restrict ourselves only to the question of the moment of Chinese interference in our elections but, instead, make sure that we looked at the broader question. This question is how we ensure that we are on top of everything we could do to protect Canadian democracy from foreign interference.

Does the hon. member have any comments on that?

• (2305)

**Mr. Brad Vis:** Mr. Speaker, the question is very important, and it points to the overall capacity of the Government of Canada to respond to foreign interference in whatever format it threatens our country. That is why I outlined, again, the NSICOP annual report for 2019, which calls for such a strategy to provide a whole-of-government approach, so that Canadians can be confident in our institutions.

**Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to take part in this debate tonight. I will start, as I did on Thursday, with an expression of solidarity with and admiration for our colleague in the House. I say, "our colleague" and not "our Conservative colleague". Our colleague is a member of Parliament, the member of Parliament for Wellington—Halton Hills, who has done great work representing his constituents and standing up for our country in the House for almost 20 years, so it is important to start there.

Right now, and it might be lost on folks tuning in and wondering what we are talking about at this late hour, we are debating a motion that states, "That the prima facie contempt concerning the intimidation campaign orchestrated by Wei Zhao against the Member for Wellington—Halton Hills and other Members be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs." The Speaker ruled today, in his ruling on parliamentary privilege, that there was a contempt of Parliament.

Now we are debating whether the House committee that studies these things would take this up. That is what we are debating today. I find it really interesting that almost no Liberals have actually spoken in the debate today, and when they have spoken, we have not known what their position is. No one has signalled what their individual position is or what the party position is. For the most part, when Liberals have gotten up and spoken, it has been to sow chaos, quite frankly, to raise random points of order and to weigh in in that way, not to contribute to the conversation in any way or to stand up for the privileges of a member, and therefore for the privileges of all members of the House of Commons.

Today, as has been referenced several times in the House, we voted on a Conservative motion that we debated last Thursday. Interestingly, in a rare show of agreement, Conservative, Bloc, NDP and Green members voted together on what seemed like a very straightforward motion; it was very much common sense if people have been following what is going on. There is some preamble that lays out the situation. It is not overly political, and there are four main points.

The motion is calling on the government to “(a) create a foreign agent registry similar to Australia and the United States of America”. That seems pretty reasonable right now. It continues with “(b) establish a national public inquiry on the matter of foreign election interference”. We have been talking about foreign election interference for some time, for months now, in the House. Next, it states, “(c) close down the People's Republic of China run police stations operating in Canada”. For most Canadians, hearing me say that will be alarming, because they would wonder how in the world any government would allow that to happen. The motion ends with “(d) expel all of the People's Republic of China diplomats responsible for and involved in these affronts to Canadian democracy”. That is something that most Canadians would think would be common sense, and most Canadians, again, would be surprised to understand that the first such diplomat was expelled only today. That is what has led us to this point in the House.

Thursday was interesting, because, as I mentioned, it would be surprising to most people that those were the four points that we passionately debated in the House. The government, like all members, was given notice that there was going to be a debate, so parties and individual members could get prepared for that debate and understand what their individual and party positions might be. I certainly came to the House expecting to have a passionate debate about something really important, but I expected that all members would rally together to understand the gravity of what we were talking about. Then we got to the House, and it was very clear that most of the members from most of the parties of the House came expecting to have that reasonable debate in the interest of Canadians, understanding the gravity of the situation. However, Liberal members came to the House with what seemed to be a coordinated strategy. There is no other explanation, because it seemed like a deliberate strategy to just cause chaos in the House.

• (2310)

The Liberals have two parliamentary secretaries to the House leader. They are both very well known to members of the House, and both of them undertook a strategy, and it was a very clear strategy, to actually call into question the credibility of the member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. parliamentary secretary is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, I have raised this point of order at least three times now for the same member who has been raising the same points. He knows full well that I have since explained what I was intending to say and that I have apologized unreservedly to that member, to all Conservatives, to the Speaker and to this House for that comment. I think it has already been ruled to that effect, and I think you should reinforce that ruling, Mr. Speaker.

### *Privilege*

**An hon. member:** It's not a point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am in the chair. This is the same debate we have been having for three days, and I have ruled the member out every time he has stood there and tried to bring it forward. That is not a point of order. It is a good point of debate, but I just want to make sure we have heard it and gotten it in Hansard. We have been over it a number of times, and I am hoping that, when the debate continues, we can maybe stop accusing each other of things and just proceed with the information we have before us.

The hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin.

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Mr. Speaker, multiple times, probably a dozen times now, Speakers have ruled that the member's point is not a point of order. I have the two words he did say and withdrew. I have them. I was not referring to those, the ones he apologized for. I think he apologized twice on the day, but—

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** What two words?

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Mr. Speaker, he is asking me to say the two words. The words he apologized for saying were said when he referred to the member for Wellington—Halton Hills as being “supposedly affected”. He apologized for those words. I was not going to read those words, but he is heckling me, asking me to read them.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** That is not true. I apologized for—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

The hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin.

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Mr. Speaker, he is still heckling me right now.

Anyone can watch the tape now. We have another member coming in.

I cannot reference that. I withdraw—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. parliamentary secretary is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, the member was talking about a member entering the chamber, which he should know he should not be doing.

**The Deputy Speaker:** That is close to a point of order, but the member did not specify which member was coming in or out. I think it was a general thing. I saw two members coming in at the same time, so I do not know which one he was referring to.

The hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin.

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Mr. Speaker, I cannot reference who is in the chamber and who is not in the chamber. All I know is that as I am speaking tonight I am getting a lot of echoing coming back from the other side.

I will say this. The approach on Thursday was to sow chaos, and not just Thursday, by the way. We have seen this in question period from ministers who were answering as well. The approach on Thursday was to blame the member for Wellington—Halton Hills. There is no question.

*Privilege*

The approach today seems to be to throw accusations of politicization. That seems to be the theme of the day. After the approach on Thursday of sowing chaos and blaming the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, the approach today, as we heard the member for Winnipeg North reference multiple times today, was to use the phrase “throwing stones at glass houses”. He over and over again used that phrase of “throwing stones at glass houses”. At one point he actually, when asked about it, attributed the phrase to the legislature in Manitoba. He said that phrase originated in the legislature in Manitoba. That is the approach that was taken there and then we got into a debate. These are almost all of the times that Liberal members have stood up to take part in the debate today. That was the entirety of their argument, to then talk about unparliamentary language.

As we have been having conversation, I think it is fair to say that members, not only in this party but maybe in other parties in the House, have a lack of trust in the Prime Minister and in the government. That is fair to say, right? We can say that. I mean this is something that we hear from our constituents. This is something that more and more Canadians are talking about, a lack of trust in what is said, a lack of trust in the competence of the government to lead during tumultuous times like this. I think that is fair to say.

We have talked about chaos, politicization and trust. There are the accusations thrown out by the government. There are questions about loyalty. Answers are not given to legitimate questions from all parties in the House about what is happening. We asked about holding a public inquiry so that Canadians can get to the bottom of what is actually happening in our democracy with some very important questions.

Ministers during question period stand up and ask how any opposition party could possibly question the loyalty of the Prime Minister. Let me be very clear. No one is questioning the loyalty of the Prime Minister. There are significant questions, very relevant questions about the judgment of the Prime Minister, the competence of the Prime Minister. I think there are very relevant questions about the competence of the entire leadership organization of the party in power right now, based on what we have seen in the last two days of debate on this really important issue.

It is not political to reference facts. It is not political when we take a look at judgment. It is not political in the context of the conversation to quote the Prime Minister himself, so I will do that. A lot of reference has been made, over the course of the debate in the House of Commons, to the 2013 interview that the Prime Minister did. It was an event that he was speaking at. The question he was actually asked at the event was which nation's administration did he most admire. Remember, this is at a time when President Obama was leading the U.S., so the answer to that question could have been “Well, of course, it's the U.S. I have a lot of admiration for President Obama” and then he could have explained why.

• (2315)

In answer to the question, without hesitation, he answered, “there's a level of admiration I actually have for China because their basic dictatorship is allowing them to actually turn their economy around on a dime.”

• (2320)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** And then we won three elections.

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Mr. Speaker, I am being heckled that if the end result is that the Liberals won three elections, I guess it is all good. The member's heckle was that they won three elections, so it does not matter.

One other common thread in the debate today has been the Liberals going back eight years. I know that the member for Winnipeg North takes issue with anybody rounding up to eight. He says they have only been destroying the country for seven years, but it is into the eighth year right now, and they seem continuously obsessed with Stephen Harper.

The Prime Minister, who was not prime minister at the time, in his answer to the question, “which nation's administration do you most admire”, went on to say, “I mean there is a flexibility that I know Stephen Harper must dream about, of having a dictatorship that he can do everything he wanted”. Even back then, Liberals were obsessed with Stephen Harper.

In referencing this, I wanted to make sure I got the quotes right, so I went back and watched the video of this and the video of a news story at the time. First of all, I wanted to make sure I had the words right, but, secondly, it gave me a bit of an idea of the tone of the day.

It was interesting to read the comments because the comments in this CBC article from 2013 could be comments that are made today as Canadians are watching the debate, as they are watching the actions of the government, as they are questioning the judgment of the Prime Minister. There were several Chinese Canadians who commented in this article in 2013 directly on the Prime Minister's use of words, who was not the prime minister at the time but the then leader of the Liberal Party, in his choice of China as the basic dictatorship that he admires the most. One commented, “Can I use the word 'foolish'?” I think there are a lot of people that this would resonate with today.

There was another comment, which we could hear in every riding in the country: “A Chinese Canadian would say every one of us is the victim of the Chinese dictatorship.” That was said in response to that conversation from 2013. A quote from a man identified as having been imprisoned and tortured was: “My case was only the tip of the iceberg.” These are not new issues. These are issues that go back a long time. These are issues that most of us would be aware of, although it is fair to say that we are more aware of them today. Then there is a final comment I wrote down by someone based on that interview. This could probably apply to all of us in this place. Maybe not all of us, but most of us in this place. The quote is, “It seems to be that he's not well-informed.”

That was the summary of the comments back in 2013 after the Prime Minister made the comment that the nation's administration he most admired was China because its basic dictatorship is allowing it to actually turn its economy around on a dime.

*Privilege*

That is the context we come here today with. We are debating late into the night tonight. I believe the House is going to pick this up tomorrow and members of Parliament will have the opportunity to debate the issue tomorrow. I hope that as members debate, they will be able to express their opinions, their thoughts, the thoughts of their constituents and contemplate where we ought to go from here without having a constant parade of Liberals standing up on bogus points of order, as we have seen today. I hope we will be able to move forward and have that conversation.

**The Deputy Speaker:** There is a point of order by the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, I believe the points of order by the member for Kingston and the Islands were actually valid, some of them, just to clarify that for the record.

**The Deputy Speaker:** When it gets into points of debate and when we are part of the point of debate, it makes it even more difficult sometimes. All I ask is that when members stand on points of order, they are based on the rules and the Standing Orders of the House of Commons.

The hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin.

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Mr. Speaker, I am pretty confident that none of the points of order were actually ruled points of order—

• (2325)

**The Deputy Speaker:** I believe we have a point of order from the hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, that is not true. Earlier today, when I raised a similar point, the Speaker who was in the chair at the time agreed, and the member actually ended up changing what he had said.

**The Deputy Speaker:** On the same point of order, the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, it is actually a different point of order.

The Speaker, prior to question period, made it clear that doing indirectly what we cannot do directly, which is accusing someone of lying or calling someone a liar, is a violation of the rules. The member just got up and said that what had been said by the member was not true. I think he should be forced to apologize and withdraw that comment or be prevented from speaking henceforth.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, I am literally stating what happened earlier. If that happens to be contrary to what the member is saying right now, what can I do? I am not saying that he is lying; I am just saying that he is factually incorrect.

**The Deputy Speaker:** We are definitely getting into a grey area.

The hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin.

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Mr. Speaker, the hope is that tomorrow, when people have had some more time maybe on the government side to think about what we are debating today, we will see some Liberal speakers stand up and share their own thoughts and share what they are hearing from constituents on the specifics of the motion.

Again, I will remind the House that we had the motion today, and the Liberals voted against it. The Liberals voted against creating a foreign agent registry, establishing a national public inquiry, closing down the People's Republic of China-run police stations operating in Canada and expelling all of the People's Republic of China diplomats responsible. They voted against that today.

Now we are discussing something very specific to the member of Parliament for Wellington—Halton Hills: “That the prima facie contempt concerning the intimidation campaign orchestrated by Wei Zhao against the member for Wellington—Halton Hills and other members be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.” I hope that when it comes to the debate on that issue tomorrow, we will get a chance to hear what Liberal members of Parliament think about this violation of parliamentary privilege.

I will remind Liberal members, all members of the House and Canadians that when we are talking about parliamentary privilege, when we are talking about the privileges of a member being contravened in the way we are talking about here, we are not just talking about a member of Parliament from one political party, or even members of Parliament from all political parties. When the privileges of members of Parliament are contravened in that way, we are talking about the roots of our democracy. We are talking about the ability of that particular member of Parliament to serve his constituents.

We can all, obviously, understand the importance of our constituents and our ability to serve democracy, serve our country, by coming here and debating important issues like this on behalf of our constituents. For doing that, the member for Wellington—Halton Hills was clearly threatened and intimidated and had his family threatened and intimidated. I would hope that all members of the House, regardless of party affiliation, can understand that, come to the House and debate that passionately, and hopefully vote in favour of ensuring that this gets a proper hearing at the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in response to my heckle, the member indicated how he is not well informed about what has been happening in this House. As a matter of fact, I did not just remove a couple of words; I actually went on to explain what I had said and how I understood it was a misrepresentation of what had actually happened, and then I apologized to the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, all Conservatives and the Speaker. This was all on a point that had been raised by the whip for the Conservatives. Then, today, when answering a question of mine, she actually got up and thanked me for doing that unreservedly. So it seems like everybody can accept it except this member, who keeps getting up and saying it over and over again.

Nonetheless, my question for him is this. If we are to give all members in this House the benefit of the doubt when they say something and to accept their word for it, as I think he would agree, why do we not lend that same luxury to the member for Papineau, who comes before this House and says that he just learned of this last Monday? Why does Conservative after Conservative get up—

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

*Privilege*

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, I have the floor right now, just so the member knows.

Why does Conservative after Conservative continue to get up and insist that the government has known about this for two years, when that is just not the case?

• (2330)

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Mr. Speaker, I am just curious if the Liberals are done chirping over there. Okay—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Chris Bittle:** Mr. Speaker, this was a matter brought up by the Speaker at multiple times. The hon. member was standing and staring at the hon. member, trying to intimidate him, just as he is doing right now. One is supposed to sit when other members have the floor. The other members are supposed to sit, and this is unacceptable.

This is something that we have heard from the Speaker, and I hope that—

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** I want to speak to the point of order. It is correct that the Speaker has brought it to our attention that many people will just stay standing. We would rather that they sit down, so as not to intimidate the member they are asking a question of or receiving a question from.

The parliamentary secretary to the leader of the government House leader is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Mr. Speaker, while the parliamentary secretary is addressing you and talking directly to you about the point of order, we are getting Conservatives members yelling at us to sit down.

I think you would agree that it is extremely unparliamentary for the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan to do that, and to say that, while somebody is addressing you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I am standing, so let us follow that rule for tonight.

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. I would really like to get the next member started, but we need to finish up these questions and comments.

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. We are done. Order.

The hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin has the floor.

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Mr. Speaker, well, I will point out, just because this summarizes exactly what the situation has been today, that an hon. Liberal member just said, in his heckle to the group about his colleague from Kingston and the Islands, that he is doing a good job, that he is doing a good job because he is pissing all of us off. That is what he just said in his heckle across the way. This is the dynamic we have seen in the House for the last few days of debate.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands will forgive me if I do not take the time to read every single word that he says, every single point of order that he has raised over the last few days. I have got other things to do in serving my constituents.

I will point this out, in regard to the Prime Minister. The defence has been that the Prime Minister did not know. I think it is relevant to ask why the Prime Minister did not know. What kind of government is the Prime Minister leading, where a foreign diplomat can be running around the country for two years, and the public service all knows, but the Prime Minister and nobody in his government knows?

What kind of government is that Prime Minister leading?

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am hoping we can elevate the debate a little bit back to privileges. I am on chapter 3, “Privileges and Immunities”, and it says:

Any conduct which offends the authority or dignity of the House, even though no breach of any specific privilege may have been committed, is referred to as a contempt of the House. Contempt may be an act or an omission; it does not have to actually obstruct or impede the House or a Member it merely has to have the tendency to produce such results.

Although, I do feel that we are being impeded tonight by not being able to stand and ask questions in a timely manner. I will just say that because it is interesting how things are going back and forth tonight on such an important topic.

Part of the privileges is really not necessarily for a specific member. It is for members to be able to represent their constituents in a secure and safe manner. I just wanted to know if the member could expand on, for people who might be watching this late night debate, why it matters so much that we do get this piece of investigation to PROC to get something done about it.

• (2335)

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Mr. Speaker, I will point out that, while I very much agree with the member on this, we do not always agree on everything. I am very thankful for a thoughtful question in this debate.

She makes a very good point for all of us. We may not agree on the choices that the people in one riding or another make about who they send to debate on their behalf here, but we do have to respect that our democracy functions on the basis of those decisions made in the 338 ridings across the country, and the functioning of our democracy depends on the freedom of all 338 members, regardless of where they are from and what party they are from. Our democracy depends on us being free to come here to debate without any fear of intimidation or risk to family members, wherever they might live. That is critical, and I think that, on this, most members from most parties in the House agree. It will be interesting to see how members of the Liberal Party vote on this important issue.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, a critical point for me in the development of this discussion was when we had the foreign affairs minister before committee on Thursday last week. The member for Wellington—Halton Hills was asking her about the expulsion of diplomats. What she said back is that we have to weigh the possibility of counter-measures, retaliation, economic measures and other things.

*Privilege*

To me, that just underlined the fundamental problem with the government's mentality that keeping Canadians safe from foreign interference is being weighed in the calculus against other things, when it should be the fundamental point. The Prime Minister has repeated those comments. They project a kind of weakness by saying we might not act against foreign interference because there might be some retaliation.

The bottom line for us should always be protecting Canadians full stop and standing up against those kinds of threats of intimidation. This demonstrates the weakness and flaw in the government's mentality and how it responds to these kinds of situations.

I wonder if the member has a response to that.

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for that important question, because I do think this is critical.

One of the four elements in the motion from last week that we voted on today was the idea of having a public inquiry. There is a real power to transparency. There is a real power to us coming together as 338 members of the House and agreeing on behalf of our constituents across the country, all of our constituents, that this type of intimidation is not okay. We were elected to stand up for the interests of all of our constituents, and we need to be free to do that. The only answer right now is to have a full public inquiry, something that members of the Conservative Party, members of the Bloc, members of the NDP and members of the Green Party support. I hope we will soon see the government come around to that as well.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, there were four specific issues in the opposition motion that was voted on today. Those measures involved the expulsion of diplomats and the creation of a foreign registry. These are common-sense measures that all members should support, like having a national public inquiry.

The government voted against that motion. It did not really provide any explanation for what it is not prepared to do. On the issue of a national public inquiry, the government would rather have people from the Trudeau Foundation, in spite of all that the Trudeau Foundation has been implicated in, be the ones doing this investigation.

I wonder if the member has reflections tonight on why the Liberals opposed our motion and would not explain why, and why they would rather have people from the Trudeau Foundation investigate foreign interference than the people who are genuinely independent and have the confidence of all parties.

● (2340)

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Mr. Speaker, I will start by pointing out that given the normal practice of the House, the normal routine, it would have been time for a Liberal question, but a Conservative got up and asked a question instead. Again, I would implore the Liberals to actually take part in this debate, take a productive role in the debate and try to understand what people—

**An hon. member:** Don't tell me what to do.

**Hon. Mike Lake:** Mr. Speaker, I am being heckled again. I cannot tell them what to do. I am imploring them. I am not telling them what to do; I do not have that power. However, I think the debate

would be better if members from all parties were participating wholly and fully in it.

To the point of the question, I think there is a real question on Canadians' minds as to why we are even having this conversation right now and why this stuff is not hard-wired into our democracy at this point in time. Again, it is all the more reason that we need a full public inquiry.

**Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I join this debate tonight with a bit of a heavy heart. I look back at being elected in 2019 and wanting the full opportunity to represent the people of Regina—Lewvan. This is the second debate where we are talking about the foundation of our democracy and what the people of Canada sent us here to do.

The first debate was around the Emergencies Act in February of 2022. The second one is this evening, where we are talking about the fact that a member of Parliament and his family, because of a vote in this place, have been harassed by a foreign diplomat, who tried to create foreign interference by the Communist Party in Beijing. We need to look back to see how we got here, first of all.

I was always told as a young kid growing up is that if one does not learn from one's history, one is bound to repeat it. On the very important debate we had on the Emergencies Act, the NDP supported it and the Liberals invoked it on Canadians. On this one, it is about an MP being harassed, but it is not just about an MP. Throughout the Chinese diaspora in Canada, lots of people have faced the same things the member of Parliament for Wellington—Halton Hills has. He is not just standing up for himself, he is standing up for all Canadians who have gone through harassment.

I started to talk about learning from our history. My friend from Perth—Wellington started down this path a little. I also brought up some of the debate from the House of Commons when the War Measures Act was invoked on October 16, 1970.

There are some words by the Right Honourable John Diefenbaker I would like to put on the record that run parallel to the discussion we are having this evening.

Mr. Diefenbaker said:

All over the world, Canada has a black eye. And now what is the government doing? It has recognized Communist China. Well, I can just imagine the deluge of communist spies who will come in here attached to the Chinese embassy, when it opens. They will all masquerade as diplomatic representatives. With the United States alongside us, we have not yet seen anything of what will happen when this group comes to Canada and begins its active responsibility which is to destroy Canada from within and, as well, undermine the United States.

Mr. Diefenbaker goes on to say:

The minister said yesterday that what Canada has done will have great influence in the United Nations. Well, and I think this expression is to be ascribed to Mao, for anyone to suggest that communism and the western world can coexist side by side is as ridiculous as endeavouring to fry an iceberg. And that is the situation. They are coming and we have seen happening up to now will be as nothing.

### *Privilege*

This was a speech given in this very chamber in 1970. The discussion we are having now as parliamentarians is how we can expel foreign influence not only on our elections but on our government as well. It is something every Canadian should be taking very seriously because it is affecting our lives on a daily basis.

This particular motion, which my colleagues have been talking about all evening, is part and parcel of our opposition day motion delivered a few days ago. This House voted to pass our opposition day motion and had support from the other opposition parties.

The motion talked about four things:

- (a) create a foreign agent registry similar to Australia and the United States of America;
- (b) establish a national public inquiry on the matter of foreign election interference;
- (c) close down the People's Republic of China run police stations operating in Canada; and
- (d) expel all of the People's Republic of China diplomats responsible for and involved in these affronts to Canadian democracy.

Lord only knows what the reason was, but it took until this afternoon after question period for the government to finally make the Chinese diplomat from Beijing *persona non grata* for the harassment of a member of Parliament because of a vote he made in this House.

• (2345)

That vote was on the motion that we brought forward on the Uyghurs in China and the genocide happening to the Uyghurs in that country. All of us voted in favour of that motion to make sure that that was recognized, and that those human atrocities could be talked about on the floor of the House of Commons, where they should be talked about.

The disappointing thing about that was that the Liberal front benches did not even pick a side or even get in the game. They abstained from the vote, which is shameful. We should always be on the side of right when it comes to human rights. That is something Conservatives have always been proud supporters of. It is one of the principles we extol across the country and around the world, making sure that we support people in their time of need.

Another thing I would like to put on the record is the fact that this is not just about the MP for Wellington—Halton Hills. This is about so many people in the 2019 and 2021 campaigns who felt bullied into not being able to vote for the person they wanted to vote for, which is fundamental to our Westminster system of democracy. It is one person, one vote, and the freedom to choose who governs them. That is something we should all stand up for and continue to push for. When we ask for a foreign agent registry, it is so that we can have a free and open democratic process. As a member of Parliament and as a former MLA, it is something that is close to my heart. That is what we do; we try to earn support.

I remember our leader talking to a lady at one of his rallies. She was just amazed, because in the country she came from, people never got that close to a politician. People never got close to the people who were elected. In other countries, politicians are insulated from the people they represent. A great thing about Canada is that we are not insulated from the people we represent. It is a point

of pride for us. We do not need a big security detail to go out in our riding. We do not need to have security systems installed in all of our homes, because this is the House of Commons. It is for the common people to come and make decisions on behalf of everyone else in our country. It is a point of pride for us to not be seen as above everyone else.

On our side of the House, Conservatives take this to heart each and every day. We make sure we stay grounded, not out of touch. We believe the Liberal government has fallen out of touch with everyday, hard-working Canadians, whether it be in the oil and gas sector or the agricultural sector. It is because we stay in touch with the people we represent that we are able to bring their concerns to the chamber.

So many different times today, I heard the member for Kingston and the Islands say that people take it for granted that every person in this place is going to be telling the truth. We said that people should take the member for Wellington—Halton Hills at his word when he said that he was never briefed on the specifics of what was happening to him through the Beijing diplomat who was harassing him and his family. The member for Kingston and the Islands said that if we take the member for Wellington—Halton Hills at his word, we should expect the truth from the member for Papineau.

I served with a lovely lady in the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. Her name is Doreen Eagles, and she was a long-serving member for Estevan. She had one of the best quotes I have ever heard, either here or in the Saskatchewan chamber. She said, to the Speaker in the Saskatchewan legislature, that the best indication of future behaviour is past behaviour.

We can be forgiven, on this side, if we sometimes do not take the member for Papineau at his word, because we have heard, time and time again, that a reporter experienced it differently, that he did not mean to elbow the NDP member during a ruckus in the House of Commons, that there was nothing to see with SNC-Lavalin, that Jody Wilson-Raybould got it wrong, or that Celina Caesar-Chavannes did not understand the conversation they had together. There are so many situations that we could put forward from the member for Papineau's past behaviour that would perhaps indicate that his future behaviour may not be on par with what we think likely happened in this situation.



• (2350)

Over the last week, we have seen the government change its story several times. First of all, we had a couple of members say that the member for Wellington—Halton Hills knew what happened and should have brought it forward sooner, over the last two years, which we know is categorically false. Second of all, at the Liberal convention this past weekend, we saw the current Minister of Public Safety say that CSIS should have brought it forward, and it is not the government's fault that CSIS did not bring it forward to them. I say “current” because I think he is in some trouble. That, once again, came to be categorically false; the security adviser to the PMO said that they got the briefing. I wonder if the Minister of Public Safety thinks it is actually CSIS's job to go and read the briefing to the Prime Minister or to him.

Yes, it is story time. We know because we have experienced this. We saw that the government hired storytellers a couple of years ago to actually tell Canadians a story about how well they are doing. Perhaps the Liberals thought CSIS was supposed to tell them the story of what happened with the national security breach, because they did not have time to read their briefings.

The Toronto Sun, which I do not quote often, has an article that brings up some questions. Every Canadian should think about this over the next couple of days when we are discussing the foundation of democracy and whether people can make free choices without harassment from foreign governments. The reporter ends with this:

The report was sent to the government as they were gearing up for the 2021 election, making this issue public at that time could have created sympathy for the Conservatives. It's easy to imagine Canadians being outraged at China targeting a Canadian MP for voting to condemn China's genocide of the Uighurs, a clear stand for human rights.

Did the Liberals opt not to deal with this report for partisan reasons? Were they so focused on beating the Conservatives that they ignored attacks by a foreign government on our democracy?

These questions should be unthinkable. We should expect that all politicians would put country over party.

It's not clear, given what we've learned over the last week, that we can assume that anymore. Asking whether the lack of action was partisan in nature is entirely acceptable given the circumstances.

Canadians should take that and mull it over for a bit. What if a government had a harassment claim with respect to a member of Parliament because of a position he took on the side of human rights, and it sat on that for another couple of years for partisan reasons? I hope that would never happen in this country. However, it is an interesting question that the reporter from the Toronto Sun puts forward in his article today. For this, we really have to understand how far we have come in the divisiveness of politics in this country.

I started by saying that there are two times when I stood in this chamber thinking about what our democracy would look like not 10 or 15 years from now but in two or three years. We have had people come to Ottawa asking for their voices to be heard only to have the other side actually create a division, where it treated them as second-class citizens and then invoked the Emergencies Act to make sure it could deal with them swiftly. Is that the right word? I am not quite sure.

I remember standing in this House giving a speech about Tommy Douglas. I know the NDP supported invoking the Emergencies Act, and I remembered something Tommy Douglas said in 1960. When

### *Privilege*

the elder Trudeau invoked the act in 1960, Tommy Douglas said it was like using a sledgehammer to crack a peanut. I would suggest that many New Democrats would have felt the same way, but the group that they have in the chamber today decided to support it. Then the government went on to freeze people's bank accounts as well, which is something I never thought I would see in this country.

• (2355)

If we fast forward to now, I do not think we have learned many lessons on how to perhaps cradle democracy and keep it a bit safer. We are talking about a ruling by the Speaker that a prima facie case was found that a member of Parliament was harassed to the point that his family overseas was threatened because he was doing his job. Many Canadians have gone through this, from B.C. and across the country, in Toronto and Quebec. What has happened in 2023 in this country is really unimaginable.

Another item in the Conservative motion that was passed by the opposition parties talks about Beijing-run police stations in Canada. I remember when the Liberal member for Scarborough—Guildwood stood up to talk about there being one close to his riding as well. We asked him if he had brought that forward to the minister. Obviously, he said yes.

The minister stood up and said that these Beijing-run Communist police stations in Canada were going to be closed immediately. The member for Kingston and the Islands stood up and said that the government was going to close them immediately. I asked him if he knew what the definition of “immediately” was, because the government seems to move a bit slower than some Canadians would like. The fact there is a foreign country running police stations in Canada is unacceptable, full stop. They should be shut down immediately. Not one person should be detained in these police stations because they should have no authority in our country.

I remember one of the first emails I got on this was a couple of years ago. At first, I thought people were joking because, from my standpoint, being a provincial politician, policing is a big part of provincial jurisdiction. Then, when moving into the public service federally, I did not understand how a foreign country could even, first of all, start and then operate a police station on Canadian soil. What kind of jurisdiction would it even have? Then we learned more about certain people with origins in different countries being targeted and harassed to make sure they are doing what their home country thinks they should be doing.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

What I would say to people now is that we need to stand up for democracy in our country. We need to make sure that the things that happened to the member for Wellington—Halton Hills never happen again. That starts with going forward with our motion, having a public inquiry to get to the bottom of everything that happened over the last couple of years, and making sure that we have this motion go to PROC, which I hope the Liberals will vote for. If the Speaker has found a prima facie case, it would be unheard of for the government to vote against it and, quite frankly, ridiculous. We need to make sure this goes to PROC so it can be fully studied. We especially need a public inquiry into foreign interference in our elections so Canadians can have faith in our democratic system.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

• (2400)

[English]

### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise on behalf of the brave women and men serving in the Canadian Armed Forces.

I asked the defence minister why 700 soldiers, including the base hospital, at Garrison Petawawa were left without heat or hot water. She did not have an answer. She could not answer, because she never bothered to find out why hot water was not deemed essential. Her job is to be accountable to Parliament. When something goes wrong in a department, the minister is responsible. That does not mean she was the one turning off the hot water. It just means it is her responsibility, her sworn duty, to come to this House and give an account of what went wrong.

Being responsible and accountable when we make mistakes is how we avoid making the same mistakes again. However, instead of being responsible, the minister retreated to her safe space and just started listing off spending announcements as evidence of the Liberal commitment to the Canadian Armed Forces. It is a crass and vulgar way to go through life thinking commitment can be measured in dollars and cents. Imagine someone telling their loved ones that they measure their commitment by how much cash they spend on them.

Of course, the irony is that the Liberals do not even spend the cash they have committed to the military. The Liberals cannot procure new equipment. They cannot even process payments for per diems when soldiers are stationed overseas. The minister claims they are committed, but the Prime Minister tells a different story behind closed doors. Privately, the Prime Minister claims there is no political will for Canada to meet its commitment to NATO. Building political will to do the right thing is what real leaders do, but the Prime Minister would rather go surfing.

The truth is that there is no support for the military in the Liberal Party base. The Canadian Armed Forces is currently under an unprecedented reconstitution order. Recruitment is cratering under the Prime Minister because Canadians know the truth. Why should

they put their lives on the line in defence of Canada when the Prime Minister will not even defend the idea of Canada? How can we have a “national” defence if the Prime Minister believes we live in a post-nation state?

The Liberals believe Canada is a racist colonial oppressor state. When radical extremists pull down statues, the Prime Minister sides with the vandals. He strips historic names from buildings while a taxpayer-funded foundation named for his father takes donations from dictatorships. He would rather apologize for the country than celebrate it. This country strips out symbols of our heritage from the Crown and replaces them with a snowflake. What message do we think that sends to potential recruits?

The minister left our recruits out in the cold. The Prime Minister treats our military like a phallic joke. Why would people lay down their lives to defend this country when the government does not even seem to like this country?

The Liberal Party has become so hostile to democratic accountability and freedom of speech that it passed a resolution requiring government approval to publish unnamed sources. Defending freedom and democracy used to be the best rallying cry to join the Canadian Armed Forces, yet the illiberals seem hell-bent on persuading Canadians that believing in freedom and democracy is an unacceptable view. Nothing symbolizes the “illiberal party” contempt for the military than its leaving our women and men in uniform out in the cold and dressing them up in snowflakes.

**Mr. Bryan May (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the identification of essential staff at Base Petawawa was negotiated with the Union of National Defence Employees and the Public Service Alliance of Canada, in consultation with the Canadian Forces Housing Agency. When strike action temporarily shut down the base's central heating plant, staff at the base moved quickly to ensure additional shower facilities with integral heating were opened up and alternative heating sources were brought in. The Department of National Defence, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat and the Union of National Defence Employees also worked together to deem additional staff essential so that the central heating plant could resume operation, which it did.

This also gives me the opportunity to highlight some of the ways we are supporting the members of our Canadian Armed Forces on the bases and wings where so many of them live. Base Petawawa has seen a number of new investments in recent years, investments that are not only improving the daily lives of our military personnel, but enhancing their operational readiness as well. That includes a new \$60-million health services centre, which opened up last year. This new facility has improved supports for the physical and mental health of our forces' members at Petawawa. It consolidates medical, dental, physiotherapy and mental health services into one centrally located facility, making it easier for members to access the help they need.

In 2021, we opened a 10-building complex on the base to give the Canadian Special Operations Regiment a dedicated place to train and store equipment. Also that year, the Royal Canadian Dragoons moved into a new, renovated facility that will better meet their operational requirements.

Investments like these are not just happening at Petawawa. They are happening across the country. In March, the Prime Minister announced a \$7.3-billion investment to upgrade and build new infrastructure that will house Canada's fleet of F-35 fighter jets, as part of our NORAD modernization plan. This new construction will take place at bases and wings across Canada from Goose Bay to Comox, in the north and especially in Bagotville and Cold Lake.

We also continue to upgrade bases and wings through a series of energy performance contracts. These contracts are retrofitting military facilities to the highest standards of energy-efficient design, while guaranteeing savings over time. We have implemented 13 such contracts since 2015, including at Base Petawawa, which are lowering the military's carbon footprint and contributing to Canada's goal of net-zero emissions by 2050.

We will continue to ensure our people in uniform have modern facilities in which to live, work and train. They deserve nothing less.

• (2405)

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary spoke for four minutes and still did not answer a simple question: Why were the soldiers left out in the cold by the government?

It is no surprise that woke Liberals would adopt a snowflake as a symbol of Canadian sovereignty. What is a surprise is that they think this will help them recruit people willing to fight and, when necessary, kill people who hate Canada and hate what we stand for. Maybe that is their dirty little secret. The Liberals think that if we do not stand for anything, if we roll over to appease hostile regimes and treat their diplomats with kid gloves, we do not really need a military.

Considering the way the Prime Minister likes to import American culture wars and American political celebrities, maybe he just sees us as a vassal state. The truth is we can only guess because they say one thing in public and another thing in private.

**Mr. Bryan May:** Mr. Speaker, upgrading bases and wings is just one way we are supporting our people in uniform. We are also helping military personnel and their families day to day through the Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services.

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

The Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services offer a wide range of vital supports, 24-7 mental health services, resources for parents and children, benefits that help with relocation and more. These are available virtually or in-person across the country.

Canada's defence policy of "Strong, Secure, Engaged" makes it clear that our people in uniform are a top priority. Indeed, they are. As we update this defence policy, supporting the physical and mental health of our Canadian Armed Forces will continue to be job number one.

### TRANSPORTATION

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am here tonight to speak to operational funding for transit in Canada because it is essential.

Transit allows people to have reliable and efficient service. Maintaining the capital assets and upgrading infrastructure such as buses, trains and stations, as well as investing in new technologies and equipment, are certainly important for transit, but for those to function, operational funds are needed. Communities across the country are looking for the government to step up and show leadership with operational funding for transit. Without sufficient funding, transit systems can become outdated and overcrowded, which leads to delays, breakdowns and reduced accessibility for passengers.

I want to share a story from my community, which happened just recently, where transit has not had the operating funds to keep its equipment fully accessible. A resident in my riding recently tweeted that they were stuck at a transit station because the shuttle bus was broken and the wheelchair lift was not functioning. The resident was then forced to get onto a transit bus, and that, too, had a broken ramp. This is about not having the operating funds to maintain the product.

I also want to talk about the fact that so many residents in my communities of Port Moody, Coquitlam, Anmore and Belcarra are looking for simple bathrooms in transit stations. With no operating funds, the transit authorities have not built the bathrooms required because they cannot afford to keep them operational. This is a human rights issue. There should be bathrooms at transit stations.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

In addition to improving these services, operational funds are critical for ensuring that transit remains accessible. Riders rely on public transit as their primary mode of transportation, and without adequate funding, fares are becoming prohibitively expensive, especially in these times when there is so much inflation and we know that folks are struggling to pay the bills at home.

Next week, the TransLink mayors are coming in from the Lower Mainland in Vancouver, and the TransLink Mayors' Council is also asking Ottawa to step up with necessary transit funding for operations. This will also help us meet our climate goals.

As we see the approach of the TransLink Mayors' Council coming from B.C., I just want to raise tonight that we need operational funds for safety as well. We all know that there have been quite a few horrific stories recently of people who have died or have been severely hurt on transit. This is something that needs to be addressed, and it needs to be addressed with operational funding. Security and the ability to have conductors on buses and trains are very important.

Lastly, operational funding plays an important role in supporting the growth and development of Canadian communities. Transit systems provide access to jobs, education, health care and other essential services, and help to connect people across different regions and municipalities. By investing in transit, government can stimulate economic growth, improve quality of life and create more resilient communities. Why does the government continue to fail Canadians by avoiding the steady, reliable and meaningful transit operational funds communities have been asking for?

● (2410)

**Mr. Bryan May (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, public transit and active transportation infrastructure enable Canadians to go places, to get to where they need to be, to connect with friends and family, to travel safely to and from work and school and to take family members to their medical appointments. Our government is committed to helping all Canadians make that journey safely, efficiently and affordably.

Since 2015, we have provided over \$20 billion in federal funding to support public transit projects in communities across Canada. This is a historic investment for municipalities and provinces; it is creating jobs, making communities more accessible and improving quality of life for Canadians.

To ensure that Canadians continue to have access to efficient transit, the Government of Canada introduced the permanent public transit program. This program will provide federal funding support to projects that deliver expanded urban transit networks, affordable zero-emissions transit options, transit solutions for rural communities and additional active transportation options. The program provides \$14.9 billion over eight years, including \$3 billion per year ongoing, starting in 2026-27. It builds on support already available for transit across the country from existing federal programs.

In addition, our government continues to leverage other programs to support communities, transit authorities and other groups providing essential services to Canadians in the public transit and active transportation sectors. The five-year \$2.75-billion zero-emis-

sions transit fund advances the Government of Canada's commitment to help procure zero-emissions public transit and school buses across the country. The five-year \$400-million active transportation fund aims to expand and enhance active transportation networks in communities large and small, as well as to support Canada's national active transportation strategy. The five-year \$250-million rural transit solutions fund addresses unique mobility challenges in rural communities through support for the planning and development of locally tailored mobility solutions. To date, the investing in Canada infrastructure program has approved \$25 billion for 5,500 projects, including funding to enhance public transit systems through the acquisition of over 4,200 public transit vehicles, such as buses, sub-way cars and light-rail transit trains.

Budget 2023 reaffirms the Government of Canada's commitment to advancing infrastructure projects across the country. We have worked diligently with our provincial and territorial partners to ensure that the \$33.5 billion in funding under the investing in Canada infrastructure program was fully committed by March 31, 2023. With these allocations, we will be continuing to make investments that get results for communities. An update on the program will be provided later this year, including next steps for the permanent public transit fund that will ensure Canadians can get to where they need to be.

● (2415)

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:** Mr. Speaker, although I see that the member had a prepared speech, I want to reiterate the fact that if capital investments are being made in transit infrastructure, the operating funds need to be assigned at the same time.

I want to revisit the safety aspect. Will the government support the ATU's call for a Canada national transit safety task force to deal with the surge in violence on transit?

**Mr. Bryan May:** Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada is committed to supporting public transit, and that commitment is for the long term. That is why we introduced the permanent public transit program to ensure continuing support for projects that will expand urban transit networks, deliver affordable zero-emissions transit options, provide transit solutions for rural communities and offer more active transportation options to Canadians. The program provides \$14.9 billion over eight years, including \$3 billion per year ongoing, starting in 2026-27. It builds on support already available for transit across the country for existing federal programs.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

The Government of Canada's continued investment in transit will help provide options for Canadians. Our investment in public transit is helping to provide an essential service to many Canadians to generate billions of dollars in economic benefits and help Canada meet its climate change targets as we approach 2050.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The motion to adjourn the House is now 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 12:18 a.m.)

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