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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 10, 2023

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1400)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Halifax West.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as someone who strongly supports women's rights, including a woman's right to choose, I was thrilled that our government invested \$4.1 million to support organizations that help women receive reproductive health services, and that budget 2023 has carved out \$36 million over three years to renew the sexual and reproductive health fund to make abortions and other sexual and reproductive health care information and services available and accessible to more Canadians.

In contrast, the Conservatives are hell-bent on restricting access to safe and legal abortion, under every false legislative pretext they can imagine. The Conservatives have shown us, time and again, that they think reproductive rights are negotiable. The latest example of this is Bill C-311. This bill is a transparent attempt to reopen the abortion debate in Canada.

On this side of the House, we will always stand up for women's fundamental rights, even as the Conservatives try to turn back the clock.

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[*Translation*]

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF SAINTE-MARIE BAKERY

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 100th anniversary of the famous Vachon snack cakes and their bakery, which is located in Sainte-Marie in my riding.

In 1923, Rose-Anna Giroux started a business by buying a bakery for \$7,000 so that her children, who were living in the United States, would come back home. Bread sales were going well, but Rose-Anna decided to diversify by making some sweet treats on the wood stove of her modest home. The rest is history.

The bakery has employed and continues to employ many families in Beauce. Located in the heart of town, the bakery has faced many challenges, including frequent floods.

For 100 years, and thanks to substantial recent investments from Bimbo Canada, the bakery has rolled up its sleeves and fired up its ovens again while remaining in the downtown core, just a few hundred metres from where it all began in the little house where Rose-Anna and Joseph Arcade Vachon lived. I commend the entire team for their achievements and congratulate them on their 100th anniversary. Long live the Vachon bakery.

I also want to acknowledge the excellent work of the interpreters in the House of Commons. Today, my speech was interpreted by Émilie Vachon, the great-granddaughter of the founders of the Vachon bakery.

* * *

• (1405)

[*English*]

THOMAS ALLEN TWEDDLE

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with emotion that I join my community of Orléans to express our deepest sympathy to the family and numerous friends of Thomas Allen Tweddle, known as Al, following his passing on May 1.

Anyone who has crossed paths with Al would say that it is simply impossible to list all his contributions to our community. His necrology says, “‘Big Al’ was a fixture in the community; much like the local parks, nature trails, hockey rinks and tennis courts he helped build. He was a tireless advocate for Petrie Island, a beautiful oasis he helped develop in the east end.”

As an Orléans resident and its representative, I had the privilege of collaborating with this great advocate of nature, the environment and education. I thank Al for teaching us the importance of caring for our environment.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

NICOLE GARCEAU AND MICHEL PILON

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last month, Nicole Garceau and Michel Pilon received the Quebec National Assembly medal to acknowledge their contribution to artistic development in Abitibi-Témiscamingue and their influence outside the region.

Mr. Pilon is the manager of a theatre troupe in Val-d'Or called Cie de la 2e scène, and he has also been a director and actor for 40 years or so. He is also the author of the dramatic comedy *Le théâtre de la vieille gare*.

Ms. Garceau founded the Festival de contes et légendes en Abitibi-Témiscamingue in 2003. This fall festival celebrates storytelling and the spoken word, with events held both in Val-d'Or and on the road in towns and villages across the region. It features both local and international storytellers. The festival will mark its 20th anniversary in 2023. It is thanks to this woman of words and images that many people have had the chance to set foot on the stage.

Congratulations to both of them. This is a well-deserved honour.

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SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY GRADUATES

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the season for handing out diplomas has come. I applaud the hard work of the students graduating from our post-secondary institutions, including Saint Mary's University in Halifax. My daughter Marena is one of them, as she is about to receive her Bachelor of Science degree with a major in biology and a minor in French.

I also applaud the dedication of the faculty and staff who guide our future leaders in their respective fields. I would especially like to mention the Centre international d'études françaises, which offered my daughter instruction in the French language and culture. She participated in study abroad programs at the Université catholique de l'Ouest in Angers, France.

As a proud alumna of Saint Mary's University, I know that the time all students spend at this university sets them up for success.

To one and all, I offer my heartfelt congratulations.

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[English]

JURY SERVICE

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, jurors play an integral role in our justice system, often at a considerable personal cost, from being away from family and work to suffering from mental health issues after a difficult trial. Nothing can fully prepare someone for jury service.

Earlier this year, a bill that I championed to better support juror mental health became law, but there is still lots of work to do. The federal government has a key leadership role in working with the provinces and territories to bolster juror supports, and there needs to be greater public awareness. That is why I fully support Bill S-252 to dedicate the second week of May as national jury duty appreciation week.

I want to thank all jurors for their important contributions to Canada's justice system.

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● (1410)

ATHLETES FROM WHITBY

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every year, Canada produces world-class athletes who go on to achieve great things. Today, I want to acknowledge the accomplishments of three stars.

Priscilla Lopes-Schliep is a track and field champion who won a bronze medal in the women's 100-metre hurdles at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Derek Suddons was a member of the Canadian bronze-winning team at the 1996 U-19 World Field Lacrosse Games in Tokyo. Adrian Woodley has won four national championships in 110-metre hurdles.

What do these athletes have in common? All of them come from Whitby, Ontario, my riding. On April 29, I and community leaders from across Whitby had the chance to hear their stories and celebrate their accomplishments as they were inducted into the Whitby Sports Hall of Fame.

I hope members will join me in congratulating Priscilla, Derek and Adrian for their many successes and for supporting those who aspire to follow in their footsteps.

* * *

UKRAINE

Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since Russia began its further genocidal invasion of Ukraine, I have advocated that we do everything possible to ensure that Ukraine achieves a decisive victory. Our government has said that Canada will stand with the Ukrainian people until they win, and that "victory is the only option".

Victory is the only option for Ukraine, but it is also the only option for Canada. If we want to stop genocide, global food shortages and global inflation, and if we want to protect our own sovereignty and security, we must ensure that Ukraine achieves a decisive victory. That means that Ukraine wins the war by ensuring that it recovers all of its territory and that it wins the peace, which means that it is secure as part of NATO, that we help Ukraine rebuild, that Russia pays for that rebuild and that there is justice for Russian war crimes.

Statements by Members

A Ukrainian counter-offensive is coming, the outcome of which we cannot predict. Regardless of that outcome over the coming days, weeks and months, I hope that we commit, today, that we will stand with the Ukrainian people until they achieve that decisive victory, because victory is the only option for Ukraine and it is the only option for Canada.

Slava Ukraini.

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BAIL REFORM

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, catch-and-release for repeat violent offenders and decriminalizing hard drugs have boosted violent crime and drug overdoses across the country. In downtown Calgary, I can see the impact first-hand. Property crime is up 65%. Addictions and homelessness are up. Most troubling is that deaths from overdose went up. People have stopped taking the CTrain because it is not safe. Seniors have told me they are more isolated because they do not feel safe on the street. It is simply not working.

What is working is the Alberta model, a system of care developed by the Alberta government over the past three years that is centred on transforming addiction treatment to focus on long-term recovery. The world is watching Alberta succeed, and is taking note. Recovery is possible, and everyone should be supported in getting the care they need.

The federal government also needs to do its part. The Liberals need to address the bail reform which has been called for by law enforcement and by victim advocates across the country. A Conservative government would reverse easy access to bail and ensure that serious, repeat violent offenders remain behind bars as they await trial.

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[*Translation*]

BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our country is an example of democracy, prosperity and freedom on the world stage.

[*English*]

That sacrifice that has been made to secure those values was recognized this weekend in London. HMCS *Prevost*, an honoured naval detachment, recognized the fallen in the Battle of the Atlantic, the longest continuous battle of World War II. Over 70,000 people died on the Allied side, including over 4,000 Canadians. They died trying to secure shipping lanes vital to the Allied effort, which secured the delivery of food, equipment, oil and other vital needs. Without this battle and its success, the Allied effort would not have been successful.

As I say, HMCS *Prevost* plays a vital role in our community. It is an example of a naval detachment that cares and that gives back.

[*Translation*]

I especially want to congratulate the young members of this organization. It is an example of patriotism. It is an example of service to our country.

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[*English*]

CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the past week and a half has seen the Liberals stoop to a new low. Rather than accept responsibility for their inaction on the threats against the family member of the MP for Wellington—Halton Hills, the Liberals chose to victim blame and gaslight our colleague, who is widely regarded as the most honourable member of the House. The government should seek to build trust and earn the respect of people. That includes standing up for our fellow citizens and members of Parliament.

This is not the Prime Minister's focus, though. His priorities are political division and going on vacation, but our Conservative leader is working hard to unite Canadians and earn their trust and respect. He would bring home freedom for Canadians from foreign dictatorships who seek to intimidate and control diaspora communities by implementing a foreign operative registry and by expelling rogue diplomats. He would bring home a united country and stand up for all Canadians, unlike the Prime Minister, who only cares about his elite Liberal friends.

It is time for the Prime Minister to step aside so a Conservative government can fix what he broke.

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● (1415)

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are out of money and the Prime Minister is out of touch. After eight years—

The Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt, but if members can hear my voice, I ask them to please say “sh”. I would like to remind everyone that S.O. 31s are taking place.

The hon. member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry may continue.

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, Canadians are out of money and the Prime Minister is out of touch.

Statements by Members

After eight years, the cost of living is at an all-time high. Paycheques are wearing thin. Housing, rent and mortgages have all doubled. The carbon tax will add 41¢ a litre to the price of gas. After eight years of the government's soft-on-crime policies and a broken bail system, violent crime has gone up a staggering 32% in this country.

Canadians are struggling, but the Prime Minister has never had it so good. He has had five lavish vacations this year alone, most recently in New York taking selfies with celebrities, and an \$80,000 free vacation to Jamaica, which was conveniently paid for by a Trudeau Foundation donor.

The contrast between this out-of-touch Prime Minister and our Conservative leader could not be more clear. Our leader is here on the road in this country, meeting with hard-working Canadians, hearing their stories and actually showing up for work here in Ottawa.

Canadians are out of money, and the Prime Minister is out of touch, but soon—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Hochelaga.

* * *

[*Translation*]

WOMEN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Hochelaga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was supposed to talk about Mother's Day today, but my mother and all the women who fought for a woman's right to choose expect every woman in the House to speak out against any attempts to turn back the clock on that right.

I would like to echo the great speech that the member for Outremont gave yesterday. The bill proposed by the Conservative Party member is designed to create a loophole in abortion access in Canada. The Conservatives are using a bill ostensibly intended to confer rights on fetuses in the event of a crime as a smokescreen for infringing women's freedom of choice.

If passed, this bill would help reopen arguments in favour of abortion restrictions. This new attempt by the Conservatives is unacceptable. We in the Liberal Party will always stand with women and protect the right to choose. The question now is whether the leader of the Conservative Party is truly pro-choice. To abstain or to vote in favour of this bill is to vote in favour of rolling back women's—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski.

* * *

[*English*]

SOCCER IN CANADA

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as the outdoor soccer season begins again in our north, I recognize the girls and women who continue to blaze trails. Soccer, the fastest growing sport in Canada, is affordable and inclusive. For Canadian girls and women, Christine Sinclair is a legend, and our national team show us that soccer is our sport.

Nationally, Canada Soccer has just elected its first ever woman as president, Charmaine Crooks. We are on track to make history at the Women's World Cup this summer, and we are gearing up to co-host the men's World Cup for the first time ever in 2026.

In our north, the excitement is growing. Let us seize the moment and make sure that girls and all our kids are part of our vision for soccer going forward. Let us support the work of volunteers, coaches and refs. These are the women such as Savanna Henderson, Michelle Day, Stephanie Davis, Carmen Ho, Erica Christensen, Sandra Lambert and many others, who give our kids a chance.

It is time for Canada to invest in soccer for our girls and all our kids here in our north and across the country. Our message is that soccer belongs here.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FATIMA-ZAHRA HAFDI

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am so proud to rise today to recognize a young artist from Quebec who is competing in the biggest song contest in the world, Eurovision. The final is this Saturday and will be watched by more than 200 million people.

Fatima-Zahra Hafdi, who goes by La Zarra, was born in Montreal and grew up in Longueuil. She was nominated as breakthrough artist of the year at the 2022 ADISQ Gala and was selected by France's Eurovision organizing committee to represent that country, while also showcasing Quebec on the international stage.

Her song, *Évidemment*, is rhythmic, inspiring and sung entirely in French. It is definitely a winning song, and it showcases her voice and her culture. I encourage everyone to have a listen.

I predict that on May 13, Quebec and France will be celebrating this incredible artist's victory. La Zarra is a source of pride for all Quebecers. We are all cheering for her.

* * *

● (1420)

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are out of money, and the Prime Minister is out of touch and often out of the country. While Canadians struggle to put food on the table and a roof over their heads, the Prime Minister has very different priorities. Here are the numbers that the Prime Minister is concerned about: \$80,000 is the value of a trip paid for by Trudeau Foundation donors; 15 is the number of celebrities he met during the lavish trip to New York; and 45 is the number of selfies taken.

Thanks to the Liberal-NDP carbon tax coalition, here are the numbers that concern Canadians: zero is the number of emission targets hit; 41¢ is the increase in the price of gas per litre; \$150,000 is the price an average farm family will have to pay thanks to the carbon tax; and 34% is the amount grocery prices are predicted to increase by 2030.

Canadians are living a nightmare and paying for the Prime Minister's authoritarian dream. A Conservative government will scrap the carbon tax scam, bring home powerful paycheques and ensure that the dreams of Canadians come first.

* * *

JASPREET SINGH PANDHER

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to pay honour to a remarkable young man from Edmonton Mill Woods, Jaspreet Singh Pandher, who passed away on January 20 at the age of 32.

Jaspreet spent several years on our Liberal government team serving Canadians and building a better country. He had a deep passion for Canadian politics and dedicated himself to advancing inclusivity and quality. He was humble, worked hard, spoke thoughtfully and always knew exactly how to make people laugh.

To the family and friends of Jaspreet who are here in Ottawa today, and all those who knew him irrespective of political stripe, I extend my sincere condolences. May Jaspreet Singh Pandher's legacy continue to inspire those he touched for many years to come.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

PASSPORTS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister could not be more out of touch with reality.

He heard that there were problems with passports, but he was not aware that Canadians could not get one. He thought the images were the problem. That is why he got rid of Quebec City, Terry Fox and even the Battle of Vimy, where 3,598 Canadians died to defend freedom and define our country.

Why does the Prime Minister want to erase this important part of our history?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians will receive their passports on time. They will be able to travel and continue to be proud of their country and history.

I want to point out that no one will take any lessons from the Conservative Party about how to treat veterans. The Conservatives were always very quick to use them as a symbol or for photo ops. Meanwhile, they were shutting down veterans offices across the country. They were slashing funding for veterans. They were constantly attacking veterans instead of supporting them.

On this side of the House, we are there to defend our veterans and always will be.

Oral Questions

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the question was about why he is deleting our veterans from our history. Why is he deleting the 3,598 Canadians who gave their lives at Vimy so Canada could have freedom and victory? He is erasing them, and with that, he is insulting all of our veterans.

Why will the Prime Minister not stand up for our history, get connected to reality and keep the images in our passport that make us so proud to be Canadians?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, right now, veterans across the country are being reminded of what the Conservatives did with veterans. They wrap themselves in the flags and the symbols any time they can, but they, in fact, nickelled and dimed our veterans, used them for photo ops and shut down nine veteran services offices across the country so they could try to save a little money through cuts.

Conservatives have always disrespected veterans while wrapping themselves in the imagery. We are going to continue to deliver for veterans every single day.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, despite that high school drama production, he just closed every single veterans office in Canada by causing the biggest strike in Canadian history.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. There seems to be some excitement building. I want to nip it in the bud. We are here to have a clear debate, which means that when someone is speaking, members do not shout, regardless of what side one is on.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition may take it from the top, please.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, in the new passport they are so excited about, they have erased Vimy Ridge to put in an image of a squirrel eating a nut. They have erased Terry Fox, a guy who ran halfway across the country to fight cancer, to put in a man raking leaves, and they have erased Quebec City to put in what appears to be an image of the Prime Minister in his boyhood swimming at Harrington Lake.

Could the Prime Minister be any more out of touch with Canadians?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Conservatives are trying to pick fights here in the House, we are focused on delivering for Canadians. As we move forward with the budget implementation act, which would protect homeowners with anti-house flipping measures, we are stepping up on—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I will have to interrupt the right hon. Prime Minister. It seems to be starting to pick up again, so I will ask everyone to listen to each other, not interrupt each other.

The right hon. Prime Minister may begin from the top, please.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, while the Conservative Party continues to try to pick fights in the House, this government is focused on delivering for Canadians, for hard-working families and for workers. While they filibuster at committee against the budget implementation act, which would create greater transfers for workers with the Canada workers benefit, we are delivering anti-flipping measures to help homeowners and moving forward with significant measures to help Canadians.

They are playing games. We are focused on affordability for Canadians. They are focused on picking fights.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister found out about the closing of the Main, a famous deli, he tweeted, “Ouch”, but his “Ouch” was not for the 35-year-long employee who lost his job; his “Ouch” was that he is not going to be able to eat his favourite sandwich anymore. We found out from a loyal customer that the reason why the Main closed is that food prices have skyrocketed under the Prime Minister. He is determined now to increase his carbon tax threefold, which will send food prices flying higher.

Why does he not park his plane, cancel the hypocrisy and axe the tax?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Trudeau—Mr. Speaker, Montrealers, like Canadians all across the country, care deeply—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I do not think I have to remind members not to use proper names.

Order. Members have gotten it out of their system; now let us go on.

The right hon. Prime Minister, from the top, please.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, Montrealers, like Canadians all across the country, care deeply about protecting the environment and also know that the only way to create good jobs, strong communities and a better future is to fight climate change while we build a stronger economy. That is exactly what we have a plan to do. That is why we put a price on pollution and are sending the climate action incentive back to Canadians, where it applies, so that eight out of 10 Canadians are doing better with that.

We are fighting climate change and building a stronger economy, two things that the Conservatives apparently know nothing about.

• (1430)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only one thing that the Prime Minister wants to know about is himself. That is why he cannot help but use his own name right here on the floor of the House of Commons.

It is why the only concern he had about a business closing is that he is not going to get his favourite sandwich. That means people are losing their jobs. Customers are losing the ability to eat. One in five Canadians is skipping meals now, after eight years of the Prime Minister, and 1.5 million are going to the food bank. The carbon tax hits the farmers who make the food and the truckers who ship it, and therefore it taxes the food itself.

Why will he not bring down food prices, bring home lower prices and axe the tax?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite wants to talk about how we use social media respectively, let us remind everyone that he used misogynistic, anti-women hashtags to make sure that he was reaching out to dark corners of the Internet with all of his YouTube videos until we called him out for it.

That kind of misogyny, the casual approach that they take on that side against fighting for women's rights, around reopening the abortion debate, around being absolutely irresponsible with the approach of standing up for rights, continues from them. So, yes, let us judge each other on our social media. I look forward to Canadians looking carefully at what he says.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Quebec government has taken a firm position against the federal government's plans to bring 500,000 immigrants into the country every year.

There are challenges related to the cost for the health care system, the cost for the education system, the cost for child care services, and the housing crisis. Obviously, language and culture are fundamental concerns.

I would like to hear directly from the Prime Minister what he has to say to the Premier of Quebec about imposing his new immigration targets.

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every year, the federal government puts forward a three-year immigration plan. This plan takes account of economic challenges, the labour shortage and forecasts for positive growth nationally.

Of course, Quebec has tremendous control over its own immigration thresholds. When it comes to Canada, however, the federal government decides.

Not only are we putting forward a responsible plan for economic growth, we are doing more than any other federal government to protect the French language and promote francophone immigration.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Coalition Avenir Québec is opposed to the idea of 500,000 immigrants a year. Our own cousins in the Parti Québécois are obviously against it. Québec Solidaire, cousins to their NDP bedfellows, are very uncomfortable with the idea. The Liberals in Quebec City, the blood of their blood, are no more in agreement with it than anyone else. No one in the National Assembly agrees with this.

What does the Prime Minister have to say to the Quebec National Assembly?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we presented our immigration numbers in November. It took Pierre Karl Péladeau and Québecor putting it on the front page of the Bloc to wake up.

The reality is that we are going to continue to table an ambitious plan to meet our country's economic needs, for the growth that we are going to create in communities across this country. We still respect Quebec and we will still protect the French language. When I go to Abitibi, Beauce or any other region in Quebec, business owners are telling me that they need workers. That is exactly what we are delivering.

* * *

[English]

PHARMACARE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has a very cozy friendship with the pharmaceutical industry. In fact, in less than a year, it met with the pharmaceutical lobbyists more than 126 times. It is no wonder we are the third most expensive place for medication in the world.

In 2017, the Prime Minister promised to make a small change that would have significantly reduced the cost of medication but has yet to do it six years later, so when will the Prime Minister stop protecting billionaires and start protecting Canadians?

• (1435)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no one in Canada should have to choose between putting food on their table and paying for their prescription medications. That is why we are continuing our work to lower drug prices. The member opposite speaks about small changes. We have made big changes by moving forward on bulk-buying power, by including and developing a national strategy for drugs for rare diseases and by progressing toward a universal national pharmacare program, which

includes tabling legislation and working to have it passed by the end of this year.

We will continue to work to build a better health care system for all Canadians, and we welcome everyone in this House working together on that.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister made a promise in 2017, and six years later has not done it, because he is in the pocket of the pharmaceutical industry.

[Translation]

Canada is the third most expensive country for medication in the world. That is really something, if medication is more expensive here than in Germany, France or Australia. The only countries where medication is more expensive are the United States and Switzerland. It is not that hard to understand why.

Why are the Liberals in the pocket of big pharma? When will the Prime Minister stop protecting billionaires and start protecting people who need their medications?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the years, we have taken concrete steps to lower the cost of medication, and we will continue to do so, especially by developing a national strategy for drugs for rare diseases and progressing toward a universal national pharmacare program. This includes tabling legislation and working to ensure that it gets passed by the end of this year.

We will continue to work to build a better health care system for all Canadians.

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HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since the Prime Minister promised to lower the cost of housing, the cost of an average down payment has doubled, the cost of a mortgage payment has doubled, and the cost of the average rent in Canada's 10 largest cities has doubled.

What did the Prime Minister do for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the agency responsible for housing? He increased the bonuses paid to executives. The fact is, 100% of the executives received a bonus, which translates into \$25 million in bonuses paid by people who are buying homes.

Why are Canadians being asked to pay twice?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition keeps talking about this, but he is not offering any solutions. The only solution we have heard from the Conservatives is to cut taxes for the owners of large buildings.

Oral Questions

On our side, we are helping Canadians save for their first home, including through the first-time home buyer incentive and the tax-free first home savings account. We are investing in the construction and repair of more housing, including by helping municipalities accelerate the construction of 100,000 new homes, and the list goes on.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the sum total of the result is that the cost of an average mortgage has doubled. The cost of an average down payment has doubled. The average cost of rent in the 10 biggest cities has doubled: double trouble. What is the Prime Minister doing to the federal gatekeepers at the CMHC whose mandate it is to carry out his policies? He has given them \$27 million of bonuses. Now homebuyers will have to pay high prices for the house and then fees to the CMHC so his executive gatekeepers can get more money.

Why does he not stop giving money to gatekeepers and start getting out of the way so we can build affordable homes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the only plan the Conservatives put forward for housing is cuts to programs and cuts to investments, we are helping Canadians save up for their first home, including with the first-time homebuyer incentive and the tax-free first home savings account. We are investing in building and repairing more homes, including supporting municipalities to fast-track the creation of 100,000 new homes. We are ensuring that homes are used as homes, by curbing unfair practices that drive up prices, including banning foreign homebuyers and a federal anti-flipping rule, which, unfortunately, is being filibustered by Conservatives, who do not want to see the budget pass with measures to help Canadians right across the board.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, actually, we are blocking the disastrous inflationary budget, which would cost an extra \$4,200 for every family in Canada.

He says he wants to accelerate home building. In fact, his own housing agency says that, this year, home construction will go down by 50,000 homes. That is a one-third reduction of the already pitiful numbers from last year. In other words, we are building fewer houses while bringing in more people.

This housing crisis is getting worse because of his gatekeeping. Why will he not get out of the way so that we can bring homes that workers can afford?

• (1440)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only plan the Conservatives have on housing is to pick fights with municipalities and with provinces and ensure cuts to programs, which will prevent people from getting homes.

We have continued to step up on investing and repairing more homes, including supporting municipalities to fast-track the creation of 100,000 homes. We are tying access to infrastructure funding for provinces and territories to housing supply. We are converting surplus federal lands to affordable housing.

We will continue to step up to support Canadians with a broad plan, with plenty of different measures to make sure we are going

at the housing challenge from all angles, contrary to the Conservatives, who have no plan.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, well, we know we have a plan because he just, for the first time, plagiarized it on the floor of the House of Commons. He literally listed all the things I have been saying in the House of Commons. I only had to say it 40 times for him to get it, but this is progress.

Unfortunately, we know he will not bring it home, because he never actually gets these things done. In fact, speaking of homes, one realtor predicts that it is now going to cost \$3,000 to rent a room in a boarding house, as the norm, by 2030. That is the track we are on right now.

Why will he not get out of the way so that we can bring homes that Canadians can afford?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it goes back and forth a little bit, but I can assure the members opposite that we are actually, right now, signing agreements, and have been for quite a while, that include obligations around densification around public transit and tying infrastructure funding to building houses in places like Hamilton and elsewhere. They were glad to be able to take ideas from us and now blame us for taking ideas from them.

It is nice to hear some ideas from them, but what we always see from them is the choice of cuts, while we choose to invest. We choose to be there for Canadians, and we are building houses, homes and opportunities for Canadians.

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very flattered that he is pretending to agree with my plan. My plan has always been to incentivize municipalities to speed up building permits, to tie the amount of money for infrastructure to the number of houses built and to require more housing around public transit stations.

That is the plan I have been promoting for a year. Now, he is trying to copy it. I think he is incapable of implementing it because he never does the work. He is all talk and no action.

Will he finally let Canadians build houses that Canadians can afford?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since launching our national housing strategy in 2017, we have seen several million Canadians access new housing because of federal investments.

Oral Questions

We realize that much more needs to be done, but what we are seeing from the Conservatives is that they are picking fights with municipalities. They believe that cuts to programs for Canadians will magically help. They have no plan for fighting the housing crisis.

We have a detailed plan that we are implementing with a budget that they are blocking.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my plan has been, for over a year, that we should link the number of dollars big cities get for infrastructure to the number of houses they allow to get built, so that we speed up and lower the cost of building permits, that we should require every federally funded transit station to have high-density housing around and on top, and that we should sell off federal buildings to turn them into housing.

He has tried to plagiarize that today, which is flattering, but it is interesting to note that his own housing agency predicts a 32% reduction in the number of houses built, a 50,000-unit decline.

Why will the Prime Minister not put his action where his words now are, get out of the way and let—

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, even by the standards of this House these past days, this is getting to be a pretty ridiculous debate. The fact of the matter is, people are saying, “No, I have the best plan. This is the best plan. That is the best plan. No, I have the best plan.” Let us focus on delivering for Canadians every step of the way. Let us—

The Speaker: I am going to have to interrupt the right hon. Prime Minister. The noise level is starting to creep up again. I am going to ask everyone to calm down and take a deep breath. I want to remind everyone that one person asks the question and one person gives a response; multiple questions should not be asked while the person is answering.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

• (1445)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, let us look at the respective records here.

The Conservative Party campaigned in the last election on a single element of a housing plan, which was to give tax breaks to wealthy landlords in hopes of selling their buildings. That is not a plan to help Canadians.

Our plan, which we have been delivering on since 2017 with the national housing strategy, is about \$70-billion worth of investments, while working in partnership with municipalities, working in partnership with provinces and territories, linking investments and infrastructure to densification, and moving forward on incentives to create better zoning so we can build more homes for more Canadians.

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is rarely a good idea to go after the diligence, independence or integrity of a media outlet. It is rarely very democratic, especially when the head of said outlet is Pierre Karl Péladeau.

The next person I want to mention needs to be handled very carefully. Gérard Bouchard said that there is indeed cause for concern about the 500,000 immigrants the government wants to welcome annually. He is a highly respected sociologist. The Prime Minister has to weigh his words very carefully in his response.

What does he have to say to Gérard Bouchard?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the experts, I spend a lot of time talking to entrepreneurs in Beauce, Abitibi and in the Quebec City area who are struggling to find labour to grow their business.

Farmers are concerned about the labour shortage. We are here to help, to work hand in hand with Quebec, which sets its own immigration targets.

We will be there to ensure that economic growth, the protection of French and francophone immigration continue to be on the agenda for our entrepreneurs across Quebec—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Belœil—Chambly.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the folks at McKinsey are great at preparing answers.

In Quebec, the CAQ, the PQ and the Liberals are against it, while Québec Solidaire is uneasy about it at best. In this Parliament, the Bloc Québécois is the only party that is against the target of 500,000 immigrants a year.

Who agrees with this target other than the 25 people who participated in the debate at the Liberal Party convention?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Immigration consulted 3,000 different organizations and groups across Canada when setting our targets.

We understand there is a great need for economic growth and for workers across the country, including in Quebec. I have had conversations with business owners in Gatineau, in Montreal and on the North Shore who need workers. That is what I am hearing.

We will be there to ensure that there is francophone immigration. We will work hand in hand with the Government of Quebec and we will enable the economic growth that everyone needs.

* * *

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's story continues to change when it comes to the threats made by a Beijing operative against a Canadian MP.

Oral Questions

He said that no one outside the intelligence community knew about the situation. However, his national security adviser admitted that his office had been made aware.

Of all the Prime Minister's staff, both in the public service and in his office, which members of his team were aware of this threat two years ago?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my three former intelligence and security advisers confirmed yesterday that the report did not land on their desk.

We will always take the concerns of Canadians about foreign interference seriously, which is why we have taken action. We will continue to act in a serious way.

While the Conservative Party tries to turn this into a partisan controversy, we will continue to take this seriously and protect Canadians.

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's own national security adviser told the member for Wellington—Halton Hills that her office had received it when her predecessor was in charge. That predecessor would have been the direct adviser to the current Prime Minister. That is important because, if his office or his top officials were aware that a foreign operative was threatening a Canadian MP's family back in July and they did absolutely nothing about it, it demonstrates their unwillingness to protect our country. If the Prime Minister was not aware, it demonstrates his total incompetence in protecting Canada. Which is it?

• (1450)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our intelligence agencies receive vast numbers of pieces of information and analyze threats to Canadians, to institutions and to our politics regularly. They make determinations about which pieces of information hit the threshold and need to be passed up the chain and what kind of priority they meet.

What I have done over the past week is ensure that any threat, no matter how low the threshold, no matter how unsavoury or unreliable the source, should be elevated if it talks about MPs and their families. Going forward, that will be the story, but this—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is basically saying that it just was not important enough for anyone to be informed that a Canadian MP had his family threatened by a foreign operative in order to punish him for a vote. No one believes the Prime Minister when he says that. Everybody knows that this is of the highest importance. If his government is operating in a way that it is not important, then he clearly cannot defend the national interests of this country.

Recently, we had testimony from the chair of the Trudeau Foundation, who said that he cannot tell us to whom the donation from Beijing was returned. Can the Prime Minister tell us?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have to give credit where it is due. The Leader of the Opposition almost got it right in the beginning of his last question.

It is CSIS itself that makes determinations on the credibility, the threat level and the seriousness of the various pieces of information that come in. It makes determinations, quite appropriately, about what to do with that information, how high to elevate it and how urgently it needs to be brought forward.

One can draw certain conclusions about the decision CSIS made based on certain elements of information as to the critical nature or the seriousness of the actual information—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the question was about the donation from Beijing to the Trudeau Foundation.

We know that the Prime Minister's own brother processed the donation. We know that CSIS intelligence, from an intercepted phone call of Beijing's diplomats, revealed that the purpose of the donation was to politically influence the current Prime Minister. In the new development, the chair of the Trudeau Foundation said that he cannot tell where the donation ended up. He said they gave it back, but they do not know whom they gave it back to.

Will the Prime Minister support new powers for the Auditor General to fully audit the Trudeau Foundation so that we can get to the bottom of this scandal?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite fully knows, and as all MPs have heard me say probably a dozen times in this House, it has been close to 10 years since I have had any direct or indirect engagement with the Trudeau Foundation. He needs to continue to direct his questions to it.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan, first nations are left out of major decisions regarding natural resources because their right to the land is not recognized. The government has obligations to consult with the provinces, territories, and first nations and indigenous peoples.

Will the Prime Minister commit today to respect free, prior and informed consent in Saskatchewan specifically, and across Canada, and ensure that the economic benefits flow to the indigenous peoples when the resources are on their land?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a federal government, we are moving forward on legislating the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which includes free, prior and informed consent. This is an important and historic step for the government that we are taking hand in hand with indigenous peoples. Unfortunately, only some provinces are moving forward in that way.

We will continue to engage on these issues, but we also recognize the responsibility and the control that the provinces have over their natural resources. We encourage everyone, however, to walk the path of reconciliation together.

* * *

● (1455)

HOUSING

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the price for an unfurnished one-bedroom rental home in metro Vancouver has climbed to \$3,000 a month. Families, students and seniors in Vancouver cannot afford to live there. The housing crisis has only gotten worse under the Liberal government. The government has allowed greedy corporate landlords to buy up homes, hike rents and make it impossible for Canadians to secure affordable housing.

When are the Liberals going to crack down on corporate landlords and make housing truly affordable?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have taken significant steps on supporting low-income renters, including a \$500 housing benefit top-up, which the Conservatives voted against and tried to delay. We are investing to rapidly increase the supply of affordable rental units. We are introducing measures to end rent evictions.

That is on top of the significant measures we are working with municipalities on to create 100,000 new homes over the coming years as we accelerate the processes of zoning and permitting. We are doing that hand in hand with municipalities by respecting them, instead of by fighting with them as the Conservatives proposed. We know that collaboration is the way to get things done.

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WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the House debated Bill C-311, which was introduced by one of the most anti-choice members of this House in a transparent effort by the Conservative Party to reopen the abortion debate in Canada.

The Conservatives do not just want women in Canada to not have the right to choose; they also oppose our support of women's reproductive rights abroad. When it comes to reproductive rights in this country and around the world, what is the Prime Minister's position?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Humber River—Black Creek for her tireless work on so many files.

Our government is unapologetically feminist and pro-choice. Since 2020, we have provided almost half a billion dollars to support women's sexual and reproductive health and rights around the world. That includes funding for abortion health care, which previous Conservative governments recklessly refused to support.

We know that the fight for women's and girls' rights around the world is far from—

Oral Questions

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am going to have to interrupt the right hon. Prime Minister. It is starting to get a little noisy again. I missed part of that. I am going to ask him to start over, please.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, our government is unapologetically feminist and pro-choice.

Since 2020, we have provided almost half a billion dollars to support women's sexual and reproductive health and rights around the world. That includes funding for abortion health care, which the previous Conservative government refused to support.

We know the fight for women's and girls' rights around the world is far from over. That is why, yesterday, we announced Canada's candidacy to the UN Human Rights Council. While the Conservative Party attacks a woman's right to choose in this House, we are defending it at home and abroad.

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HEALTH

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what the Prime Minister is doing is massively increasing the drug overdose crisis in this country.

He has been providing taxpayer dollars for high-powered drugs that have flooded our streets and lowered the cost of hydromorphone on the streets by as much as 95% in Vancouver. This has led to the deaths of 30,000 Canadians.

Will the Prime Minister back away from his reckless plan to join with the NDP in B.C. and decriminalize crack, heroin and other deadly drugs?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the toxic drug and overdose crisis continues to take a tragic toll on families, loved ones and communities.

We are using every tool at our disposal to work with our partners to end this national public health crisis. Since 2017, we have committed more than \$1 billion to address the overdose crisis, and we are taking concrete steps to divert people who use drugs away from the criminal justice system.

The evidence is clear that harm reduction measures save lives. Some 46,000 overdoses have been reversed since 2017. We will continue to trust the science.

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what the science shows, and I will quote Giuseppe Ganci, head of the Last Door Recovery Society, is this: “One-hundred per cent of all of the people I’ve met who are on safer supply sell their safer supply. I’ve never met anybody who’s taken all of it”.

Why do they sell it? It is because, while it is powerful enough to get a high to begin with, it loses its strength with use. It gets sold to kids, and the profits are then used for fentanyl. Then those kids buy the fentanyl when the hydromorphone is not—

• (1500)

The Speaker: I am sorry, but I am going to have to interrupt. It is getting noisy again.

From the top please.

I want everybody to listen to whoever is speaking and then, when the answer comes, please, everyone listen to the answer as well.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition please.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, furthermore, to quote a recent article on the matter, “According to some of the experts I spoke to, this has caused the street price of hydromorphone (the primary opioid dispensed at safer supply sites) to drop by an estimated 70-95 per cent in cities with safer supply programs.”

In other words, the only thing that has been exempt from the Prime Minister’s inflation is the powerful drugs that are killing people, because he is subsidizing them and flooding them into our streets, including through dispensaries.

Will the Prime Minister finally put an end to the deadly policies he has put in place that are killing our people?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the ongoing opioid epidemic is taking far too many lives across the country, whether it is families, whether it is workers or whether it is communities from coast to coast. We need to stay grounded in the science and evidence in how we are going to respond to it.

Now, the Conservatives’ ideologically driven solutions are good for bumper stickers, but they are not effective in supporting people in moving forward on a health-based approach to opioids and making sure we are supporting people and getting them through this.

We will continue with harm reduction—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to be blunt, his policies are killing people.

The number of overdose deaths that have happened in this country, in British Columbia in particular, where the policies of this government and the NDP are most advanced, are up by 300%. Those deaths were 75% lower before these policies came into place. Worse, beyond just subsidizing deadly drugs, now he wants to decriminalize crack, heroin and cocaine in partnership with the NDP government in B.C.

This policy is insane. It is killing people. Will the Prime Minister reverse it before it is too late for more Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the ideological fearmongering coming from the Conservatives is all too typical and too unfortunate.

We have seen this kind of rhetoric before—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am sorry, but I am going to have to stop everything again. We will wait a few seconds.

The hon. Prime Minister, since you had just started, please start from the top.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the ideological fearmongering from the Conservatives is alarming. It is the kind of rhetoric that we have seen all too often from the American far right and now here in Canada.

We need to stay grounded in what the frontline responders are telling us, in what the frontline doctors and health experts have been doing to save lives across the country.

We will continue to work on a harm reduction approach. We will continue to work with frontline partners. We will not be swayed by the ideological approach of the Conservatives on supporting people as we fight this epidemic.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is truly alarming is a walk through many of our inner-city streets. There he will see tent cities where people are lying face-first on the ground, because he has flooded those streets with taxpayer-funded drugs and has signed a deal with the NDP to decriminalize crack, heroin, cocaine, meth and other drugs. He has imported this ideological and extremist policy from failed big American cities where the result has been exactly the same.

Will he finally abandon his reckless and extremist policies in favour of a common-sense plan that gives recovery and brings home our people?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it feels like it is déjà vu all over again.

We spent years in opposition fighting against the Stephen Harper ideological approach that stood against harm reduction, that allowed people to die in the streets and that criminalized drug users.

That failed. Canadians chose a different path in 2017, one grounded in evidence, science, compassion and a health approach to treating addictions, not a justice-system approach to treating victims.

We will not take any lessons from that ideologically driven, fact-free Conservative Party of Canada.

• (1505)

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the idea of a larger and therefore cheaper workforce is a McKinsey specialty called “breaking workers”. This is the same McKinsey that made no mention of French or Quebec in their proposal. The so-called progressives in this House should be ashamed of this policy.

Is the Prime Minister saying that he will bring in 500,000 immigrants a year as cheap labour, yet we are the ones who will pay?

He will be able to read his answer in tomorrow's *Journal de Montréal*.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, entrepreneurs across Quebec and the country need workers. Our communities want to welcome new families who can come and fill the needs for the economic growth that is on the horizon.

We are here to welcome not just newcomers, but new Canadians and new Quebecers who will continue to help build our country for generations to come.

Yes, we are going to continue to be there to defend French and to deliver on francophone immigration, but we are also going to be there to create opportunities for all, in both official languages, to achieve solid economic growth.

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INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we have a Prime Minister who is about to speak about himself in the third person, who says he consulted 3,000 organizations or people, but not Quebec, because those they intend to harm do not get consulted.

What does he have to say to this growing number of people who realize, say and write that the only solution is Quebec's sovereignty?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is immediately obvious what the Bloc Québécois is focusing on and always ends up arguing about.

They just want Quebec and Ottawa to argue. They only want to bicker with the federal government because they are not interested in Canada's economic growth, or in creating bilingual communities with two flourishing official languages, and they are not interested in having a stronger Canada.

They have already lost two referendums, but we will continue to be there to work with Quebecers and the Government of Quebec to provide a more prosperous future in French.

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CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here are the choices: The Prime Minister is generally outside the country and the Bloc Québécois wants a referendum to

Oral Questions

break up the country. There is only the Conservative Party who wants things to be more affordable and for people to have bigger paycheques and a better country. That is the choice.

Let us talk about choice. The Prime Minister wants to bring in a second carbon tax that will increase the cost of fuel.

How much will Canadians have to pay for the second carbon tax that the Prime Minister wants to bring in? How much?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, years ago we decided that here in Canada it is no longer free to pollute. We made sure there was a price on pollution across the country.

In doing so, we also put more money in the pockets of average families in the country to ensure that while we fight climate change we continue to invest in the cost of living for families.

This is working, not just in terms of lowering our emissions, which is happening, but also for creating economic opportunities, economic growth and good jobs for the middle class.

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EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Prime Minister's government spread false information about the number of belugas in the St. Lawrence River to justify the rejection of the GNL Québec project, which would put bigger paycheques in the pockets of people from Saguenay.

We know now that that information was false and that the number of belugas is double what the government said it was.

Will the government reverse its position to give jobs and paycheques to the people of Saguenay rather than sending that money to Vladimir Putin?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party leader is once again demonstrating that he understands nothing about what is happening in Quebec. That is a real problem for him, but it is his problem.

We were working with the Government of Quebec on the GNL Québec project, and we know very well that the Government of Quebec was the first to reject that project. Then, the federal government did its job.

The reality is that we need to work hand in hand with the provinces rather than picking fights and refusing to understand how things work in a federation.

• (1510)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the difference is that I would rather see that money go towards a paycheque for a Jean-Marie Tremblay or a welder from Saguenay than to Vladimir Putin.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

In fact, the Japanese Prime Minister and the German Chancellor both asked the Prime Minister for LNG. He said, “No, call Putin. He’ll provide it to you instead,” claiming there was no business case. Nobody told the Americans who have built six LNG plants at the same time that the Prime Minister blocked 18.

Will the Prime Minister get out of the way so that we can turn dollars for dictators into paycheques for our people?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know well that clever buzzwords is not a plan to grow the economy and create opportunities for the middle class right across the country. Energy workers in Alberta, forestry workers in Quebec and miners right across the north know that with the opportunities we have, while fighting climate and while building a cleaner economy by getting to that net-zero economy the world expects, we are going to be able to create more great jobs for the middle class. Meanwhile, they continue to stick their heads in the sand and refuse to accept climate change is real and that one cannot build an economy—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis.

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*[Translation]***NEWS MEDIA INDUSTRY**

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, local news is vital. Voters rely on local news outlets to keep them informed. When the Liberal government passes legislation to ensure fair compensation for the use of community news content, Facebook responds by censoring the news.

The Conservative leader, a friend of big tech, is happy to parrot the excuses offered up by the billionaire web giants, at the expense of Canadians’ right to access news content.

What are the Prime Minister’s thoughts on this disregard for Canadians’ right to information, a fundamental right in any democracy?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member from Lac-Saint-Louis for his question and for his hard work. Facebook’s tactics failed in Australia, and they will fail in Canada. The saddest part is seeing the Conservative members continue to rally around the web giants, regurgitate their arguments and rush to help American billionaires attack local news.

While the Conservative leader stands alongside big tech, we will keep standing alongside francophone and rural communities, who consider access to the news as something essential.

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*[English]***OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister continues with his ridiculous claim that there is no business case for the 1,300 trillion cubic feet of natural gas we have here in Canada. Nobody told the Americans, who built six export plants. Nobody told the Qataris, who are increasing their

production by 66%. Nobody told the Mexicans, who are using a formerly Canadian company, Trans Canada, to bypass and exceed Canada’s export potential. We could be shutting down dirty Asian coal fire and replacing it with clean Canadian LNG and we could turn dollars for dictators into paycheques for our people.

Why will the Prime Minister not finally bring it home?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again the leader of the official opposition will never let the facts get in the way of a good political argument. The reality is this is the government that approved a historic \$40-billion LNG Canada investment by Shell and Asian partners to export LNG to Asian economies to replace coal and to make sure we are contributing in a strong way. We will continue to move forward on ensuring a cleaner energy future for people around the world. Canada and Canadian workers especially in the energy sector deserve to be part of the future we are building, and we are making sure they will.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, actually, the LNG Canada project was approved before the Prime Minister even took office. He showed up for the photo op. The only way it could get built was exempting it from the carbon tax and exempting it from Bill C-69. There were 18 proposed LNG projects on his desk the day he walked in on his first day on the job; zero have been completed. That is because his gatekeeping keeps our resources in the ground and the money in the pockets of foreign dictators.

Why will he not bring it home to Canada for our people?

● (1515)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again we are suddenly back in the Stephen Harper era, where Conservatives continue to think one can just drive a pipeline anywhere one wants, build a plant, move—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am going to interrupt. There is some shouting back and forth, more going back than forth, but I want to remind everyone that when a person asks a question we listen and when a person answers the question we listen as well, whether we like the question or the answer. Unfortunately, that is not up to me to decide. We listen and then we will make some judgments later.

The right hon. Prime Minister has the floor.

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, under Stephen Harper, Conservatives were the most pro oil and gas of any government we had ever had and yet they could not get a damn thing built. They did not understand that working with communities, working together with Canadians and fighting climate change is the only way to get things built, and that is how we are the ones able to move forward with the twinning of the Trans Mountain pipeline they were unable to get done. They failed the energy sector with their ideological approach. We are delivering for Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, is he bragging about the Trans Mountain project? He said it would cost \$7 billion to get it done. It has cost \$30 billion, and it is still not complete. By the way, the money he spent went to Kinder Morgan, a foreign company that took it to build pipelines in Texas. Under the Prime Minister, all our exes are in Texas.

Why will he not bring jobs, resource production and opportunity home to Canada so we can put paycheques back in the pockets of Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we just heard it from the Conservative Party of Canada: We should not have moved forward with the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion. We disagree, and that is why we are actually getting it done.

If the member opposite really cared about creating great jobs for the middle class, he would be understanding that we cannot grow the economy unless we fight climate change at the same time. That is why Volkswagen is coming to invest in Canada. That is why Sayona is building lithium mines in Quebec. That is why Stellantis, Ford and GM, and investors like Michelin, Rio Tinto and Lion Electric continue to invest in our supply chain, in our future and in great jobs for Canadians.

* * *

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

Ms. Lisa Hefpner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives do not believe in a woman's right to choose. Conservative MPs introduced legislation to reopen the abortion debate. They will march with anti—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. Now we will hear what the question is.

The hon. member for Hamilton Mountain.

Ms. Lisa Hefpner: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives do not believe in a woman's right to choose. Conservative MPs introduced legislation to reopen the abortion debate. They will march with anti-choice activists—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am not sure how many times I have to start this question over so that I can hear it, but I am going to ask everyone to listen. We do not have a choice on what the question is or what the answer is. Ours is to listen, everyone in here, and then we can debate it at another time, if we want.

The hon. member for Hamilton Mountain, hopefully for the last time.

Ms. Lisa Hefpner: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives do not believe in a woman's right to choose. Conservative MPs introduced legislation to reopen the abortion debate. They will march with anti-choice activists tomorrow. They are beholden to Campaign Life Coalition and other groups that want to bring Republican-style abortion restrictions to this country, and the Leader of the Opposition uses misogynist hashtags in his YouTube videos.

It is clear Conservatives want to control women's bodies in Canada. What does the Prime Minister believe?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Hamilton Mountain for her continued advocacy on women's rights.

Let me be clear: Abortion is health care in Canada. A woman's right to choose is hers, and hers alone. We will always stand with Canadian women and the vast majority of Canadians on this, which is why it is so disappointing to see yet another thinly veiled attempt by the Conservative Party of Canada to restrict a woman's right to choose.

The Conservatives are busy getting ready to march tomorrow in an anti-choice protest. We will be busy standing up for fundamental rights, including a woman's right to choose.

* * *

● (1520)

DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, thousands of Albertans have been evacuated due to out-of-control wildfires. They do not know when they will go home or what they will go home to. Métis settlements and first nations communities are hit worst of all. The federal government has a responsibility to ensure the safety of indigenous evacuees and provide them with the basics, like water, food and shelter.

What does the Prime Minister have to say to the thousands of Albertans who are, as we speak, without basic necessities right now?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my message to Albertans, indigenous and non-indigenous, is the same as our message to all Canadians who have faced terrible extreme weather events over the past years: We will be there for them.

We will continue to work with the provincial government. I spoke to Premier Smith, just on Monday, to assure her that we are going to be there with CAF supports, with resources, with whatever is needed.

Privilege

We will be there to work with the Red Cross, and I encourage Canadians to continue to donate generously to the wildfire relief through the Red Cross to help families who are displaced.

We will continue to work with indigenous communities to ensure that they continue to lead on the safety of their communities.

We know we will work together and—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Kitchener Centre.

* * *

ELECTORAL REFORM

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians overwhelmingly support creating a citizens' assembly on electoral reform. This past weekend, Liberal Party members strongly voted in support of it too, yet the Prime Minister will not make electoral reform a priority.

If not Canadians, and if not his own party, who else does the PM need to hear from before he is ready to act?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as members of the House know, I am committed to and continue to be hopeful about replacing the first-past-the-post system with a preferential ballot.

I moved forward in 2015 to live up to that promise and to find consensus in the House of Commons. When we change something as fundamental as the way we elect members of the House, it has to be done with consensus. Unfortunately, there was no consensus on moving forward with a ranked ballot; therefore, we chose not to do it.

I continue to be open. If anyone wants to move forward with a preferential ballot, I am happy to talk with them, but we will not impose a change on Canadians.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the finalists for the 2023 Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for political writing: Norma Dunning, Dale Eisler, Josh O'Kane, Andrew Stobo Sniderman, Douglas Sanderson and Chris Turner.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

* * *

HON. MARC LALONDE

The Speaker: Following discussions among representatives of all parties in the House, I understand there is an agreement to observe a moment of silence in honour of our former colleague, the Hon. Marc Lalonde.

[*Translation*]

I would invite hon. members to rise.

[*A moment of silence observed*]

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed from May 9 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: It being 3:24 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 question of privilege in the name of the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

• (1525)

[*Translation*]

Call in the members.

• (1535)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 316*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultarif	Aitchison
Albas	Aldag
Alghabra	Ali
Allison	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bergeron
Berthold	Bérubé
Bezan	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Block
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Bragdon	Brassard
Brière	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Cannings	Caputo
Carrie	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Chahal	Chambers
Champagne	Champoux
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Chong
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cooper	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Dalton	Damoff
Dancho	Davidson
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	d'Entremont
Desbiens	Desilets
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Doherty	Dong
Dowdall	Dreeshen

Routine Proceedings

Drouin	Dubourg	Poilievre	Powlowski
Duguid	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Qualtrough	Rayes
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi	Redekopp	Reid
El-Khoury	Ellis	Rempel Garner	Richards
Epp	Erskine-Smith	Roberts	Robillard
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)	Rogers	Romanado
Fast	Fergus	Rood	Ruff
Ferreri	Fillmore	Sahota	Sajjan
Findlay	Fisher	Saks	Samson
Fonseca	Fortier	Sarai	Savard-Tremblay
Fragiskatos	Fraser	Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Fry	Gaheer	Schiefke	Schmale
Gallant	Garon	Serré	Sgro
Garrison	Gaudreau	Shanahan	Sheehan
Gazan	Généreux	Shields	Shipley
Genius	Gerretsen	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Gill	Gladu	Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Godin	Goodridge	Singh	Small
Gould	Gourde	Sorbara	Soroka
Gray	Green	Sousa	Steinley
Guilbeault	Hajdu	Ste-Marie	Stewart
Hallan	Hanley	St-Onge	Strahl
Hardie	Hepfner	Stubbs	Sudds
Hoback	Holland	Tassi	Taylor Roy
Housefather	Hughes	Thériault	Therrien
Hussen	Hutchings	Thomas	Thompson
Iacono	Idlout	Tochor	Tolmie
Ien	Jaczek	Trudeau	Trudel
Jeneroux	Johns	Turnbull	Uppal
Joly	Jowhari	Valdez	Van Bynen
Julian	Kayabaga	van Koeverden	Van Popta
Kelloway	Kelly	Vandal	Vandenbeld
Khalid	Khera	Vecchio	Vidal
Kitchen	Kmiec	Vien	Vignola
Koutrakis	Kram	Villemure	Virani
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek	Vis	Vuong
Kusie	Kusmierczyk	Wagantall	Warkentin
Kwan	Lake	Waugh	Webber
Lalonde	Lambropoulos	Weiler	Wilkinson
Lametti	Lamoureux	Williams	Williamson
Lantsman	Lapointe	Yip	Zahid
Lattanzio	Lauzon	Zarrillo	Zimmer
Lawrence	LeBlanc	Zuberi — 319	
Lebouthillier	Lehoux		
Lemire	Lewis (Essex)		
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Lightbound		
Lloyd	Lobb		
Long	Longfield		
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)		
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor	Nil	
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire		
Maloney	Martel		
Martinez Ferrada	Masse		
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)		
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Mazier	Bibeau	Duclos
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McDonald (Avalon)	Fortin	Freeland
McGuinty	McKay	Liepert	Perron — 6
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLean		
McLeod	McPherson		
Melillo	Mendès		
Mendicino	Miao		
Michaud	Miller		
Moore	Morantz		
Morrice	Morrison		
Morrissey	Motz		
Murray	Muys		
Nater	Ng		
Noormohamed	Normandin		
O'Connell	Oliphant		
O'Regan	O'Toole		
Patzer	Paul-Hus		
Pauzé	Perkins		
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon		

NAYS

PAIRED

Members

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

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

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 17th report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, entitled “Main Estimates 2023-24: Votes 1, 5, 10, 15, 20 and L30 under Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, Vote 1 under International Development Research Centre, and Vote 1 under International Joint Commission”.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured today to present, in both official languages, the ninth report of the Standing Committee on International Trade, entitled “The United States’ Inflation Reduction Act of 2022: Trade Impacts on Certain Canadian Sectors”.

* * *

● (1540)

*[Translation]***PETITIONS**

ETHIOPIA

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present a petition signed by 511 people, which reads as follows, and I quote:

WHEREAS: The war on the Tigray region of Ethiopia has led to more than 63,000 refugees fleeing to camps in neighboring Sudan, 2.2 million civilians internally displaced, and over 91% of the 6 million people in need of assistance; The forces of Ethiopia and invading forces of Eritrea and Amhara region have jointly waged another round of atrocities, war crimes, and crimes against humanity on civilians in Tigray; The war on Tigray has resulted in a man-made famine. The World Food Program estimates that 5.2 million people, 91% of Tigray’s population, need emergency food assistance. Due to the siege and blockade, the people of Tigray are denied access to humanitarian aid and basic services; Sexual Gender-Based Violence has been systematically used as a weapon of war in Tigray by Eritrean troops, Ethiopian forces, and Amhara regional forces; and Since November 2020, Canada has provided \$54.5 million in humanitarian assistance to Ethiopia for the crisis in Tigray. It is more likely that this assistance will be used by the Government of Ethiopia to purchase military armaments, including drones, instead of addressing the humanitarian needs in Tigray and other parts of Ethiopia. We, the undersigned citizens of Canada, call upon the House of Commons to: Immediately call on the Eritrean government to stop invading the Tigray region of Ethiopia and withdraw its forces from Tigray; Immediately call for unfettered humanitarian access to Tigray. Call for humanitarian discussion under Resolution 2417 (2018); Immediately withhold all non-life-saving funding from Canada to Ethiopia until the cessation of violence is achieved; Provide an update on how funds for humanitarian assistance Canada has been given to Ethiopia in support of the people affected in the Tigray region; and Immediately call to allow the UN-led inquiry commission to enter the Tigray region to conduct its investigation on crimes against humanity, war crimes, and humanitarian and human rights violations committed in Tigray.

The Speaker: I would remind the member and all members that we ask for a concise summary of the petition.

The hon. member for Brampton North.

[English]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of the staff and students of Notre Dame Secondary School, a Catholic school in my riding of Brampton North.

Although the oil and gas sector is only 5% of the economy, it is responsible for 26% of Canada’s emissions. The petitioners call for a hard cap on emissions from the oil and gas sector to address the climate crisis.

They give a five-point plan on how to do so, by restricting pollution, reducing emissions, addressing extraction methods and the burning of fossil fuels, and phasing out fossil fuel subsidies. They lay out a groundwork for a just transition to a net-zero economy by 2050.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise to present a petition expressing concerns of many constituents about the lack of adequate public transportation across Canada. As the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has pointed out, in the transition to zero emissions, public transit helps Canadians meet the Paris targets. It also notes that the lack of public transit is particularly acute between communities.

The petitioners, citizens and residents of Canada, call for the House of Commons to establish a permanent federal funding mechanism for public transit; work together with all levels of government to provide sustainable, predictable and adequate funding; and have accountability mechanisms to ensure that different orders of government work together, collaboratively and effectively.

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is yet another petition, similar to petitions I have submitted before, looking at encouraging airlines and governments, all people, including the Winnipeg international airport, to have a direct flight from the city of Winnipeg to a place such as Amritsar, India, at the very least.

With the growth of our Indo-Canadian community, I believe, as many believe, that the need to have additional international flights going from Canada to Europe is of the utmost importance. Hopefully, we will get a response coming not only from parliamentarians but also from other vested groups such as our airlines.

* * *

● (1545)

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. 1344, 1346, 1348, 1350, 1353 and 1355.

Routine Proceedings

[Text]

Question No. 1344—**Mrs. Tracy Gray:**

With regard to the \$1,000 processing fee charged to employers for a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA): (a) what is the breakdown of activities funded by this fee, broken down by the actual cost and the proportion of the fee; (b) what was the total amount of fees collected or projected to be collected by the government for the (i) 2022-23, (ii) 2023-24, fiscal year; (c) how is the government projected to spend the amounts collected in (b); and (d) is a portion of the fee used for measures other than directly recouping costs associated with the LMIA, and, if so, what is the portion and what is it used for?

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), ESDC activities relating to the temporary foreign worker, TFW, program are funded not through fee revenues, but through voted appropriations, for which the government must seek Parliament's approval annually through an appropriation act.

Labour market impact assessment, LMIA, fee collections constitute non-respondable revenues, which are returned to the government's consolidated revenue fund. The LMIA fee is intended to help recoup costs associated with the administration of the TFW program. This includes activities related to processing of LMIA applications, as well as program compliance-related costs intended to ensure employers are abiding by program rules and temporary foreign workers are protected while in Canada.

There are fee exemptions set out for certain LMIA applications, most notably, those made under the program's primary agriculture stream. Positions in primary agriculture are exempt, given the industry's long-standing domestic labour supply challenges and the potential downstream effects on national food security. As a result, the LMIA fee, which is exempt from the Services Fee Act, helps the TFW program operate on a partial cost-recovery basis.

With regard to part (b), as per ESDC's 2023-24 departmental plan, specifically its consolidated future-oriented statement of operations, unaudited, for the year ending March 31, 2024, the total amount of fees projected to be collected is \$129,288,000 for 2022-23 and \$133,338,000 for 2023-24.

Revenue forecasts may not ultimately align with actuals. Program revenues are dependent on program volumes, i.e., LMIA applications, which are dependent on labour market trends, i.e., employer demand for temporary foreign workers. Historical indicators are leveraged in forecasting program volumes/revenues. However, given the evolving nature of the labour market and the difficulty in forecasting labour market shocks, i.e., COVID-19, actuals may differ from forecasts.

With regard to part (c), LMIA fee collections constitute non-respondable revenues, meaning that the TFW program does not have the authority to spend fee collections. Fee revenues are deposited directly into the government's consolidated revenue fund.

With regard to part (d), the LMIA fee only serves to recoup costs associated with the TFW program, including activities related to processing of LMIA applications and program compliance-related costs, e.g., employer inspections. Costs unrelated to the administration of the TFW program are not recouped via the LMIA fee.

Question No. 1346—**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:**

With regard to Transport Canada (TC), the Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA) and air travel: (a) what are the top 10 risks identified in 2023 as they relate to (i) airline safety, (ii) passenger delays, (iii) the smooth operation of airports; (b) what steps is TC taking to mitigate each risk identified in (a); (c) what is the role of (i) the CTA, (ii) TC, in ensuring that air traffic delays are correctly reported to air traffic control towers; (d) how many and what percentage of total flight delays were reported due to (i) mechanical issues, (ii) air traffic congestion, (iii) weather conditions, (iv) other issues, broken down by year for each of the last five years; (e) what are the specific steps taken by either TC or the CTA to (i) reduce flight delays, (ii) increase flight delay transparency, (iii) invest in improved flight reporting technologies; (f) how many delays were reported in compliance with Annex 15 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation — Aeronautical Information Services in each of the last five years, and, of those delays, how many were due to (i) weather, (ii) shortages of air traffic controllers, (iii) airline maintenance, (iv) supply chain blockages; (g) how does TC ensure the (i) safe, (ii) efficient, (iii) transparent, reporting of flight information between air traffic controllers and Nav Canada; (h) what measures has TC implemented to improve coordination and communication between air traffic controllers and airlines when flight delays are caused by (i) adverse weather conditions, (ii) equipment failures, (iii) labour shortages, (iv) labour disputes; (i) how does TC hold Nav Canada accountable when flight delays, runway safety or shortages impact safety and passenger experience; and (j) what steps has the CTA taken to ensure compliance with the Canadian Aviation Regulations and international aviation regulations in reporting of flight delays caused by (i) runway maintenance, (ii) air traffic congestion, (iii) security incidents at airports?

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Transport Canada undertook to respond to the question in the time frame allotted. The department concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question is not possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

With regard to part (j), the Canadian Transportation Agency has a mandate to keep the national transportation system running efficiently and smoothly for all Canadians. The agency makes air regulations and consults the air industry, the Canadian public and consumer organizations about this work.

The agency's air activities include the following: providing licences and charter permits needed to operate an airline in Canada; making sure airline tariffs are reasonable and follow rules and international agreements; providing consumer protection for air passengers and helping to resolve air travel complaints; removing undue obstacles to the mobility of persons with disabilities when travelling by air; and helping to negotiate and put in place international air transport agreements.

The agency's air mandate does not include reporting on flight delays as they relate to runway maintenance, air traffic congestion or security incidents at airports.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1348—Ms. Lianne Rood:**

With regard to financial incentives provided by the government to Volkswagen to entice the company to open a battery cell plant in St. Thomas, Ontario: what are the details, including the total value, broken down by type of incentive (grants, tax deferrals, loans, etc.)?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the industry pivots towards electric vehicles, anchoring these firms in Canada is critical to the Canadian economy and ensuring a resilient domestic supply chain. This is why the government has committed to making strong investments in this area. As a result, Volkswagen is investing \$7 billion to establish its first overseas electric vehicle battery manufacturing plant in St. Thomas, Ontario. The plant, Volkswagen's largest to date, will create up to 3,000 direct jobs and tens of thousands more in indirect jobs. Once complete in 2027, the plant will produce batteries for up to one million electric vehicles per year, bolstering Canada's domestic battery manufacturing capacity to meet the demand for electric vehicles now and into the future.

Canada is deepening its investments in EV batteries to position itself as a global leader, with Volkswagen as an important player in the production of EV batteries and supporting the development of a sustainable domestic battery manufacturing sector in Canada.

The Government of Canada will contribute \$700 million from the strategic innovation fund to help PowerCo build a net-zero lithium battery assembling plant in St. Thomas, Ontario. The Province of Ontario is likewise supporting the investment to establish this greenfield assembly plant with \$500 million in direct incentives.

In addition, the Government of Canada has committed to providing PowerCo with a production incentive, matching that for which it would be eligible in the U.S. under the Inflation Reduction Act's advanced manufacturing production credit. Consistent with the U.S. incentive, Canada's support will be for those battery cells produced and sold and will phase out by 25 percentage points every year beginning in 2030. After 2032, the credit would be eliminated. The agreement also has the flexibility to be adjusted should the U.S. advanced manufacturing production credit change over time.

Question No. 1350—Mr. Michael D. Chong:

With regard to the allegations related to the member from Don Valley North contained in the Global News reports of February 24, 2023: did anyone from the Office of the Prime Minister request briefings about the allegations, and, if so, for each briefing, (i) who provided it, (ii) who received it, (iii) what was the date on which it occurred?

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on April 14, the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs received a response from the national security and intelligence adviser that details formal briefings to the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister's Office, ministers and cabinet on the subject of foreign interference in elections.

Question No. 1353—Mr. Greg McLean:

With regard to the government's stated goals on electric vehicle chargers in Canada, since November 4, 2015: (a) how much funding has the government invested in installing electric vehicle chargers, broken down by the (i) project, (ii) recipient company or organisation, (iii) year, (iv) location, (v) government entity providing the funding; (b) how many chargers have been installed with these funds, broken down by the (i) project, (ii) recipient company or organisation, (iii) year, (iv) location, (v) federal government entity providing the funding; and (c) of the charg-

ers in (b), where were they manufactured or shipped from, and what is the carbon footprint of each installed charger?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since 2016, to help expand Canada's electric vehicle, EV, charging network to the scale required, the federal government continues to invest in charging infrastructure through NRCan's electric vehicle and alternative fuel infrastructure deployment initiative, EVAFIDI. For details, please see <https://natural-resources.canada.ca/energy-efficiency/transportation-alternative-fuels/electric-and-alternative-fuel-infrastructure/electric-vehicle-alternative-fuels-infrastructure-deployment-initiative/18352>. It provided funding to organizations to help establish a coast-to-coast network of EV fast chargers along core routes and highways through NRCan's zero emission vehicle infrastructure program, ZEVIP. For details, please see <https://natural-resources.canada.ca/energy-efficiency/transportation-alternative-fuels/zero-emission-vehicle-infrastructure-program/21876>. It provides funding to increase the availability of local charging options where Canadians live, work and play, in public places, on street, and in multi-unit residential buildings, workplaces and vehicle fleets. The Canada Infrastructure Bank, CIB, will be investing \$500 million in large-scale charging and refuelling infrastructure that is revenue generating and in the public interest.

The charging investments fit in the greater, comprehensive approach of the Government of Canada to support this ZEV transition. For more on Canada's action plan for clean on-road transportation, visit https://tc.canada.ca/en/road-transportation/publications/canada-s-action-plan-clean-road-transportation#_Toc117001122.

As part of NRCan's efforts to support open data, we have created openly available maps with our latest information on open or nearly open projects, which can be found at <https://gcgeo.gc.ca/viz/index-en.html?keys=draft-706a6d1a-df8e-40e3-8e0c-94211025c528>.

Information pertaining to parts (a) and (b) can be found at this link. The fuel type "L2" refers to slow chargers and "L3" refers to fast chargers. The range of speeds of the latter are indicated as being between 50 and 99 kilowatts, kW. These figures are for projects that are already installed or in the very late stages of project completion. They represent 12,153 stations installed or soon to be installed, totalling over \$183 million invested by the federal programs to date. Program officials have given the initial commitment for more chargers, although details are still being finalized. Including this latter category, the government has committed to 34,666 chargers and funding of over \$277 million.

With regard to part (c), the programs are brand neutral and do not track charging station manufacturers associated with each project. The programs conform with international trade obligations and so do not prejudice against origin of manufacturing. Information on the carbon footprint of charging station manufacturing is not tracked.

Question No. 1355—Mr. Greg McLean:

With regard to the \$1.3 million government investment in Net Zero Atlantic for the Community Geothermal Resource Capacity Assessment and Training Program (GeoCAT): (a) how many geothermal energy infrastructure projects are expected to directly benefit from these funds; (b) what percentage of these funds will be used for engagement and relationship building with Nova Scotia communities to create and deliver the community-tailored geothermal opportunity information modules; (c) what percentage of these funds will be used to deliver a geothermal project development information module to provide the community with a roadmap to potential project development; and (d) what percentage of these funds will be used for other project components?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the GeoCAT program supports the transfer of geothermal project development knowledge to local indigenous groups and community representatives, who in turn will assess community-specific infrastructure and interest for geothermal project development. Given the program provides capacity-building funding, benefits to geothermal energy projects will be indirect.

Based on the program description, 50% of the funding will support awareness of community geothermal opportunities and 50% will support the development and delivery of training modules to acquire skills and tools to lead or advance community development opportunities. No funds will be used for other project components.

* * *

[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 1343, 1345, 1347, 1349, 1351, 1352 and 1354 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1343—Mr. Damien C. Kurek:

With regard to government advertising on television and radio since January 1, 2022, broken down by department or agency: what are the details of all such advertisements, including the (i) type of advertisement (tv, radio, or both), (ii) title and description of the message, (iii) purpose, (iv) amount spent on running the advertisement, (v) start and end dates of when the advertisement ran?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1345—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to the government's use of artificial intelligence (AI): (a) which government departments and agencies have used AI; (b) for each entity in (a), what are the specific uses of the technology; (c) has (i) the Department of National Defence, (ii) Public Safety Canada, (iii) the RCMP, (iv) CSIS, (v) the Communications Security Establishment, (vi) Global Affairs Canada, (vii) the Canadian Armed Forces, ever used AI to gather information on Canadians, and, if so, how many times has AI been used in the last five years and how was it used; (d) for each entity in (c), what specific privacy policies and protocols are employed before using AI; (e) in the last five years, how many incidents of inappropriate use of AI by any gov-

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ernment entity have occurred, including the date of the incident and what happened; (f) is the government aware of any foreign governments or state-owned entities using AI on Canadians in the last five years, and, if so, what are the details of all such incidents, including (i) the date, (ii) the name of the government or entity, (iii) how AI was used; and (g) what specific actions, if any, is the government taking to protect Canadians from the harmful application of AI by (i) government entities, (ii) foreign entities?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1347—Mr. Bob Zimmer:

With regard to the items listed in the Supplementary Estimates (C), 2022-23, under Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs: what is the detailed breakdown of the \$18,954,772 listed under "Funding for the stabilization of internal services", including how the funds were used and the specific details of each project funded with the money, broken down by the amount spent on the project?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1349—Mr. Bob Zimmer:

With regard to the sale of federal properties since December 1, 2021: (a) what are the details of the properties sold, including, for each, the (i) province or territory, (ii) city, (iii) street address, (iv) type of listing (residential, office, etc.), (v) description of property, (vi) sale price, if different than the asking price, (vii) buyer, (viii) future use of the property, if known, (ix) date of sale; (b) for each sale in (a), what were the costs incurred by the government related to the sale, broken down by type of expense; and (c) for each sale in (a), how did the government reinvest the net profits?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1351—Mr. Eric Duncan:

With regard to surplus government buildings being converted to affordable housing: (a) what are the details of all buildings which have been sold by the government since November 4, 2015, including, for each, the (i) location, (ii) address, (iii) description of the building, including the square footage, (iv) buyer, (v) price, (vi) number of affordable housing units expected; (b) what are the details of all government buildings currently deemed to be surplus, including, for each, the (i) location, (ii) address, (iii) description of the building, including the square footage; (c) of the buildings in (b), which ones will be sold or used for the purpose of developing affordable housing; and (d) are there any other government buildings, not listed in (c), which the government is taking steps toward converting to affordable housing, and, if so, what are the details, including, for each, the (i) location, (ii) address, (iii) description of the building, including the square footage?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1352—Mr. Greg McLean:

With regard to the Pembina Institute, from November 4, 2015, to present: (a) how much money has the government allocated to the Pembina Institute and what are the details, including, the (i) department, agency or other government entity, (ii) date of the funding, (iii) amount and deliverables expected; (b) of the allocations in (a), which ones were (i) sole-sourced, (ii) awarded through a competitive bidding process; (c) of the allocations in (b)(ii), what was the (i) duration of the competition, (ii) number of organizations that submitted bids for the required deliverables; and (d) what programs from the Pembina Institute received government funding, broken down by year and deliverables expected?

(Return tabled)

*Government Orders***Question No. 1354—Mr. Greg McLean:**

With regard to the Canada Infrastructure Bank (CIB): (a) what are the details of the process that led to the selection of the former McKinsey & Company partner Ehren Cory as the CEO of the CIB in October 2020; (b) how much money was spent on consulting services since the creation of the CIB, including, for each, the (i) consulting firm, (ii) number of consultants hired from each firm, (iii) fees paid to each consultant, (iv) duration of each consultant's contract, (v) reason each consultant was hired, (vi) proposals worked on by each consultant; (c) how many employees were hired by the CIB, broken down by month since its creation; and (d) how many project proposals were received by the CIB, broken down by year since its creation, including the number of proposals (i) rejected, (ii) approved?

(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.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

AN ACT FOR THE SUBSTANTIVE EQUALITY OF CANADA'S OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

The House resumed from April 26 consideration of Bill C-13, An Act to amend the Official Languages Act, to enact the Use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act and to make related amendments to other Acts, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-13 on the modernization of the Official Languages Act.

As members know, this is a historic moment. It has been a long time since we have reviewed this legislation, 35 years to be exact. As the member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, I want to tell my colleagues that I did all of my schooling in English because there was no French school. We did not have this essential protection at the time. My children, however, were able to do all of their schooling, from kindergarten to grade 12, in French. What a change. That was made possible because of the first Official Languages Act in 1969. Thanks to that, my grandchildren will also be able to complete all of their schooling in French.

I want to tell my colleagues that this was a very long process. First, there was the Official Languages Act in 1969. Section 23 was

added to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982 and changes were made to the act in 1988. Then, as members know, Bill C-32, which sought to strengthen the Official Languages Act, died on the Order Paper. Now, we are back with Bill C-13, which underwent a number of essential changes in committee.

As I see it, the most important thing is that the act will have to be reviewed every 10 years. We will not have to wait 35 years. The procedure has already been established. The Minister of Canadian Heritage, in consultation with the President of the Treasury Board, will have to undertake a review, a comprehensive analysis of the enhancement of the vitality of the communities. They will examine whether we have achieved our objective of protecting and promoting the French language. They will also examine whether sectors that are essential to enhancing the vitality of Quebec's francophones and anglophones, including health, immigration, employment and French-language education from early childhood to the post-secondary level, have been respected. A report will have to be tabled in the House of Commons. In my opinion, this is a well-regimented procedure.

Let us start with the Treasury Board. It is the most important machine in Parliament. Bill C-13 would make the optional powers, duties and responsibilities mandatory, which is essential. The Treasury Board will have some meaningful work to do.

Other improvements were made in committee. They are very important to mention. Every community across the country asked that there be a central agency, a minister responsible, and we can now check that off the list. What is more, the minister cannot withdraw from their responsibilities or delegate them. The Treasury Board and the minister will have to ensure compliance.

As far as justice is concerned, Bill C-13 confirms that justices of the Supreme Court of Canada have to be bilingual. Still today, the Conservatives do not agree with that and do not want that to happen. I do not understand it. In committee, progress was also made on appointing justices to superior courts and appeal courts. It is extremely important. We have to take into account people's needs in terms of access to justice. The Canadian Bar Association and the Fédération des associations de juristes d'expression française de common law have been asking for that for years.

Let us talk about immigration. In my opinion, this is the perfect example. When we started working on Bill C-32, having a policy was important. When we moved on to Bill C-13, ensuring that the policy had some content, some details, was important. Finally, in committee, we determined that not only did we need details, but we also needed to ensure that the demographic weight was restored and increased. It is going to be a game of catch-up and we will have to increase our newcomer target to 8% or 9% and then go back to our target of 4.4% or better.

Let us move on to real estate. I am quite pleased because this was a problem for 20, 25, 30 years across Canada.

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• (1550)

I can say that now, because of the amendments that were made, the government has to consider the needs of the school community, which was not the case before. It is great to have a charter of rights that recognizes the right to education in French, but if land cannot be purchased, how and where are we supposed to build schools? It is not possible. Now, this will be guaranteed. It will no longer be an option, but an obligation, for the government to do something that is essential. It must consult the school boards about their needs.

I can cite examples such as the Jericho lands and Heather Street lands in Vancouver, Royal Roads in Victoria, Lagimodière Boulevard in Winnipeg, or Oxford Street in Halifax.

With respect to the language clause or the positive measures, the Standing Committee on Official Languages has made a lot of progress. It is not perfect, but it made a lot of progress.

When agreements are being negotiated, those involved, such as school boards or the organizations concerned, must be consulted. It is important to ensure that there is accountability, and that when money is earmarked for a certain organization or a certain location, it ends up there. Major progress has been made in that regard.

The Commissioner of Official Languages has been given significantly increased powers. Bill C-13 of course gives him the power to impose penalties and to make orders. This does not mean that violators will have to pay billions of dollars in penalties, but the idea is that anyone who has to pay \$10, \$100, \$1,000 or \$10,000 will be called out. That is very important. We are also giving the commissioner other powers and additional tools to do his job, which is to protect and promote the French language, and that is extremely important.

Now, I must say, there are areas where we did not accomplish as much as we would have liked, and that hurts. On enumeration, we were not able to get it done the way we wanted. Nevertheless, we added that question to the short form census two years ago, which means that everyone had to answer it. We still have that data, which will be good for 10 years. I am confident that if the Liberals are still in power in 10 years, we will be able to achieve and cement this. This is extremely important.

As I mentioned, the language clauses and positive measures are not what I would have liked, but we did make some progress, and I would like to thank the opposition parties for helping us.

I also realize that English-speaking Quebecers have some concerns that deserve mentioning. However, I can assure you that our government is going to defend linguistic duality and the rights of anglophone Quebecers in Quebec.

We will continue to provide funding, protect language and culture, and ensure the court challenges program is kept in place and adequately funded.

I am extremely proud to commend the government and the opposition for doing a great job and for the work done and the progress made on bills C-32 and C-13 at the Standing Committee on Official Languages. It truly is a team effort. I am very proud of the House and, as always, ready to answer questions.

• (1555)

The Deputy Speaker: I always appreciate the energy of my friend from Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook as an Acadian from Nova Scotia.

Questions and comments.

The hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier.

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I agree with you on listening to my colleague, a passionate Acadian, talk to us from his heart and soul today.

Now, I have a question for my colleague the member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook. Today we are speaking at report stage, following the motions that his government moved in the House, instead of moving them in committee.

He appreciated the work that we did as members of the Standing Committee on Official Languages, so why are the Liberals delaying the process to pass Bill C-13 again today?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, I certainly thank my colleague for his question, but also for his leadership within his party on official languages. There is no doubt that he does exceptional work. We thank him and the community across Canada thanks him for his work.

I have to say that it is too bad that he was not in the House at the time. What did the Conservatives do between 2005 and 2015? I will tell the House what they did. For the action plan, there was zero increase for 10 years. Under the Liberals, there was \$1.4 billion. The Conservatives made cuts to the court challenges program that ensures that rights are protected. They made spending cuts to the Translation Bureau and they even cancelled the long-form census. It is incredible.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I am always surprised to see people of Acadian descent join a party like the Liberal Party, which is a monarchist party. I might understand it one day. We know that it was the monarchy that ordered the deportation of Acadians. They are fervent defenders of Canada, even though French is prohibited in almost every Canadian province, except for Quebec.

The member is very pleased with the results of the Official Languages Act, which was passed in 1969. This same law has performed so many miracles that the French-speaking population in Canada continues to steadily decline. The number of people whose mother tongue is French and the number of people who speak French at home is declining. In the member's province, Nova Scotia, about one in two people whose mother tongue is French speak it at home. That means that one in two people have already lost their language and cannot pass it on to the next generation.

I wonder if the member opposite is deluding himself that the Canadian government is not killing French in North America.

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Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased to respond to my colleague.

I must say that I am a bit surprised. I expected a question about immigration, considering that tomorrow is an opposition day and we are going to discuss demographic weight. Bill C-13 settles this issue, and that is very impressive.

I would like to say something very important to my colleague. If the Official Languages Act had not been passed in 1969, very few people in Nova Scotia or outside Quebec would be speaking French now. That fact is indisputable.

Not only that, but we had no French schools before 1969. Today, Nova Scotia has 23 French schools, and the student population has doubled in size since the Conseil scolaire acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse school board was founded in 1996. That is impressive.

The Official Languages Act is doing its job.

• (1600)

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that was a very impassioned response. I am glad to see some excitement in the House today.

I speak no French. I grew up in a remote community in the north, and French was not even offered. I look at the area I represent right now, and we are seeing a lot of people pick up the language. There is a lot of focus on having more French. I am really impressed with the work that is being done in my region.

We are happy to see this legislation, but we acknowledge that it took a long time. In fact, the Liberal government proposed it on the eve of an election call. Could the member explain why the Liberals just continued to wait for so long when this action needed to be taken quickly?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for the excellent work she does on veterans affairs.

I really want to answer this. Looking at B.C., I talked about how in the B.C. schools, they could not get any lands. In the bill, there are guarantees that they would be consulted, which is important.

If the member is asking why I am upset with the delay, I have to be very honest and say that today, where I stand, I am happy with the delay. I explained that Bill C-32 had strengths, but Bill C-13 has more strengths. Now, going to committee with the new amendments, it is even better. In 10 years, we will make it perfect, if it is not perfect today.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak on a subject that is near and dear to my heart, namely, official languages, and the French language in particular.

First of all, I hope everyone can hear my Saguenay accent, because I am very proud of it. There are many types of linguistic variations: morphological, syntactic, diachronic. Speakers choose a certain word and not another, and the reason for their choice is mainly due to their age or geographic location. Therefore, I hope that ev-

eryone understands that, when I speak, my lexicon is tinged, shaped by my regional roots in Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean. I am proud to be someone from the Saguenay who says “là là” every once in a while.

No matter where we come from, language unites, brings us together and creates a feeling of community. Regardless of a person's accent, the expressions they use or the words they choose, French speakers are vectors of a true linguistic treasure. This language that we share and love so much is a legacy that has been bequeathed to us and of which we can be very proud.

As members can see, I care deeply about my language. I learned enough English to have a foundation, but there is nothing like proudly carrying the voice of my constituents in Ottawa in French. French has always been a big part of my identity.

I want to talk a little bit about linguistic identity, because that concept really resonates with me. I have never been embarrassed to identify myself as a francophone anywhere in the country or in the world. If someone were to ask me to describe myself in a few words, one of the adjectives I would use would obviously be “francophone”. Being francophone is part of my identity. It guides me and is part of who I am. Language allows us to express our thoughts and feelings, to communicate with those we love, to exchange opinions, to open up to the world. Language is one of the tools of our trade as politicians. We must use our language skills to debate, to denounce the things we disagree with and to support what we think is right.

Language is more than important; it is essential, hence the importance of promoting the richness of our two official languages across the country. That is why I am very pleased to rise in the House and begin the discussion on Bill C-13 to amend the Official Languages Act. Specifically, this conversation is relevant and necessary, because the Liberals have proposed a number of amendments. I was actually quite surprised when I saw the list of Liberal amendments, because I thought the Minister of Official Languages was insisting that the bill be passed as quickly as possible, because it was supposedly ready to be voted on.

I even remember that just a few months ago, the minister wanted to remove witnesses from the list of the Standing Committee on Official Languages when it was studying the bill. She did not think it was a good idea to hear from experts on such an important issue. We are talking about linguistics professors from several universities, stakeholders and people on the ground. She wanted to move a motion that was nothing more than a gag order.

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As a result of the pressure applied by my colleague and friend, the member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, whom I would like to thank once more, we fortunately obtained more time for witnesses at the Standing Committee on Official Languages to continue studying the bill. The minister took a strictly political approach and wanted to end debate. As usual, the Liberals make it a priority to advance their political agenda and, this time, it was at the expense of bilingualism and the protection of French in Canada. The minister mentioned several times that she wanted to speed up debate on Bill C-13 and pass it as quickly as possible.

• (1605)

It seems to me that anyone who wants to pass a bill quickly does not move 10 motions. What is more, why move so many motions in amendment if the bill is considered ready to be passed?

The Minister of Official Languages is being very contradictory on this file, but contradiction is not exactly out of character for the Liberals. The good news is that the Conservatives are here to fix the Liberals' broken promises.

As far as Bill C-13 is concerned, I hope that the minister does not really believe that her bill will slow the decline of French. They keep making things up as they go along. It makes us wonder if the minister truly understands the issue of Canada's official languages. If she went out there to talk to the communities involved, the people who are living in linguistic insecurity daily, she would see that she is wrong.

Linguistic insecurity can be described as feeling uneasy, uncomfortable, even anxious about using one's mother tongue in an environment where they are not the majority. Obviously, that concept has become a hot topic for official language minority communities and Bill C-13 is not exactly going to make them feel less linguistic insecurity. The content of this bill is not a big step forward for francophones outside Quebec or those in Quebec either.

Most of the amendments proposed by stakeholders, including the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada and the Commissioner of Official Languages, were not even heard by the Liberals. Ignoring the observations made by the people on the ground who are directly affected by Bill C-13 shows a complete lack of respect.

However, the Liberal-NDP coalition is not listening to Canadians. Once again, it only wants to advance its own political agenda. It wants to check Bill C-13 off the list and move on to the next item.

Let me assure all the stakeholders we met with that the Conservative Party is here. We listened to them, and we have worked hard to incorporate their requests and their demands into this bill.

I would like to remind the House of a few Conservative amendments that were unfortunately rejected. First of all, we wanted to expand the powers of the Commissioner of Official Languages. It is vital to enhance the commissioner's ability to perform the duties of that position. Right now, the commissioner's powers are too narrow. In practical terms, the commissioner has the power to make orders concerning parts IV, V and VI of the Official Languages Act. The problem is that the very core of the act is in part VII. Part VII is the

one that talks about the equality of status of French and English and mechanisms for achieving it.

The commissioner must have the power to make orders that will ensure that federal institutions follow through on implementing positive measures, and that these measures do not have a harmful impact on official language minority communities. Bill C-13 contains nothing but commitments under part VII of the act, without any obligation to achieve results. A lack of results is a tendency we see fairly often among the Liberals. For that reason, we wanted a central agency and expanded powers for the commissioner, to ensure that there is a way to meet the equality of status objective, and because we can by no means rely on the Liberals.

Then, we wanted to add obligations for federal institutions to take the necessary measures to protect and promote both official languages. The Conservatives were asking for regular, proactive reviews of the act in order to ensure that any necessary adjustments are made in keeping with the linguistic situation at any given time.

In short, I am disappointed, not only as a Conservative MP, because my party's amendments were not incorporated into the bill, but also as a francophone. I feel that the government is abandoning Quebeckers, official language speakers in minority settings and the French language altogether.

A Conservative government will ensure that we put a stop to the decline of the French language and that it is promoted across Canada. Bring back common sense.

• (1610)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a very simple question for my colleague. Will the Conservative Party support the bill, yes or no?

Mr. Richard Martel: Mr. Speaker, as my colleague well knows, we are currently at report stage. It is not yet time to vote. The next step will be to debate the amendments and then, further down the road, we will vote.

I remember noticing when I was in committee that there were a lot of contradictions among the Liberal caucus members who were there. It seemed like the West Island contingent had one version and everyone else had another.

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think that everyone in the House agrees that French is in decline in Quebec and across Canada. That is the impression I get. Perhaps the Liberals still have their doubts, but that is the way it goes.

How does my colleague explain the fact that the Liberal government is promoting English in Quebec by allocating \$137 million for services for anglophone communities? If his party were in power, would he be providing those same services?

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Mr. Richard Martel: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague. That is a good question. First of all, the Liberals are out in left field because English is not in decline. I completely agree with my colleague.

We are missing three things that the Liberals failed to pay attention to. We need a central agency. We need to give the commissioner more powers, particularly for part VII, and we need to give the commissioner the power to issue orders.

I do hope that, at some point, the members of the Liberal caucus will be able to agree on official languages.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am just trying to figure out the timeline. I know that 1988 was the last time the Official Languages Act was revised and, really, the review is long overdue.

I wonder if the member could explain why the modernization did not happen when the Conservatives were in power. Since 1988, it just seems long overdue, and I wonder why they did not see it as a priority to take leadership on.

• (1615)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Martel: Mr. Speaker, I find it rather odd that the Liberals are always looking back at the past.

We had an opportunity here. The Liberals had the opportunity to move this bill forward, but they did everything they could to delay it.

The bill was not ready, but they were saying that it was ready to be introduced and voted on. Now we find out that there are 10 motions that we need to debate. What is more, the Liberals rejected all of the amendments that we proposed. I think that they need to ask themselves a few hard questions.

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask my friend a question. There was a consensus within the Canadian francophonie about setting up a central agency in charge of overseeing enforcement of the act within Treasury Board. Everyone was in agreement. Unfortunately, the Liberals rejected this option in multiple ways.

Still, it would have been the best approach. Having two authorities in charge of oversight does not work. The past 50 years are proof.

The Conservatives are not alone in asking for this. The entire Canadian francophonie was asking for it too. I would like my colleague to tell me why he thinks the Liberals consistently rejected this option.

Mr. Richard Martel: Mr. Speaker, my colleague wants to know why the Liberals rejected this option, which was a very good option.

They rejected an option that would have significantly improved things because they were not interested. We never know what truly goes on in their heads. We never got the sense that they wanted to move this bill forward.

[*English*]

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a member of Parliament who represents a great many anglophones, a minority community with unique needs in the Quebec context, I have studied Bill C-13 with a critical eye.

First, I would like to say that my community is not impressed by the Quebec government's pre-emptive, and one could say almost perfunctory, use of the notwithstanding clause to escape judicial and political scrutiny of its recent language legislation, Bill 96, and its law on religious symbols, Bill 21.

Quebec anglophones have a unique political perspective because they are a minority within a minority. This makes the community particularly understanding of the importance of minority rights, including francophone minority rights. This perspective leads to an inherent sense of fairness and moderation among Quebec anglophones that makes the community wary of government overreach that can harm not just minority-language rights, but minority rights generally.

My colleague from Mount Royal has put it well. Section 1 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms allows for an override of rights where reasonable in a democratic society. Recourse to the clause when section 1 is otherwise available but deemed insufficient by the legislator is by definition a tacit admission that rights are being unreasonably suppressed.

The timing of Bill C-13 unfortunately intersects with the Legault government's heavy-handed approach to a legitimate objective, which is the strengthening of the French language against unrelenting pressures in the proverbial sea of English, pressures heightened by the new Internet-based communications technologies, a challenge our government is addressing through Bill C-11 and Bill C-18.

I believe Bill C-13 and Bill 96 have been conflated and a narrative has taken root that obscures key facts about this legislation and minority-language guarantees in Canada. Anglophones in Quebec have legitimate grievances with aspects of Bill 96, but Bill C-13 is not Bill 96.

As former Supreme Court Justice Michel Bastarache said, the objective in Bill C-13 is to give special attention to the French-speaking minority outside Quebec and it is not inconsistent with the interests of the anglophone community in Quebec. Let me quote the former Supreme Court justice:

I don't really know what it is in the bill [Bill C-13] that worries them. I don't think that promoting French takes anything away from anglophones.... One can help a community in trouble [that is, francophones outside Quebec] without harming another.... I don't think the anglophone issue in Quebec has anything to do with the federal government, but rather the Quebec government.

That said, in my view, we could have done without the preamble in Bill C-13, with its reference to the Charter of the French Language, and the confusion and controversy this has sown. In fact, there was an attempt to remove the reference, but that attempt was blocked by the opposition parties in committee. One would not expect co-operation from the Conservatives or the Bloc, but the lack of support from the NDP was disappointing.

Bill C-13's preamble refers to the fact of the existence of the Charter of the French Language, just as it also makes reference to iron-clad constitutional guarantees for minority-language communities across Canada, including the anglophone community in Quebec.

For example, the preamble states:

the Government of Canada is committed to enhancing the vitality and supporting the development of English and French linguistic minority communities—taking into account their uniqueness, diversity and historical and cultural contributions to Canadian society—as an integral part of the two official language communities of Canada, and to fostering full recognition and use of English and French in Canadian society;

Preambles, however, are not the substance of a law. They are not normative, nor determinative. In fact, they have not always been included in Canadian legislation. According to an article by Kent Roach in the *McGill Law Journal*, between 1985 and 1990, only nine statutes had long and substantive preambles. Since then, there has been an increasing trend to incorporate preambles into legislation. As Mr. Roach puts it, “Once departments and ministries saw their colleagues using preambles, this created a demand for more preambles.”

The same article outlined different types and uses of preambles. In some cases, preambles are meant as a recognition of “the complexity...of modern governance” and as “an appeal...to embrace tolerance and diversity as part of what it means to be Canadian.” Roach gives the example of the preamble of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, which states that “the Government of Canada recognizes the diversity of Canadians as regards race, national or ethnic origin, colour and religion as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society”.

He continues by saying, “The symbolic nature of preambles means that they are often concerned with the politics of recognition” and they “frequently recognize goals that are in some tension with each other.”

• (1620)

He then adds, “By definition, preambles will be better in securing expressive as opposed to instrumental purposes because they do not impose rights and duties.” Here is a final quote: “courts have frequently been reluctant to give great weight to preambles.”

This all sounds a lot like Bill C-13's preamble. I will quote from the preamble: “the Government of Canada recognizes the diversity of the provincial and territorial language regimes that contribute to the advancement of the equality of status and use of English and French in Canadian society”.

In response to those who argue that preambles are interpretive, I would say that this is typically the case only when the body of law in question is not clear, which is not the case with Bill C-13. I will quote British case law in *Attorney-General v. Hanover*: “It is only when it conveys a clear and definite meaning in comparison with relatively obscure or indefinite enacting words that the preamble may legitimately prevail.”

I will quote Ruth Sullivan, from her book *The Construction of Statutes*, in chapter 14 on page 445: “Preambles must be measured against other indicators of legislative purpose or meaning, which

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may point in the same or a different direction. If there is a contradiction between the preamble and a substantive provision, the latter normally prevails.”

Finally, I will quote former Supreme Court Justice La Forest: “it would seem odd if general words in a preamble were to be given more weight than the specific provisions that deal with the matter.”

Bill C-13, in its body, is specific in its language, including with respect to the need to protect the interests of Quebec's anglophone minority. This would avoid any confusion that would otherwise require the courts to rely on the bill's preamble for interpretation.

For example, Bill C-13 would add, in black and white, the following to section 3 of the Official Languages Act: “For the purposes of this Act...language rights are to be given a large, liberal and purposive interpretation”. The body of the text also reiterates phrasing from the preamble on the federal government's commitment to enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and supporting and assisting their development.

This brings me to the fear that Bill C-13's preamble endorses the pre-emptive use of the Constitution's notwithstanding clause.

Some contend that the reference to the Charter of the French Language in the preamble of Bill C-13 endorses the Quebec government's pre-emptive use of the clause, but the federal government has been clear that it does not approve of the pre-emptive use of the clause, whether against organized labour in Ontario or in both Bill 96 and Bill 21. The Attorney General has said clearly that the federal government will argue the point in court, specifically when Bill 21 reaches the Supreme Court.

Parliament also made its view known when it recently voted against the Bloc motion seeking to affirm the legitimacy of the pre-emptive use of the clause. I note that the Conservatives voted with the Bloc to support the motion affirming pre-emptive use. However, both together failed to carry the day.

These official parliamentary and governmental expressions of opposition to the pre-emptive use of the notwithstanding clause matter. As the Supreme Court said in 2023 in the case of *Murray-Hall v. Quebec*, “To analyze the purpose of a law, courts rely [also] on...extrinsic evidence, such as parliamentary debates and minutes of parliamentary committees”. This would include, in my view, statements by the government and votes in Parliament.

As such, there should be no confusion in a future court's mind that the federal government has no intention of legitimizing Quebec's pre-emptive use of the clause by referencing the Charter of the French Language in Bill C-13.

Finally, something that has been lost in this debate is that the notwithstanding clause cannot override minority-language education rights, nor the right to speak English in Quebec in the courts or in the National Assembly.

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Some suggest that Bill C-13 would allow the Quebec government to ignore obligations to the anglophone community under federally funded programs delivered through negotiated agreements with the province, but those agreements are governed by section 20 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which refers to the right of the public to communicate with and receive services from federal institutions in English and French, and by part IV of the Official Languages Act, which is meant to implement section 20.

• (1625)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Lac-Saint-Louis and I do not necessarily have the same views on this.

I would like to remind him that today, we are not debating the bill at third reading. We are debating the bill at report stage. The Liberals have moved 10 motions. I repeat that these motions should have been moved in committee when we were working on the amendments.

There has been some confusion, and the Liberals presented many duplicate amendments. These amendments were identical and when the liberals presented them in committee, they had to rescind them. There seems to be a breakdown in communication in that party.

I would like to thank my colleague for recognizing the work that the official opposition accomplished in collaboration with the Bloc Québécois with respect to what was done in Quebec to recognize that in Quebec, the common language is French. It is a rather unique situation in North America. We need to recognize that in Quebec, the language that is vulnerable is French. I would like to know whether my colleague thinks that English is in danger in the Province of Quebec. That is a big question mark for me.

I have another example that illustrates the prevailing confusion. My colleague just spoke about the preamble. He is questioning whether it is valid and wondering if it will be recognized by the courts. This demonstrates the lack of clarity in the Liberal government's work on the official languages bill. It is chaotic and messy. It is difficult to make heads or tails of it.

I would like my colleague to comment on that. I will listen carefully.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Mr. Speaker, I talked about the preamble to reassure my community that the government will not have the power to take away the rights of the anglophone community.

With respect to the anglophone community, the English language is obviously not under threat in North America. Nevertheless, a community can face challenges without its language being under threat. The anglophone community has many cultural institutions. It has its own arts scene and culture. For a community to feel at home, for a community to flourish, it must have access to these types of cultural institutions, for example, not to mention its educational institutions.

The action plan for official languages will help the community maintain institutions that it considers to be important. I believe that the member opposite must recognize this.

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the more I hear the Liberals talk, the more discouraged I become.

They always confuse words and concepts, but these things matter. The member from Nova Scotia was speaking earlier about the anglophone minority in Quebec. In the same sentence, he was talking about the anglophone minority in Quebec and the court challenges program. Even the UN has said that there is no anglophone minority in Quebec. There is an anglophone community, which is part of the Canadian and North American majority. That is a fact.

Pierre Elliott Trudeau's fantasy was to establish bilingualism throughout Canada. I have here a table from Statistics Canada that contains data on bilingualism in Canada from 1971 to 2021. In 1971, Canada's bilingualism rate was barely 6%, and today it is 9%. The bilingualism rate in Quebec in 1971 was 26%, while in 2021 it was nearly 50%. After that, people want to tell me that the anglophone community deserves those levels of investment and that it feels threatened, even though it has universities and hospitals.

I challenge anyone to show me a francophone community that has as many services in the rest of Canada.

• (1630)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Mr. Speaker, the member brought up hospitals. I can say that I fully supported the efforts of Gisèle Lalonde, who recently passed away. She was the leading figure in the fight to maintain all services at Montfort Hospital, and she was able to use the court challenges program to lead that fight.

I want francophones outside Quebec to have their institutions. It is thanks to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms that they can have their schools. It is thanks to my colleague, the member from Nova Scotia, that the census will now include a question on rights holders. Obviously, this includes francophone rights holders outside Quebec.

The Deputy Speaker: I would like to remind members that interventions during questions and comments should be a little shorter so that everyone can participate. That goes for both questions and answers.

Order. It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, Carbon Pricing; the hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue, Sport; the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Public Services and Procurement.

[*English*]

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, French and English are foundational to our nation. The bilingual nature of our country is in our DNA, and we do not want to lose it. Where I am from in British Columbia, as well as throughout this country, there has been a decline in French spoken at home. The French language and French Canadian culture are part of who we are, our tradition and our heritage.

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I live in Maple Ridge. Right across from where I live is Fort Langley, which is where the first capital of British Columbia was situated. The French Canadian *coureurs de bois*, or *voyageurs*, were very much a part of that. Maillardville in Coquitlam is the hub of francophone culture in the Vancouver area. Every year, thousands come to the annual Festival du Bois, which highlights French Canadian music, dance, art and traditions.

I am glad there are hundreds of thousands of students, past and current, who have gone through French immersion programs in British Columbia. It speaks volumes about the interest in the language among the non-francophone population.

Francophone minorities in my province of British Columbia, as well as across Canada, have been calling for the modernization of the law on official languages for many years.

My mother put a lot of effort into trying to encourage me, or force me, to learn French. She put me with French families and gave me lists of verbs to learn, but I did not really apply myself very well. It was after I graduated from high school and started travelling that I realized there was real value in learning other languages and communication. I went on to take courses in university to study it. I am very appreciative of the effort my mother made. It has enriched my life.

• (1635)

I believe there is great merit in strengthening the bilingual nature of our country.

[*Translation*]

I am pleased to have this opportunity today to speak to Bill C-13, which modernizes the Official Languages Act. I have had the pleasure of serving on the Standing Committee on Official Languages for two or three years now, with a few interruptions. During that time, as a committee, we had the opportunity to hear from many individuals and organization representatives who shared their expertise and opinions on official languages in minority communities across Canada.

One thing is clear and unanimous. We need to modernize the Official Languages Act, particularly to address the decline of French in the areas of the country where it is a minority language.

I would like to talk a little bit about my francophone roots, my family lineage. What happened to my family happened to hundreds of thousands of other French Canadian families in western Canada who were originally from Quebec. My grandfather was Léopold Beaudoin. He married my grandmother, Alice, in the 1920s. At that time Quebec families had a lot of children. My grandparents had 18.

Like perhaps most people, my grandfather was a farmer. During this time, the population in Quebec was growing. There was less and less land to support the big families and provide enough food. They decided to move to Opasatika, near Kapuskasing, in Ontario.

As we all know, there is a large francophone community in northern Ontario. My mother was born there. However, after 10 years, they decided to start over in the Rivière-la-Paix region in northern Alberta. Many small francophone communities were established in the region, such as Falher, Girouxville, Saint-Paul,

Bonnyville and Morinville, and, beforehand, there were already towns such as Saint-Albert and Leduc.

• (1640)

My father is Métis. He was born in Jossard. He later joined the Canadian Armed Forces. Whenever my family visited these communities, everyone spoke French. What is the current situation?

French is still spoken, but the demographic weight of francophones is decreasing. Farms are much bigger because of technological advances, and families have far fewer children. Furthermore, many of these children move to Edmonton, Calgary or other cities when they grow up. The situation is similar in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and other provinces.

Francophones are proud of their heritage, their culture, their language. We want it to be preserved, but not as an exhibit in a museum. The French language should be vibrant and alive. It is a major challenge. We are in a sea of anglophones. Almost all business transactions and communications are in English. It is the same situation all immigrants end up in when they want to retain their heritage, their culture and their language but still speak the language of the majority, either English or French in Quebec. The difference is that French and English are the official languages of our country.

It is part of our heritage, part of our history as a country. Speaking of our heritage, I am a little disappointed in the Liberal government. I do not think they show enough appreciation for our heritage. For instance, on the new passport that the Liberals are introducing, they have erased the image of the Vimy memorial, where thousands of Canadians were killed during the First World War. It was a foundational battle for Canada as a nation. The Liberals have also erased the image of Terry Fox, a Métis like me and a world-famous Canadian hero. In my view, in their pursuit of wokeness, they are rejecting Canada's traditions and history.

I am not entirely convinced that Liberals are committed to protecting and promoting the French language. I say this with respect, and I am certainly not accusing all Liberals. The Liberal government has been talking about modernizing the Official Languages Act to better promote bilingualism in Canada for eight years now. The Liberals promised this when they first came to power, and it was still part of their election platform in 2019 and again in 2021.

We were just about to begin the debate on Bill C-32 in 2021, but what happened? The Liberals decided to call an unnecessary election during the pandemic, and that killed the bill. We had to start over. What is happening now? The Liberal government just added a dozen amendments to its bill. Why did it not do this during the committee study? It will only slow down the process. That is also what the Liberals did in committee, with 50 amendments.

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These motions at report stage are not substantive amendments and could easily have been moved in committee. However, the Liberals once again decided to waste time. I wonder if they really want to pass this bill. We have a minority government, and the Prime Minister could easily call an election, which would once again kill this bill. I hope we will quickly move to third reading.

Mr. Marc Serré (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really want to thank my colleague from British Columbia for his intervention today, for his work at the Standing Committee on Official Languages, and for his French.

He talked about his northern Ontario heritage and how his ancestors had 18 children. We could be related. The Serré family had 16 children. On my grandmother's side, in the Éthier and Racine family, there were 15 children. There were some in Kapuskasing as well. We could look at our family trees and see if there are any common branches.

I would like to add a comment. I met with representatives of the Fédération des parents francophones de Colombie-Britannique and, obviously, with people from the FCFA, who represent francophones from across the country. I would like my colleague to say a few words about the measures in Bill C-13 that are going to help his community in British Columbia.

In looking at the action plan for official languages, in which we invested \$4.1 billion, as well as Bill C-13, does my colleague see anything specifically that will help his community in British Columbia?

Mr. Marc Dalton: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member who has the same first name as me. He stole it, I think. I am not certain. It is spelled with a “c”, is it not?

In British Columbia, during the pandemic, the federal government was nowhere to be found. Francophone immigrants coming from all over had to turn to francophone and provincial organizations. The federal government was missing in action. Francophones were not happy about that.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I was happy to hear my colleague mention that he is aware that French is in decline in Canada. I think it is important to be clear-eyed and face the facts.

I would like to hear more from him about the initiative that the Liberals launched not long after Bill C-13 was brought up for debate in the House, after the committee study. I gather that there is a segment of the English-speaking community in Montreal, particularly the West Island MPs, who were not happy to see that French was going to gain some more rights in Quebec. In return, they decided to send a lot of money to the English-speaking community to both reassure and silence them, saying that there was no need to worry, because they would continue to anglicize Quebec through their funding.

I would like to know if the Conservatives are comfortable with all this funding, which is estimated to be approximately \$800 million over the next few years.

• (1645)

Mr. Marc Dalton: Mr. Speaker, when my father was in the military, I lived in Chibougamau for a few years, as well as Valcartier. I went to an English school, and I appreciated the fact that I could receive my education in English. It is important, and it is an historic part of the charter, in the Constitution, for people whose first language is English. It is their right.

We cannot take that away from people, from our Constitution and from Quebec.

[English]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge for raising the Festival du Bois. What an important and wonderful festival it is, and it happens in Coquitlam every year. I just want to give a shout-out to Joanne Dumas, who heads up Société francophone de Maillardville and has been bringing the most wonderful arts, culture and French heritage to our community every single year. I thank Madame Dumas so much for that.

I wanted to ask about the Official Languages Act, which has not seen a revision in over 30 years. Actually, the last time it was looked at was 1988. This is long overdue. Why did the Conservatives not take action to modernize this act when they were in power for 10 years?

Mr. Marc Dalton: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the member and I will see each other at the next Festival du Bois. I have been there a number of times with students, and it is a great time.

With respect to the modernization, when in government and now as the Conservative Party, the Conservatives are committed to bilingualism, to the rights of all Canadians and to strengthening bilingualism in Canada.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by taking a few seconds to acknowledge the courage and resilience of the people of Baie-Saint-Paul and Saint-Urbain, which have been hit by violent flooding. The beautiful Gouffre River overflowed its banks, washing away many houses, trailers and cottages and destroying roads in our community.

It has been a very difficult week in Charlevoix. I spent all last week there with the people, touring the area in my rubber boots. I saw the damage and the devastation, but I also saw the solidarity, the comradeship, the vitality and the generosity of the people of Charlevoix and the surrounding areas.

Since we are talking about the French language, I would like to quote Charles Aznavour, who sang, “Misfortune brings out the best in people”. I cling to that. I commend the mayors, municipal teams, firefighters, police officers, the Red Cross and the many volunteers, community organizations and donors. I admire them. They are dear to me and are always in my thoughts.

Speaking of Charles Aznavour, poetry, songs and literature, I have listened to all the speeches, the rhetoric, the multiple definitions, the amendments and the debates surrounding Bill C-13 on official languages.

The cultural aspect of our language, of our mother tongue, was all but forgotten. French is not a language. French is much more than that. French is a door that opens up to what defines us and brings us together. It is not a tool for talking about the weather, talking about a dream or arguing. It is much more than that. French defines us. French is part of our DNA, despite the different times in our history when attempts were made to burn it down along with our homes, to extinguish it by banning it from being spoken at school, a ban imposed by the conqueror. Despite all the efforts to crush it, French persists because it lies at the foundation of culture, and language and culture go hand in hand.

No federal legislation is going to determine whether Quebec, France or any other country or people in the world speaks French. No Canadian federal legislation is going to determine the survival of this language. Our love for our language will keep it alive. That is what will determine whether we survive and whether our language survives. Love for one's language is a vehicle for culture, which intrinsically becomes the primary power for protecting the French language.

I suggest that those listening to us start thinking very carefully. Putting the screws to the lovers of a language only strengthens their motivation. I would advise my colleagues not to try to stamp out the French language. Indeed, the more effort they put into doing just that, the more it will get back up again, the taller it will stand and the more we will love it.

This is what is happening right now in Quebec. I am happy because I know that when Quebecers are provoked, they do not take it sitting down.

• (1650)

I would like to acknowledge a great poet, Yves Duteil. He wrote a magnificent song dedicated to his friend, Félix Leclerc.

It is a beautiful language with splendid words
Whose history can be traced in its variations
Where we feel the music and smell the herbs
Goat's cheese and wheat bread
...
In this beautiful language tinted by the colours of Provence
Where the flavours can be tasted in the words
Where the party starts when people talk
And we drink up the words like they are water
...
It's a beautiful language on the other side of the world
A bubble of France in the north of a continent
Held in a vice but still so fruitful
Locked in the ice at the top of a volcano
It built bridges across the Atlantic
It left its home for another land
And like a swallow transported by the spring
It returns to sing of its sorrows and hopes
It tells us that in that far-off country of snow
It faced the winds blowing from all directions
To impose its words even in the schools
And that our own language is still spoken there
It is a beautiful language to those who know how to defend it
It offers treasures of untold richness

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The words we lacked to be able to understand one another
And the strength required to live in harmony
And from Île d'Orléans to Contrescarpe
Listening to the people of this country sing
It sounds like the wind moving over a harp
And composing a whole symphony

I love French. I love the French language, and Bill C-13 will not snuff it out.

• (1655)

Mr. Marc Serré (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really enjoyed the speech by my colleague, who spoke about how the French language will never be extinguished and about our culture and our identity. I can really relate to what she said about francophones in northern Ontario in relation to identity.

My father was here in the House in 1969, and he voted for the original Official Languages Act. I have always said that I am an MP today because of the work my father did on official languages. My father was asked in 1970 and 1971 to visit Quebec CEGEPs because he spoke French very well. It was a very important experience for him.

We are talking about Bill C-13 and co-operating with the province of Quebec and the Bloc Québécois. There has been some progress. Things are not perfect, but we are getting there.

Can my colleague comment on why the leader of the Conservative Party has not come out in favour of the bill?

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Mr. Speaker, I have no idea what the Conservative leader thinks and I must admit that that is the least of my worries.

I would venture to say that the Bloc Québécois has always supported francophones outside Quebec. That is why we will support this bill. We are very reluctant to support it, but we are supporting it anyway, because we are very concerned about the fate of French outside Quebec and its chances of survival.

However, I remain extremely concerned that money in Quebec has been used to promote and support English when French is the language that is in danger, both in Quebec and throughout Canada, not English. That is a glaring issue in this bill. It is very worrisome for the future. However, at the same time, we see that people in Quebec are rising up. That is poetic justice.

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend my colleague from Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix. I want to publicly announce that I am originally from her riding. I am very proud to have roots in Charlevoix.

Like her, I want to pay tribute to the people of Baie-Saint-Paul and Saint-Urbain. I am thinking especially of the two volunteer firefighters who lost their lives in the floods. My thoughts are with their families.

I thank my colleague for that flight of oratory, for the poetry. Let us thank Mr. Duteil for his work, which my colleague did such a fine job of reading.

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To begin, my colleague mentioned that it is up to Quebec to decide. I would simply like to remind her that this is a federal Parliament. The Conservative Party of Canada's mandate is to protect both official languages in Quebec—and we have worked closely with the Bloc Québécois on that—as well as in the rest of Canada, from coast to coast to coast. It is important to mention that.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on the tactics the Liberals are using to delay the passage of Bill C-13. It is important to understand that we are at report stage today. We are not at third reading. The Liberals are delaying the process. I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Mr. Speaker, just as I am not privy to what the Conservative leader is thinking, I am not privy to what the leader of the government is thinking, either. Honestly, I have no explanation, but I hope that there will be enough understanding between them to bring around some of the MPs who seem reluctant to support the initiatives the government has undertaken.

[English]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the speech by the member, who talked about the beauty of the language and the expressive way in which the language is used in the arts.

Does the hon. member have any suggestions on how solidarity between francophones across Canada and francophones in Quebec can be strengthened?

• (1700)

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Mr. Speaker, I think that Quebec has always been open and friendly. It has always made an effort to reach out. Furthermore, that is what the leader of the Bloc Québécois often does. He has met with a great many francophones outside Quebec. This is constantly on our minds. I have no concern about Quebec being in harmony with the rest of francophone Canada.

The issue is that we cannot just protect French outside Quebec. We also need to protect French in Quebec. That is what is missing from Bill C-13, which is absolutely worrisome and disappointing.

We will see what Quebec does.

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on Motion No. 1. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 2, 3, 5 and 8 to 10.

[English]

Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of motion to House]

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.

The hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on motion No. 1 stands deferred.

[English]

The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 2, 3, 5 and 8 to 10.

The next question is on Motion No. 4. A vote on this motion also applies to Motion No. 6.

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.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, we request a recorded vote, please.

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motion No. 6.

[Translation]

The question is on Motion No. 7. A vote on this motion also applies to Motion No. 15.

The Deputy Speaker: 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.

The hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix.

• (1705)

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred. The recorded division will also apply to Motion No. 15.

[English]

Normally at this time, the House would proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions at the report stage of the bill.

[Translation]

However, pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, 2022, the recorded divisions stand deferred until Thursday, May 11, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I suspect if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent at this time to see the clock at 5:30 p.m. so that we could begin the Private Members' Business hour.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC) moved:

That:

(a) the House recognize that,

(i) Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which Canada signed in 2007 and ratified in 2010, states that signatories “shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning directed to enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society”,

(ii) according to the Global Education Monitoring Report, in low- and middle-income countries, approximately 50% of children with disabilities are estimated to be out of school,

(iii) a 2021 UNICEF report found that, compared to children without disabilities, children with disabilities were 49% more likely to have never attended school; and

(b) in the opinion of the House, where the federal government spends money on education, domestically or internationally, clear consideration must be given to the maximum inclusion of people with disabilities, including people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is an absolute pleasure to be here.

This is usually a place where we have very passionate debates about things that there are wide-ranging opinions on, and sometimes those debates can be hotter than at other times. I think that this time of year traditionally is a time when the temperature outside is hotter and maybe things in here get a little bit hotter as we are moving towards summer. However, my hope is that today we can have a conversation that is every bit as passionate as the ones we usually have in here, but where we are able to maybe find a little more common ground.

I will give a little bit of context. My daughter is 23 now, and she just finished her second year of law school. She was six when I got elected, so it has been a while. When she was 13, we did an interview with her brother Jaden, who has autism, when Jaden was 16. He is now 27 years old. When Jenae was 13 and Jaden was 16, we did an interview with Steve Paikin on *The Agenda*.

Steve knows me and my kids well, and he did not give Jenae a heads-up that he was going to ask her a really tough question. He just said, in the middle of the interview, to 13-year-old Jenae, “Jenae, I’m going to ask you a really tough question right now. Are you ready for it?” She said that she was, and she steeled herself. He asked, “Do you ever sometimes wish that your brother was ‘normal’ like every other kid?” Thirteen-year-old Jenae, without hesitation, responded, “Well, honestly, since Jaden was diagnosed with autism before I was born, I don’t exactly know what a ‘normal’ brother is like, so Jaden kind of is my normal, having autism.”

Steve asked, “You like him just the way he is?” Jaden was just smiling there the entire time, looking at his sister, whom he loves deeply. Jenae answered, “If he didn’t have autism anymore or was cured or something, he wouldn’t be the same as Jaden is now.”

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Obviously, Jenae, being three years younger than Jaden and growing up in the same house, has not known a life without Jaden, as she referenced, so her “normal” has always included Jaden, for her whole life. However, when I am speaking to students or groups around the world internationally, or whatever the case might be, I always use it as an opportunity to draw a connection to the school environment that they both grew up in.

They went to a kindergarten to grade 12 school, so they went to the same school for their entire basic education lives. Obviously, Jaden was a few years ahead of Jenae. Jaden was fully included in a regular classroom, and that was right from the time he started. He had a full-time aide working with him. His needs are such that it was really important for him to have that full-time aide. In some circumstances, it might work a little differently; the needs might be a little different, as every kid with a developmental or intellectual disability is in a different circumstance.

Because the school made the decision to include Jaden in that school, certainly his life was better, his educational experience was better, and he will be more prepared to participate and be able to contribute his skills and abilities because of having been included in that school. However, for every other student who went to that school with him, their normal included Jaden. Their normal included life with somebody who had autism, somebody with a developmental disability.

Surprisingly, when we talk to those students afterwards, to a person, they say that their life was better off because of that experience in school and getting a chance to work with Jaden. Their experience since they left school has also been better, when, for example, they come across somebody who thinks a little differently than they do, maybe not even with autism or a developmental disability, just somebody who thinks a little bit differently. We all know people we can think of when I say that. I guarantee that everybody can think of somebody in their life who thinks a little differently than they do. However, because Jaden had been included in a regular classroom, their lives were better, and they were better prepared to come out into the world.

The motion has some preamble that is really easy to skip by, but I will focus on just a couple of things in the preamble that I think are really important at a global level.

The second point in the preamble reads, “according to the Global Education Monitoring Report, in low- and middle-income countries, approximately 50% of children with disabilities are estimated to be out of school”. This is not about developmental disability or intellectual disability and being included in a different part of the school. They are out of school. Approximately 50% of children with disabilities are out of school.

• (1710)

Point (iii) in the preamble says:

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(iii) a 2021 UNICEF report found that, compared to children without disabilities, children with disabilities were 49% more likely to have never attended school

We are not talking about them dropping out later in their teenage years or whatever the case is. We are saying that they were 49% more likely to have never attended school at all.

The action statement in the motion says:

(b) in the opinion of the House, where the federal government spends money on education, domestically or internationally, clear consideration must be given to the maximum inclusion of people with disabilities, including people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

I am going to explain this a bit because that language is very deliberate.

First of all, regarding “where the federal government spends money on education”, in Canada, obviously we get into jurisdictional questions, and much of the funding for education domestically is provincial. However, the federal government does spend money on education. I think particularly of indigenous communities, for example. We have a lot of work to do there. What the motion says is that as we have those conversations, we need to consider people with disabilities, particularly people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

I have had great conversations. We have some fantastic leaders in the disability community. I think of conversations I have had leading up to this point with Neil Belanger and Ken Robertson. We have an up-and-coming researcher in Alberta named Grant Bruno, who is doing some fantastic world-leading work on these issues. That is one important component.

Then the motion says, of course, “or internationally”. The federal government just contributed over \$80 million to Education Cannot Wait, an international organization that does fantastic work in refugee camps, war zones and those kinds of places. It is an organization that I have had the chance to do a lot of work with. As we are pursuing that work and funding education, we want to make sure that people with disabilities are included.

The motion talks about “maximum inclusion”. I use the words “maximum inclusion” because we want to make sure we are having a conversation in which it is really easy to get into wordsmithing and to get into some important debates about what full inclusion looks like and what inclusion looks like broadly. My view is that whatever the level of inclusion we are at, we can do more. We can move to maximize what inclusion looks like.

In Jaden's case, he was included in a regular classroom, but some schools that do great work might have an interactions classroom, where there may be six, seven or eight kids with a developmental disability or an intellectual disability. They are in a separate classroom, maybe because their support needs are so significant. Those schools might be striving to include those kids as much as they can in field trips, lunch, recess, phys. ed., musical theatre or any kind of art program they have. We can imagine a world of opportunities, and ultimately, maybe the goal is to move them to a regular classroom with proper supports. That might be the goal there. “Maximum inclusion” is meant to allow anybody to get a vision for where they want to go with it, depending on their point of view and the work they are doing.

The motion then says, “people with disabilities, including people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.” It is really important that we have disability-inclusive education, but oftentimes many advocates in the world of developmental or intellectual disabilities say that even in inclusive education conversations, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are excluded or are left behind. The language is designed to create a bridge so that we are working on both and are not leaving anyone behind in the conversation.

This motion comes at a really interesting moment. It is actually a really great moment, I think, for this motion. While it is a motion and some people might think a motion is non-binding or has a bit less action to it in a sense, I believe the opposite. I believe it allows us to have an important conversation on the floor of the House of Commons. We can vote on it as members of all parties and hopefully pass it, and then we can point to the motion as being a driving force or guide for us as we do the important work we do on education.

• (1715)

The timing is important because, in September, the UN General Assembly held the Transforming Education Summit, with a broad approach and countries coming together on the important issue of education, something that both the former Conservative government and the present Liberal government have supported. There was a specific note that came out of it called “A Call to Action to Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education”. That was at the UN General Assembly.

Coming up in June, there are the annual meetings on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Those annual meetings will take place next month. Governments from both sides of the political spectrum have been supportive of the convention over the years, so that is an important opportunity. Then at the end of June, Special Olympics are happening in Berlin. Around Special Olympics, Tim Shriver, the chair of Special Olympics and the son of co-founder Eunice Kennedy Shriver, is putting together a global education summit, where they are going to talk about these very issues at a global level. This is a real opportunity for Canada to play a leadership role.

Private Members' Business

I do want to point out that, in the world of international development, there is a lot of conversation about the hardest to reach and leaving no one behind. These are important concepts in the world of international development, particularly in the education context. When we think about people who are vulnerable, we try to avoid some of the debates that we have, as we do not want to play one group against another group. However, one thing I would quickly remind folks of is that, as we work on, for example, education for people in refugee camps and war zones, those kids would be incredibly vulnerable if they are living in a refugee camp or a war zone, but any one of those vulnerable kids could, on top of their vulnerability, have a developmental, intellectual or physical disability, and then they would be even more vulnerable.

We talk about girls' education, and we rightly we talk about girls' education. There are tens of millions of girls who are not in school right now who should be. When we think about girls' education and the vulnerability around that, particularly in some parts of the world, we have to recognize that any one of those girls could also have a developmental, intellectual or physical disability, and then we have even more vulnerability.

As we build our systems, as we build the structures and the programs at an international level to tackle these issues, we need to make sure that we build those systems to reach that girl, maybe in rural Africa, who is 13 years old and dealing with maybe an early forced marriage, in some countries, and the stigma of having a disability on top of that. If we can reach that girl with an intellectual disability in rural Africa, we can reach every girl along the way. If we can reach a little boy in a refugee camp or a war zone, who is six years old with a disability, if we can wire our hearts and our systems to reach out, find that boy and make sure that boy is included in the education systems that we set up, we are going to reach everybody along the way as we are doing that.

I will finish with a story. I was in Tanzania about eight years ago, and I came across this group of teenage boys. They were intrigued by my iPad. I showed them a picture of my daughter and one of the boys said, "She's nice", in Swahili, and I agreed. My daughter is very nice. Then I showed them a picture of Jaden, and I explained through the interpreter that he has autism and what he is like. The boys were riveted to my words as I was explaining what Jaden is like.

One of them, who had been quiet up to that point, looked me straight in the eye and said, again in Swahili, "I like him. He's beautiful. I'll pray for him." This was unprompted. With just a bit of understanding, that 15-year-old boy's heart became attached in a very special way to another young person with autism half a world away from him.

This is the time for us to have this conversation. There is a world of impact we can have if we not only have the conversation, but then also activate that conversation. I look forward to the opportunity to hear members from all parties weigh in on the conversation.

• (1720)

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just cannot thank my colleague enough on behalf of everybody in my riding whose family is struggling with the circum-

stances around a loved one's disability. I do not want to suggest all of them are struggling. Many of them thrive thanks to great community support. It is great because of a lot of volunteers. It is great because of organizations like the Special Olympics.

There is an organization in my riding that is really special called the Special Friends Network. I have spoken to the member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin about the Special Friends Network before and how it brings so many people together for sports, arts and all sorts of different things. It just does such extraordinary work.

I just stood today to thank my friend and colleague for dedicating his private member's bill to this, and moreover, for dedicating much of his political career to standing up for people who live with disabilities. His work is exemplary and I thank him very much for it on behalf of everybody in Milton and across Canada who relies on this progress.

Hon. Mike Lake: Mr. Speaker, it is nice. I am going to zero in on two points the member made. First of all is the incredible importance of connection. He talked about the Special Friends Network. The Special Olympics now has its unified program, where it is having people with developmental or intellectual disability playing alongside people without disability. Building those connections is so important to social health, mental health and all of the different aspects of our health.

The second thing is the language we use. It is interesting because he talked about struggling but then talked about strengths. Absolutely one of my missions is to focus on talking about unlocking the potential. There is a world of skills and abilities that reside in the capabilities of people with developmental disability, with intellectual disability, with autism. I see it in my son. We absolutely need to cultivate those skills and abilities, and as a society, we will all be better off for it.

• (1725)

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for opening up the debate on this very important opportunity, as he just mentioned. I wanted to ask specifically about the indigenous funding and on reserve. The member mentioned in his speech that federally the opportunity to fund education for persons with disabilities is not as vast as it could be. I just wonder if he would not mind just sharing some of the things the federal government could be doing for indigenous children, and also, learning throughout a lifetime.

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, one of the things I did not do particularly in the legislation is call on the government to spend more money on anything. I did not want to get into debate about how much we spend, whether it is enough and all of those different things. Clearly, there are challenges and clearly we need to do more in indigenous communities on a lot of fronts and education is absolutely one of them.

Private Members' Business

Whatever government is in power, whatever Parliament we have in place going forward, this motion says that when we take steps, when we spend money as a federal government on education, clear consideration must be given to the inclusion of people with disabilities, including people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It is absolutely critical in this motion, whenever we have those important conversations, that this is part of the conversation.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague went into a lot of his personal story as part of him coming to this place. Can he just touch a bit more on the importance of considering what he has in this legislation on top of all disabilities? As he said, his wording is very focused. What will this mean to people not only here but around the world as we spend money on education?

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, I love that question. I have loved all the questions.

I would say, to that end, one thing that is really important is that this is not a competition. This is not one vulnerable group against another vulnerable group, or one advocacy organization against another advocacy organization. The need is profound here, across disability, and we will absolutely get more traction as we work together.

The advice I would have for stakeholders, self advocates and all of those different roles is to find the common ground. We may have areas where we are working on our own track, and that is great, but the more we can find common ground, the more we will accelerate the action we are looking for.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin for his motion, and also for sharing his beautiful story of Jaden. I had a chance to meet Jaden two months ago during the World Autism Awareness Day celebrations on the Hill, and I can tell members that he brought a smile to all of our faces. I also wanted to thank the hon. member for his tireless advocacy on behalf of persons with disabilities, including children and youth with disabilities.

I have no hesitation in telling the member opposite that we support his motion, fully, unreservedly and with all of our hearts. In fact, one of our government's key priorities is to promote the full social and economic inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Canada is working to create a country and a world where persons with disabilities are included in every aspect of society. At the core of this work is implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This commitment connects Canada to the international community with the opportunity to both lead and learn from other nations as we work toward the shared goal of real, meaningful disability inclusion.

Last year, as part of these efforts, the hon. Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion introduced Canada's first-ever disability inclusion action plan, a road map to create a more inclusive country. The Canada disability benefit will be a cornerstone of this plan and has the potential to seriously reduce poverty and improve financial security for hundreds of thou-

sands of Canadians with disabilities. These are huge, progressive steps forward.

The member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin seeks greater support for the inclusion of children with disabilities in the education system, tying federal spending to specific measures to achieve that goal, both here in Canada and through our international commitments.

As we know, education falls largely within the jurisdiction of provinces and territories, except for first nations education on reserves, but we do play a key role in building and maintaining a robust system of quality education across the country. We provide significant block transfers to the provinces and territories through the Canada social transfers, including for post-secondary education.

We are committed to working collaboratively with provincial, territorial and indigenous partners, disability stakeholders, and persons with disabilities to remove barriers to quality education. As part of that collaboration, we have established the Canada-wide early learning and child care system. Inclusive and equitable access to early learning and child care is built into the Canada-wide agreements with provinces and territories. Federal funding is being used by our provincial and territorial partners to provide supports that can address the unique circumstances of each individual child and family.

Furthermore, just last June, we announced a \$12.5-million investment under the enabling accessibility fund, small projects component, which supported 225 early learning child care centres to buy specialized equipment for children with special needs, so they can thrive in environments that respect their needs.

Through agreements with the provinces and territories, we are building an affordable child care system that is accessible and inclusive to all Canadians in every region of our country. All of this is in addition to supporting lifelong learning and skills development opportunities for working-age persons with disabilities, through, for example, the workforce development agreements and the opportunities fund.

Allow me to circle back to Canada's first-ever disability inclusion action plan. The plan has four key pillars, including financial security, so we can lift persons with disabilities out of poverty, through the groundbreaking Canada disability benefit; employment, so we can take action to address long-standing barriers in the labour market and the workforce; accessible and inclusive communities, so we can address barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from fully participating in their communities; and, finally, a modern approach to disability, so we can address challenges in accessing federal programs and benefits. The action plan will help to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal opportunities to contribute to their communities and workplaces.

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● (1730)

Furthermore, I am pleased to say that budget 2023 provides funding of \$10 million over two years, to help us address the unique needs and ongoing barriers faced by persons with disabilities by investing in capacity building and the community-level work of Canada's disability organizations.

In the spirit of "nothing without us", we will continue to engage the disability community at every turn. When Canadians work together, and we have seen it here in the House, we can build a stronger and more accessible country and world.

I sincerely thank the member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin for his motion, his leadership and his advocacy, and for helping to bring the House of Commons together behind this excellent motion.

● (1735)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, I too would like to recognize and thank my colleague from Edmonton—Wetaskiwin.

It is to his credit that he has moved this important motion. As the member said, although the motion is not binding, it does give meaning to our action, and particularly to the action that Canada needs to take with respect to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which Canada signed in 2007 and ratified in 2010.

Part of the motion reads as follows:

Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities...states that signatories "shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning directed to enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society".

The convention is a human rights treaty that aims to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities, to ensure they are treated without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. This convention has three key principles. The first is equality and non-discrimination. The second is accessibility, and the third key principle is participation and inclusion.

As my colleague pointed out, according to a 2021 UNICEF report on children with disabilities, there are nearly 240 million children around the world with disabilities. These children may seem to be at a disadvantage compared to children without disabilities when it comes to education because they are 49% more likely to have never attended school.

Of course, the Bloc Québécois is in favour of the motion. We are also in favour of the full and equitable inclusion of people with disabilities in Quebec and Canada. We are aware of the challenges that people with disabilities face and we stand in solidarity with them, whatever their disability may be. People with disabilities are not a homogenous group. All types of disabilities must be considered. I think that we need to put targeted solutions in place for each of them.

Everyone must have access to a quality education under the principle of equality of opportunity in our societies. An inclusive education system takes into consideration not only accessibility but al-

so the need to provide reasonable accommodation and individual support.

Although this was already mentioned, I want to remind members that, in Canada, elementary and secondary education fall under the exclusive jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces and that Ottawa should only intervene in areas under its own jurisdiction. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities falls under its jurisdiction.

I would also like to remind members that non-visible disabilities are often identified by health care professionals and social services workers. That is invaluable, actually. There too, the government could play a role. It takes dedicated and professional personnel to support these persons with disabilities.

I will talk about our schools. Ideally, these young people, these students with disabilities would be included in regular classrooms as much as possible because diversity in school is an asset for education. We also have special schools and classes, but support is required, as is the capacity to make the right diagnosis to get some follow-up. Health care professionals and psychologists play a major role. On that, we take issue with the federal underfunding of health through the Canada health transfer to the provinces and Quebec. This is a serious problem.

That being said, internationally, the government has the full authority and legitimacy to impose standards and conditions on international aid.

● (1740)

We recognize that a greater global effort must be made to better integrate people with disabilities into education systems around the world, in line with the UNESCO and UNICEF findings in this regard.

Global efforts in favour of inclusive education are consistent with advocating for the rights of other groups, such as the rights of women and girls in general and the right of girls and women with disabilities to education, specifically. According to a UNESCO study, there are approximately 130 million girls between the ages of six and 17 who are not in school.

The government needs to recognize this motion—it is good that it has been fully welcomed—and come up with a concrete plan to ensure that the money it distributes internationally will help improve education around the world, particularly in poorer or low-income countries.

Compared to Canada's international aid to improve women's rights, according to a report by the Auditor General, this is pretty significant. The 2023 report was lackluster with respect to Canada's international feminist strategy.

The audit sought to determine whether Global Affairs Canada had implemented Canada's feminist international assistance policy by funding projects that supported gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in low- and middle-income countries and by demonstrating that the projects were producing the intended results.

Private Members' Business

Unfortunately, although objectives were set for Canada's feminist international assistance policy, it did not yield tangible results. Global Affairs Canada was unable to show how the policy contributed to improving gender equality in the country.

If we want Canada to pay special attention to the new criteria for helping children with disabilities access education, then Global Affairs Canada must absolutely come up with new processes and new ways of working to achieve measurable results.

We have an obligation to ensure that education is a reality both in fact and in law for all children with disabilities, whatever that disability may be, and their loved ones.

We know that some countries in the world need this assistance. In that sense, the last part of the motion, which invites Canada to do more, is consistent with the convention that was signed. We think that is important.

Once again, I thank my colleague for this motion.

[*English*]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, just before I begin this debate on educational support and inclusion for persons with disabilities, I start by reminding the government that it has outstanding disability commitments. I am referring specifically to Bill C-22, the Canada disability benefit bill.

The government promised this income support bill years ago and one million Canadians who need it are still waiting. With the rising costs of living, the situation is past dire and the government should immediately enact a disability emergency response benefit to offset the rising costs of food and housing for persons with disabilities living in poverty in Canada. Bill C-22, the Canada disability benefit act, will be coming back from the Senate soon and the government needs to get it on the House agenda immediately after it arrives from the Senate; there is no time to waste.

Let me talk about the motion in front of us, Motion No. 78, brought forward by the member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin. I thank him for carrying on this conversation in this House. The motion states the following:

...where the federal government spends money on education, domestically or internationally, clear consideration must be given to the maximum inclusion of people with disabilities, including people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Today, the member talked about why that wording is so important. Of course, the NDP supports this. Where we are disappointed is that it is not already a reality in Canada.

Canada, like other signatories to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, has an obligation to uphold the right to education for persons with disabilities outlined in article 24, but currently it is not doing that.

In my riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam, Anmore and Belcarra school boards and teachers are doing that work without a federal partner to ensure the adequate funding, education and supports to fully meet article 24. I was at our school board meeting recently applauding the work that the school board is doing, along with its staff, teachers, EAs and administration. They are doing that work to try to optimize their limited resources and supports to address the

needs of students with disabilities, including those with learning disabilities.

The number of students with disabilities who are not getting their needs met in Canada's education system is growing and parents and guardians are coming to me, at my office in my riding, asking for help.

Another reason I rise today is to stand up with the voices of students, parents and guardians in Canada who are telling me that it is imperative that Canada adhere to this article.

Education is a fundamental human right and is essential for the full inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in society. Adhering to article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities means that Canada must ensure that persons with disabilities have access to inclusive and quality education at all levels of their life learning journey, without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. This includes removing barriers to education, providing reasonable accommodations, and ensuring that teachers and other educational staff are trained to support the needs of persons with disabilities.

In Canada, it has been said tonight that education is primarily funded and administered by the provincial and territorial governments. What has the Liberal government done to ensure it is supporting provinces and territories to adhere to article 24? I can say right now that they are not doing enough.

With the provincial and territorial governments responsible for funding and administering public elementary and secondary schools, as well as public colleges and universities, they need a federal partner so they can set curriculum standards, and oversee certifications and professional development that supports our commitments to article 24. Right now, they are on their own doing all this work and not getting the financial support, administration or education support they need from the federal government to meet the convention.

The federal government does provide some funding for education through transfer payments to the provinces and territories, as well as through specific programs and initiatives. However, there is not a specific focus on funding to ensure provinces and territories have the financial capacity to meet the obligations that Canada makes on the international stage.

Private Members' Business

• (1745)

This is especially true for indigenous students. The federal government provides funding for research and development in higher education, and supports programs aimed at improving outcomes for indigenous students. This is their obligation, yet even for indigenous students, the funding for disability supports in on-reserve education does not align with provincial standards, and that is unacceptable. It must be corrected.

In Canada, every student is entitled to a barrier-free education. It sets them on their path for life. Furthermore, ensuring that persons with disabilities have access to inclusive education that meets their needs is not only a matter of human rights, but also has significant health, social and economic benefits. Education leads to better employment opportunities, better health outcomes, increased social participation, and enhanced self-esteem and confidence.

We know that investing in education for persons with disabilities promotes inclusivity by ensuring that everyone has access to the same opportunities for learning and personal growth.

I just want to make a note here, because the member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin mentioned field trips. In my riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam, Anmore and Belcarra, there are times when field trips are not accessible to everyone because of the funding limitations, because of the fact that they do not have the supports that are required. We can imagine kids having to go to school and seeing all their friends go on the field trip while they do not. That needs to be corrected.

Investing in education for persons with disability promotes inclusivity by ensuring that everyone has access to the same opportunities. It helps to break down barriers and promotes a more equitable and diverse society. It also promotes independence and self-determination by providing education and training opportunities. I know that the Liberal government is investing right now in those education and training opportunities. How about starting earlier? How about supporting the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, article 24, in provinces and territories? How about doing that?

We know that it promotes independence and self-determination by providing education and training opportunities. With supportive education, persons with disabilities could acquire the skills and knowledge they need to live more independently.

Education is also linked to improved employment outcomes. Investing in education for persons with disabilities could help to improve their employment prospects and reduce their risk of living in poverty. Right now, a million Canadians with a disability are living in poverty because they live in an ableist country that does not allow them full access to employment. How about the Liberal government fixes that? Education is an important driver of economic growth, and investing in education for persons with disabilities can contribute to the overall economic prosperity of the country.

For all the reasons above, the government needs to support provinces and territories with the funding and the education required to uphold article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. UN Conventions are not pieces of paper. They are rights, human rights, and they need to be adhered to.

I am surprised to see, for the second year that I am here as the NDP critic for persons with disabilities, that the government does not have a Canadian delegation going to the United Nations in June. For the second time, I am standing here and not seeing any coordinated Canadian effort to have a delegation at the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It is unacceptable. Why are we not there?

In closing, as we look outside of Canada, we see that the federal government provides funding to Canadian organizations that apply for international assistance, which could include educational projects. The Liberal government says those projects must align with the feminist international assistance policy, advance human rights and advance sustainable development goals. Yes, that is good. However, there are insufficient directives to ensure that people with disabilities are included in Canadian international assistance projects, so the government must restore the international assistance funding it cut and do better to meet its international commitments to human rights.

• (1750)

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a privilege to rise on behalf of the residents of Kelowna—Lake Country. It is an honour to speak in favour of the motion brought forward by my colleague, the member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin. That member has long been an advocate for persons with disabilities and is well respected for his many different efforts on this.

The motion before us would allow this House to set a key reminder for government to remember those too often forgotten in our world: people with disabilities. Canada's work, whether here at home or abroad in developing countries, in aiding children's education is vitally important. While it is essential to help fund the books, pencils and computers needed for education, we would fail in our ambition for better education for every child if we did not consider the need to ensure the inclusion of all children, regardless of circumstances beyond their control.

A 2021 Statistics Canada study found that young Canadians with disabilities between the ages of 15 and 34 still encounter a wide range of difficulties in attending school, such as limitations on learning, social exclusion or a lack of accommodations. The study found that among the participants, 21.1% of women and 33.7% of men had yet to complete a high school level of education. Of those interviewed, 29% said they had discontinued their education because of their condition.

Though we recognize education as primarily provincial, there is a role the federal government can play.

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As the Conservative shadow minister responsible for disability inclusion, I was involved in helping to advance the Canada disability benefit. We know for that piece of legislation that the government was working for years on it and finally tabled legislation in the last Parliament. The snap election of 2021 cancelled the legislation from moving forward, and it was reintroduced in this Parliament, though not as a priority piece of legislation for the government, as it was not one of the first bills to be introduced.

Surprisingly, it was the same legislation as this, and in fact it is well documented through testimony at committee that there is much uncertainty. What it would actually mean for people as to the parameters, to whom it would be applicable and what they would receive would all be done through regulation. I will continue to hold this government to account for this unacceptably slow pace of delivery. Still, by that bill's unanimous passing in the House, we know this chamber is committed to seeing all persons with disabilities reach their highest potential.

When it comes to our federal role in education, in situations such as indigenous education or social transfers, keeping in mind the specific needs of all children as they study is vital. Our goal must be nothing less than, as the text of this motion states, "maximum inclusion of people with disabilities, including people with intellectual and developmental disabilities." We should want no less for our children living with disabilities around the world, whom we seek to aid in our efforts to alleviate poverty in developing countries. Without access to education, poverty is not alleviated in the long term.

It is indisputable that a good education can help make people's lives better. What we see needing improvement in the developing world is a clear commitment to the consistent consideration of the millions of people worldwide who face unique physical, developmental and intellectual challenges in achieving their best lives.

Globally, children with disabilities face significant barriers that result in exclusion from education and schooling. According to UNESCO's "2020 Global Education Monitoring Report", at least 50% of children with disabilities are excluded from education in low- and middle-income countries. In some contexts, the figure is closer to 90%.

The reasons for this are varied, whether they are a lack of transportation options to reach schools, inaccessible school or classroom buildings, the lack of proper teacher training to educate children with varying intellectual and developmental challenges, or poor curriculum design. The denial of primary education leaves many of these children with the poorest life outcomes imaginable, with poor adult literacy or social skills condemning them to hard labour, extreme poverty or worse. Socially, these children can often be deeply misunderstood, with their conditions treated as burdens or even death sentences.

• (1755)

In some areas of the world, prejudice surrounding what we in Canada would regard as basic conditions sadly leads to the lives of children being harmed and given up on. According to the same report I cited earlier, adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities are lacking in developing countries. Canada undoubtedly has inclusion challenges to overcome as well for those with disabilities. Still, we can take some fulfillment in the tireless

efforts of our many education leaders, teachers and support workers who help to provide educational benefits for children who, had they been born in too many other places around the world, would have never received those efforts. I thank all of those who work in this field.

Similarly, we can take pride in Canadians seeking to address that gap in the developing world. Canada has a long history of commitment to helping developing countries. For example, one project looks to advance inclusive higher education for young adults with disabilities, develop new occupational therapy programs and foster research for inclusive education and community-based rehabilitation in the region.

Hearing of Canadian efforts to help with projects like this is no surprise. Canada has always prided itself on its capacity for humanitarian work. We are proudly home to tens of thousands of charities, not-for-profits, faith groups and individual miracle workers pursuing similar aims in regions around the world. The same consideration they give toward ensuring a good education for every child must be kept front of mind. The member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin is very purposeful in the wording of his motion calling on the government to take action. He does not want persons with disabilities to be forgotten. In fact, he wants them to be top of mind.

He is also drawing attention to persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. When people think of persons with disabilities and their extra needs, they may have to help minimize or overcome challenges with their diverse abilities. Often, we may think of physical accessibility needs. For example, physical infrastructure, like building a ramp or having an accessible washroom, may come to mind, and people get a check mark for being inclusive when considering those with disabilities.

However, this motion also adds in purposeful wording to include people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This is important because the check mark may not be quite as easy. Those with intellectual and developmental disability needs need to be top of mind when considering educational funding in order for us to be truly inclusive and to make a difference through education for those who may not be considered now. This elevates the importance of not forgetting those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

I call on all members of this House to put aside partisanship and come together unanimously in passing this motion. Doing so will send a clear message of commitment to those in need of a better life through education who may currently be denied it.

• (1800)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague and friend for his guidance and leadership.

It is a very good example of where the real experience is lived in a diverse House of Commons. We are making the best policies and we are making progress.

That is an excellent example. On behalf of all the families in Milton living with a person with a disability, I thank the member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin.

[*English*]

I would like to stand up today and talk about how this motion really leverages a lot of our collective work on our disability inclusion action plan. It is fantastic that we can work together and find ways to improve the lives of Canadians and work across party lines, as I have with this particular member for as long as I have been here. He definitely represents the best of this place and, again, I want to commend him for that effort.

The first pillar of our disability inclusion action plan is our employment strategy. The motion would definitely leverage this and ensure that it is as effective as possible. Last year, we launched a \$200-million employment strategy for people with a disability. Ensuring that more of these funding programs are directed to persons living with a disability is so important.

The second pillar, which this motion would leverage, is the Canada disability benefit. The member and I have spoken one-on-one before, and I have spoken with many members of my community as well, about people who are now children or are young people who will age out of care, as well as people who have a disability of any form whose support network will leave them one day. We need to ensure that there is support for those individuals and groups when their support network leaves them, and they do not have support they had relied on for so many of their lived years.

The third pillar is all about eliminating barriers in physical spaces. I know that many programs in my community have applied to the enabling accessibility fund. This is for building physical structures that eliminate barriers, such as ramps, elevators and various other devices that support disability inclusion.

However, I also want to acknowledge that the things that we can add to our society to correct for curbs, stairs and other barriers resulting in inaccessible physical space include far more than just physical things. I want to mention one of my neighbours, Carly, who is currently engaged with the town of Milton in building a new kind of playground for kids with various sensory differences. She is also raising a flag for Disability Awareness Month. I want to commend everybody in Milton who is working on that particular project. It will mean kids can go to the park and experience the fun, the laughter, the enjoyment and physical activity that they deserve. They will not have to make those accommodations themselves within their families, because there will be a park built for them. That is really fantastic.

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The fourth pillar, last but certainly not least, is a modernized government. A modernized government in the context of a disability inclusion action plan is all about easier access to benefits. This would ensure that we are not creating an environment where applying for these programs or new resources is going to cost a lot of money or where business owners have to hire somebody new or special in order to do that. A good example of that is automatic tax filing, which was in budget 2023.

Once again, I want to thank and commend my hon. colleague from Edmonton—Wetaskiwin for this extraordinary work. I am glad that we are finding, at the end of today, a great way to work together and collaborate across party lines.

• (1805)

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

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I suspect that if you canvassed the House, you would find unanimous consent at this time to call it midnight.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, my question to the Liberals is regarding their failed, ineffective and ever-increasing carbon tax. The Liberals have misled Canadians on their carbon tax, not once, not twice, but many times. Government members must be held accountable for their misleading carbon tax claims, and they must answer to the Canadians they are supposed to represent.

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Let us take a walk down memory lane. First, the Liberals promised not to raise the carbon tax, and then they tripled it. Then the Liberals promised Canadians they would get more money back than they had paid, but the government's own Parliamentary Budget Officer proved the government wrong. In fact, we now know the average family in 2023 will pay between \$402 and \$847 even after the rebates. Then the Liberals claimed the carbon tax would reduce emissions, but guess what, emissions went up.

Now we know the government misled Canadians once again on its failed carbon tax. Let me explain. In 2019, the Liberals announced a program called the MUSH retrofit stream. MUSH stood for municipalities, universities, schools and hospitals. It was a bureaucratic government program designed to return the carbon tax back to the public institutions it was charged to so they could afford energy-efficient retrofit upgrades.

One may be wondering why on earth the government is forcing a carbon tax on our hospitals and schools in the first place, or how this reduces emissions, and trust me, I wonder the same.

Despite this, and despite promising to return the money the Liberals took from our hospitals and public institutions, no money was returned to hospitals, no money was returned to municipalities and no money was returned to universities. Not one dime.

The Liberals took millions of dollars to Ottawa, created their own bureaucratic program, promised to return it and never did. Even the commissioner of the environment pointed this failure out in a recent report, and local governments across Canada were wondering where the millions of dollars they were promised went. We would never have known this if it were not for an Order Paper question I submitted because the Liberals took the money and secretly shut down the program without telling Canadians. I guess we will never know where the money went.

My question to the Liberal government is very simple. Why did the Liberal government mislead Canadians and not return any carbon tax revenue to hospitals, municipalities or universities through its own MUSH retrofit program?

• (1810)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I found it interesting that the member, my friend, started the discussion this evening by talking about the carbon tax, or a price on pollution, whatever one wants to call it. He started off by saying we were misleading Canadians.

On that particular point, I have to make mention of the fact that there were 338 Conservative candidates in the last federal election who knocked on doors with an election platform. That election platform, under the stewardship of Erin O'Toole, who was the leader of the Conservative Party at the time—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, my apologies. I withdraw the name.

The former leader of the Conservative Party campaigned on the policy that a price on pollution, or a carbon tax, is a good thing. The member stands up and says we are misleading Canadians, yet

he campaigned on a platform that made it very clear to Canadians that, if the Conservatives were elected into government, they would put a price on pollution. I think the member needs to reflect on the issue of misleading Canadians, because there is no doubt about that. We could show him the platform position of the Conservative Party, the platform that he himself has raised.

The member also made reference to the Parliamentary Budget Officer. He said the Parliamentary Budget Officer said there was a net loss. However, the Parliamentary Budget Officer also indicated that when we factor in the rebate portion, 80% of the population will receive more money than they are paying in the tax. One might argue we should factor in this and that, but I would suggest that if we factor in this and that, like floods, forest fires and all the other factors, they would also have to be calculated in. The bottom line is that the same Parliamentary Budget Officer has made it very clear that, dollar for dollar, there is a net gain for 80% of the population.

When we talk about other jurisdictions, we now have Atlantic Canadians seeing the benefits of having the rebate structure we have in place. Those provinces are now moving to the federal program, which is something they opted to do.

I would suggest that one of the best ways of dealing with emissions and being sensitive to our environment is to recognize what many governments around the world have done, including this government, which is to assign a price on pollution. Interestingly enough, members might be surprised to know that the first legislative government to ever do something of this nature was the Alberta Conservative Party many years ago.

• (1815)

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, the government again did not answer my question. I find it interesting that the Liberal platform was to tax hospitals in the form of a carbon tax to heat themselves. That is an outstanding type of platform. Maybe the member should run on it again and call this the actual carbon tax that it is, but I digress.

I guess Canadian hospitals, municipalities and universities will never know where the money went. Here is an idea. Instead of forcing hospitals and municipalities to pay a carbon tax, and instead of designing a complicated government program that makes it look like the money will be returned, let us just scrap the carbon tax altogether.

I will give the government one more chance: Why did the Liberal government mislead Canadians and not return any carbon tax revenue to hospitals, municipalities or universities through its own MUSH retrofit program?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the Conservatives will have to justify to Canadians sometime in 2025, I suspect, when we will be going back to the polls, although we never know in a minority situation, why they misled Canadians in the last federal election and are now saying they will get rid of the price on pollution. A part of that explanation should also incorporate that they will be getting rid of the rebate. The benefit of the rebate is that 80% of people are receiving a larger rebate than they are paying into the program. In essence, they would be taking more money out of the pockets of 80% of Canadians.

In terms of hospitals and universities, this government has made significant investments, both capital and otherwise, in our health care and post-secondary facilities, and the numbers will—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

[Translation]

SPORT

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I rise today in favour of an independent public inquiry into sports. The issue has become more important than ever and it is disappointing that the Minister of Sport thinks that this issue still requires nothing more than internal audits as cases come up.

We all saw the leniency in the audits since, in less than a year, funding for Hockey Canada and Gymnastics Canada was restored. In the case of Canada Soccer, it is total silence. It is incomprehensible that after more than 35 articles on separate cases involving several dozen victims tied to allegations of sexual assault and harassment in sport, there has not been more outrage in the House.

For more than a year, the Bloc Québécois has tirelessly and clearly called for an independent public inquiry into sports. Today, the NDP MPs, and I commend them, also took position in favour of an inquiry. The Conservatives and the Liberals remain, in my opinion, divided on this issue. I ask the question. If it was our own children, would we hesitate on whether or not to shed light on the allegations of abuse in the world of sports?

The silence of the Minister of Sport is as disconcerting as her absence thus far from the discussions taking place in the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. She has been invited on more than one occasion. None of the testimony—all of which was very well researched and relevant—spurred her to act responsibly and transparently.

I want to talk about different aspects. There is the outsourcing of safe sport cases. It was the Liberal government that implemented the idea of contracting out complaints from athletes who have been abused or mistreated. This is a highly lucrative arrangement for these private sector firms, which the government calls “third party investigators”. Currently, these firms are paid by federations and there is no assurance that victims are treated fairly in the process. There are no quality standards in place, and Sport Canada does not conduct any verifications.

Many victims testified that they were mistreated by these investigators. These investigations should be conducted by people who have the well-being of the athletes at heart, and, above all, who

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have no conflict of interest. Even worse, the process results in non-disclosure agreements that silence the victims. This tacit endorsement by the government prevents victims from speaking out or they risk being prosecuted. We absolutely need to consider changing this paradigm so that victims can really have a say.

A non-disclosure agreement must be the prerogative of the victim because only they can make that decision. These non-disclosure agreements raise another concern. Coaches dismissed by these federations for allegations of abuse will be protected by these very agreements. A public and independent inquiry will shed light on these elements and lead to action.

The financial audits ordered by Sport Canada are a financial framework that requires the tabling of detailed financial statements in order to obtain funding. However, it seems that no one analyzes these results year over year or asks questions about the objectives of these sports organizations. It is as though it were just a box to be checked. That does not work. Some corporations in Canada are not in compliance with the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act. We see these situations of abuse.

The study being done by the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage has found that sports organizations have benefited from government largesse without sufficient accountability and transparency. Less than 5% of these organizations are in good standing with the federal registry of corporations. They are violating the rules for federally chartered corporations. The government is clearly not taking action.

Everyone has an obligation to report abuse in sport. However, it seems quite clear that the priority for Sport Canada is not to act on this information.

In closing, I would say that establishing a public and independent inquiry in the field of sports is imperative in order to conduct spot checks, rather than the light—

• (1820)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport.

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking my colleague for bringing awareness to this issue. I also want to say that our government understands the situation very well. It recognizes that this is a very important challenge. I want to commend and thank everyone who has the strength to share their stories.

On the subject of an inquiry, I want to repeat for my friend that it is not a question of “if”. It is a question of what form and scope it will take. I want the member to know that.

[English]

Reports of maltreatment, including harassment, abuse and discrimination have come to light recently and there have been consistent calls for stronger governance and greater protections for athletes, accountability and better alignment within the sports system.

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I am familiar with these calls. I have been making them myself for over 10 years. I was the vice-chair or chair of the Athletes' Commission for a total of almost a decade. We have been fighting for a stronger and more accountable support system. The first letter that I wrote to Sport Canada was in 1999.

We take this issue very seriously, and we are committed to ensuring that all sport participants, including children and youth, experience a safe and inclusive sport environment.

[*Translation*]

While changes in the sport system involve many stakeholders, including provincial and territorial governments, national sport organizations, national multi-sport service organizations, Canadian sport centres and the private sector, the Government of Canada has made significant and concerted efforts to promote safe sport, particularly in recent years.

We have worked to ensure safe, welcoming and inclusive environments for all athletes through investments in the 2018, 2019, 2022 and 2023 budgets.

[*English*]

The Government of Canada supported the achievement of a number of safe sport milestones in recent years. We can be proud of this collectively. For instance, the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport was developed by and for the sport community, with the support of Sport Canada in the last five years.

[*Translation*]

In July 2021, Sport Canada launched a call for proposals to find the most appropriate and most qualified organization to administer the code of conduct and establish an independent safe sport mechanism. A committee of sport community stakeholders and experts in ethics, youth protection and policy development selected the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada to do this work.

In June 2022, the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada set up the Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner. As of April 1, 2023, every national sport organization has signed an agreement to access the services of the Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner.

• (1825)

[*English*]

Though the Government of Canada has demonstrated leadership in this area, it is important to note that ensuring a safe and inclusive sport environment is a shared responsibility with provinces and territories as well, particularly when it comes to younger participants. In February 2019, federal and provincial territorial ministers responsible for sport, physical activity and recreation endorsed the Red Deer Declaration for the Prevention of Harassment, Abuse and Discrimination in Sport, and ministers at that time committed to developing a collaborative approach to address harassment, abuse and discrimination in sport—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
The hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Madam Speaker, I am crossing my fingers that my colleague from Milton's positive leadership will lead to action. Otherwise, perhaps we can battle it out on the soccer field later.

I am asking the parliamentary secretary to at least admit that, unfortunately, the government has failed in its duty to shed light on the management of abuse and sexual misconduct in sports. There is a lot of bureaucratic jargon being used. The government is failing to recognize the distress and frustration of amateur and national athletes, as well as those covered by the program subsidized by the federal government.

The government must get to the bottom of the management problem in sports organizations, because it has been going on for far too long. That is our athletes' right, and they have every right to demand it be respected. These days, many people are criticizing the minister for failing to take into account the victims' point of view. That is particularly true at the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. Everyone agrees on one thing. The minister is working on an announcement, but the work has been done behind closed doors—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[*English*]

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Madam Speaker, we are speaking very fast. I am going to try to get my ideas out in English because they take longer in French, although I am working on it.

This has been a work in progress for many, many years. I used to come to the Hill to advocate for a better sporting environment back in 2015 or 2016. The first time that I came here to do government relations on behalf of athletes was in 2009. I hear the calls to stronger action. The member did acknowledge concrete action over the last couple of years. It has been accelerating to a degree in the last couple of years, particularly under the leadership of the Minister of Sport.

We have come so far and there is no reason why the House needs to be divided on this issue. We are talking about safer sport environments for kids and better sport environments for all participants, and I think that is something that we can collectively continue to work on. The Minister of Sport has prioritized this issue as number one since she was appointed. We have made significant investments since then, and we will continue.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am rising tonight to follow up on a question I earlier asked the Prime Minister with respect to the Liberal-McKinsey scandal. In particular, at the time I was asking about the role McKinsey played in the opioid crisis and what the government is doing in response to that, recognizing that the government gave over \$100 million in contracts to McKinsey, recognizing by now that the Treasury Board has acknowledged that all rules were not followed in the awarding of those contracts, recognizing that at the time this was going on McKinsey had a relationship with a company called Purdue Pharma.

McKinsey was led by Dominic Barton up until midpoint in the government's mandate. During that time and previous to that, under the leadership of Dominic Barton, McKinsey was working for Purdue Pharma, giving Purdue Pharma advice on how to supercharge opioid sales, something that drove the opioid crisis. Incredibly, McKinsey's advice to Purdue Pharma included things like paying bonuses to pharmacists in instances where there were overdoses and developing a system for circumventing traditional pharmacies in order to circumvent the checks that were in place in order to prevent people who struggle with substance abuse challenges from being able to access those kinds of opioids. McKinsey was advising Purdue Pharma on how to sell more opioids, how to circumvent checks in the system and, incredibly, giving advice on how to give bonuses to pharmacists in instances where there were overdoses.

McKinsey and Purdue Pharma have been the subject of much criticism here in Canada, as well as the United States and elsewhere. McKinsey has had to pay over half a billion dollars in compensation in the United States. In the United States, there are Democrats and Republicans in various jurisdictions suing McKinsey and Purdue for their role in the opioid crisis and using the money from that to support treatment and recovery. This is precisely the policy that has been put forward by the Leader of the Opposition, which is, as part of a suite of measures, to combat the horrific ongoing opioid crisis, to hold accountable those bad corporate actors that are responsible for it, to sue them directly federally as well as to join provincial class action lawsuits, to sue them for the full range of damages and to put those resources into treatment and recovery, recognizing that McKinsey was a critical player, and that is why it had to pay over half a billion dollars in compensation in the United States.

The contrast is quite stark because in the United States there are people across the political spectrum who have stood up to McKinsey and Purdue and others to try to hold them accountable. In Canada, the government gave McKinsey over \$100 million in contracts. I find this striking.

More recently, it was revealed in a response to a petition I received that the government said it is actually going to now join British Columbia's litigation against McKinsey. I have asked various figures in the government if they are prepared to confirm that and I wonder if the parliamentary secretary is prepared to confirm that tonight or not. If this is the case, this is quite a stark shift. I think the government has to account for the fact that, on the one hand, it was giving massive levels of government procurement to McKinsey, not following the proper rules in the process, while

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McKinsey was fuelling the opioid crisis and, on the other hand, now it is effectively acknowledging McKinsey is complicit in the opioid by saying it is going to join B.C.'s class action lawsuit.

I want the government to clarify whether it is planning to sue McKinsey. Is it planning on following the policy recommendation that Conservatives have been putting forward for months? Will it try to hold McKinsey accountable for the full range of damages, not just joining this lawsuit but other damages as well? Why did it have such a close—

• (1830)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member across the way is trying to connect some very important issues. Talking about the opioid crisis, I am sure the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Health could have expanded on the degree to which we, as a government, need to continue to work on that particular situation. A good part of that is recognizing that Canada, as a country, cannot do it alone. We need to work with provinces and municipalities, as well as first responders and others. There are many different stakeholders who are out there trying to deal with the opioid situation. That is an issue in itself.

The other issue the member is trying to raise and make a connection to is McKinsey. That is kind of tacked on. McKinsey has a contract, but the member is trying to build the case that there is a wonderful, special relationship between an individual at McKinsey and the Prime Minister.

Tying the three issues together is not very responsible, because there is no direct connection among them. The opioid crisis is there; it is real and tangible. The government is doing what it can and working with a multitude of different stakeholders.

In regard to the contracts, if we listen to the Conservative Party on this particular issue, we would think that if they were in power, they would change the process of procurements and contracts that are being let out through the public service. The Conservatives are doing that process a disservice.

The Liberal government, through transparency and accountability, has ensured that these contracts are done through the public service as much as possible. This should not be a surprise, because these types of contracts are done at all different levels of government here in Canada. Internationally, around the world, governments always look for those independent contracts.

The issue is how those contracts are awarded. I have no problem comparing Canada's procedures with those of any other country. Often, we get other countries looking to Canada for the way our public service lets contracts out for tender. We can all take comfort in and have confidence in our public service in getting out those important contracts.

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Now, on the connection between McKinsey and the Prime Minister, this is one of those fishing trips by the Conservative Party. No matter what, they put on their tin hats and start asking questions like these: Where is it all connected? How could it be connected to the Prime Minister? They do this so they can dump all over the Prime Minister. That is the logic behind it.

The member is taking a couple of serious issues and trying to somehow make it look as though something corrupt has occurred; in fact, nothing corrupt has occurred. The Conservatives are trying to give that impression, and then they are trying to somehow link it to the Prime Minister. I can assure the member that there is nothing there. In turning these little pebbles, he is not going to find—

• (1835)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, respectfully, that was quite a rambling answer to a direct question.

The question is about McKinsey's involvement in fuelling the opioid crisis. This is not a conspiracy. McKinsey did not pay \$600 million in compensation to victims of the opioid crisis because somebody was saying things about it on Reddit. McKinsey paid that massive amount of compensation because the facts were clear and its complicity was clear. Moreover, there have been multiple stories in The New York Times detailing the way in which McKinsey fuelled the opioid crisis.

While these stories were being written, Dominic Barton, who was managing partner of McKinsey, claimed he was unaware. He

said that he only found out about what happened with McKinsey and Purdue after the fact. That just does not hold water.

A direct question I have for the parliamentary secretary is this: Can the government confirm, as was said to me in a written response to a petition, that it is suing McKinsey for its role in the opioid crisis? What is its response in terms of the relationship that is there?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I have confidence that our law enforcement agencies, the RCMP and our Department of Justice, along with the professional civil servants who are there, will provide the services needed. I suspect that if the grounds and evidence are there, we will see action taken by the government. We have witnessed, over the last number of years as a government, that we have protocols and procedures. We have the checks in place to ensure that there is a high sense of accountability in the government and the private sector to ensure that Canadians' best interests are being served.

As the member knows full well, on the issues that Canadians are very much concerned about, the government will ensure that Canadians are well served.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:38 p.m.)

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