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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 5, 2023

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

• (1105)

[*English*]

The Speaker: The Chair would like to comment on the points of order raised on Friday, June 2 by the members for Calgary Forest Lawn and Northumberland—Peterborough South, as well as rule on the question of privilege raised by the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan regarding proceedings on Bill C-47, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023.

[*Translation*]

The various concerns raised touch upon the clause-by-clause consideration of the bill by the Standing Committee on Finance, and how it should inform the selection and grouping of report stage motions by the Speaker. The Chair would also like to address the events surrounding electronic voting during the recorded division held on Friday.

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED BREACH OF PRIVILEGE AT COMMITTEE—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: The Chair will begin by addressing the concerns raised by the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, before turning to the question of selection and grouping of report stage motions.

In his intervention, the member claimed that his privileges were breached during the clause-by-clause consideration of the bill by the Standing Committee on Finance. His concerns centred on the contention that his right to vote, to move subamendments, to speak and raise points of order were unfairly limited by the committee chair. He argued that Standing Order 116(2)(a) had not been respected. Furthermore, the member alleged that the scheduling of the bill last Friday by the government had limited his ability to have report stage motions drafted and submitted in time for publication in the Notice Paper.

[*Translation*]

Standing Order 116(2)(a) makes clear that a committee can set time limits in relation to its own proceedings. The standing order reads:

Unless a time limit has been adopted by the committee or by the House, the Chair of a standing, special or legislative, committee may not bring a debate to an end while there are members present who still wish to participate.

This also applies during the consideration of legislation.

[*English*]

It is an established practice that a committee can adopt its own orders, set its own deadlines to submit amendments or limit debate during its clause-by-clause consideration of bills. This appears to be what occurred in this case, where the committee adopted a motion to restrict the time for considering Bill C-47. Given that the committee made such a decision, as the Standing Orders allow, I do not believe that the Speaker has any cause to invalidate its proceedings nor to consider them a breach of privilege.

As to the other matters raised by the member, Speakers generally will not address procedural concerns from committees without first having a report outlining what procedural irregularities may have occurred. This was stated by the Assistant Deputy Speaker on Friday and I too see no reason to deviate from this well-established practice in this case.

[*Translation*]

As to the contention that the scheduling of the bill for consideration in the House last Friday limited members' ability to submit report stage amendments, I would refer members to Standing Order 76.1(1), and I quote:

The report stage of any bill reported by any standing, special or legislative committee after the bill has been read a second time shall not be taken into consideration prior to the second sitting day following the presentation of the said report, unless otherwise ordered by the House.

The report in question was presented on Wednesday, May 31, 2023. It could therefore be called for debate as early as Friday, June 2, 2023.

[*English*]

This two-sitting imperative, combined with the 24-hour notice requirement to submit report stage motions, is standard and usually provides enough time to have motions drafted and submitted.

Speaker's Ruling

• (1110)

As such, members who wish to receive support in the drafting of report stage motions should contact the capable staff in the Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel as soon as possible with clear drafting instructions. If members wait to see when the bill will be called, they run the risk of not having their motions drafted in time.

For all these reasons, the Chair fails to see how the rights and privileges of the member were breached.

* * *

• (1115)

POINTS OF ORDER

REQUEST TO CONSIDER MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I will now turn to the points raised by the member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

The member indicated that the programming motion adopted by the committee for Bill C-47 had prevented the moving of amendments during the clause-by-clause study of the bill. For that reason, he asked that his motions now be selected at report stage. The member for Northumberland—Peterborough South echoed the same concerns, adding that rulings made by the chair of the committee had prevented members from moving new proposals to the bill.

As stated in *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, at pages 787 and 788:

...the Speaker could, if he or she thinks fit, call upon any Member who has given notice of an amendment to explain it so as to enable the Speaker to form a judgment upon it, but in practice, Members would send a written submission to the Speaker if there were any doubt as to the selection of their amendments for debate.

I would like to stress the latter part of this sentence. This important practice was also mentioned by the Assistant Deputy Speaker when she addressed the point of order on Friday.

If members wish to assist the Speaker in his deliberations, they are strongly encouraged to bring their arguments for the selection of their report stage motions by way of a written submission when they place them on notice. They can nonetheless rest assured that all report stage motions are always carefully analyzed by the Speaker, even if they are not accompanied by written submissions. The Speaker makes his determination after a thorough analysis of the committee's consideration of a bill, precedents and guidance provided by the Standing Orders. This includes considering whether or not motions could have been presented in committee.

[*Translation*]

As per usual practice, the Speaker's rationale for the selection of motions for Bill C-47 will be provided to the House when it is called for consideration at report stage.

TECHNICAL ISSUES RAISED DURING THE TAKING OF RECORDED DIVISION—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: Finally, the Chair would also like to revisit the technical issues raised during the taking of the recorded division held on Friday. This matter is of significant importance given that recorded divisions are scheduled regularly.

[*English*]

Casting one's vote is an important part of our parliamentary system and is central to each member's parliamentary duties. Members can exercise their vote in person, by rising in the House when their names are called or, since 2021, electronically through the voting application.

The process for electronic voting is spelled out in the order made on June 23, 2022. Subparagraph (o)(iv) of this order specifies that "any member unable to vote via the electronic voting system during the 10-minute period due to technical issues may connect to the virtual sitting to indicate to the Chair their voting intention by the House videoconferencing system."

[*Translation*]

If a member is not successful in casting their vote using the app, they may indicate on the House's Zoom feed how they wish to vote. They can simply connect to the feed, use the raised hand function, wait for the Speaker to recognize them and, when invited to do so, cast their vote, promptly—and I am emphasizing "promptly"—without getting into specifics or providing unnecessary details. This is especially important as there is generally no interpretation during this part of proceedings, as the Clerk announces the name of the member and their vote in English and French.

[*English*]

Last Friday, an unusually large number of members connected to the virtual sitting claiming technical difficulties. As Speaker, I was concerned and therefore mandated the House administration to conduct an assessment of the situation. I would like to commend our committed staff for having invested their time to do a fulsome analysis.

I am happy to report that, besides very minor issues affecting only a few members, no generalized outage occurred that day. The voting application worked as it was meant to.

That being said, issues may arise from situations that are not related to a malfunction of the voting application. While giving the benefit of the doubt and taking members at their word, the Chair has found no evidence of difficulties some members claimed to have experienced.

[Translation]

In a statement made on March 7, 2023, I indicated that the effectiveness of remote participation is based in large part on the use of proper equipment. This ranges from an optimal Internet connection, the type of device used and to the need for adequate sound quality. This includes the use of proper headsets with an integrated microphone. I therefore encourage members to ensure they are properly equipped before participating remotely in a sitting, including when using the voting application.

[English]

The Chair has the utmost respect for the voting process. The success of the voting application depends on the good faith of members. All members are to treat their right to vote in this place with the sanctity and respect it deserves.

I want to thank all members for their attention.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC) moved that Bill C-281, An Act to amend the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Act, the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act (Sergei Magnitsky Law), the Broadcasting Act and the Prohibiting Cluster Munitions Act, be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, as always, it is an honour and privilege to rise in this House on behalf of the people of Northumberland—Peterborough South. Today, it is a particular honour because I rise with respect to my private member's bill, Bill C-281, on human rights.

Just to give a little context before I jump into the substance of this legislation, I want to say that we are extremely blessed to live in the greatest country in the world, a country where we can be assured of the rule of law and where people can disagree without there being any physical violence. In the last three weeks of Parliament, I imagine we will hear some rancorous debate, which I am sure the Speaker will do a great job presiding over, along with some arguments and other things that may not be as pretty as they could be. However, they will be a lot better than the alternative, which, of course, would be violence.

In too many countries around the world, people have been resorting to violence. There are many countries where people will spend the night awake, waiting to see what their government might attempt to do to them. People who are just standing up for who they are, what they believe in and how they choose to worship stay up nights in living, shaking fear of an authoritarian regime or some goon or thug coming in to threaten them, simply because of the way they live. Worse yet, they may be arrested, put in jail or tortured. Right now, many are sitting around and rotting in horrible conditions, suffering through torture and unthinkable, unbelievable pain at the hands of governments around the world. Therefore, it gives me great pride today to discuss my private member's bill,

Private Members' Business

which seeks to at least move the ball a little bit forward towards more humane conditions while advocating for human rights around the world.

Bill C-281 has four primary sections, or clauses. The first section deals with prisoners of conscience. Prisoners of conscience are people around the world who are being detained, sitting in prisons right now, simply because of their beliefs or thoughts. They are fighting for virtuous causes like liberty, freedom of religion or freedom of expression. They are in incredible pain and suffering. Anything that Canadians and the Canadian government can do to alleviate or reduce their suffering is something that I think we should do as quickly as we can.

My private member's bill seeks to give the Canadian people and Parliament oversight of the government's advocacy for these individuals, these important people around the world. Specifically, it puts on to the government a reporting regime that forces it to report what actions it is taking to help prisoners of conscience around the world. It would have to report how many prisoners of conscience the government's Department of Foreign Affairs is aware of and what it is doing to aid their cause; it would also have to determine whether it has been deemed helpful by the families of these victims to publish their names.

I have had the great privilege of talking to some of the family members in Canada whose loved ones are in prisons around the world; there is one in particular who is in Venezuela. They want the name of their loved one, their brother in this case, to be published, because it would add *gravitas*. They would be able to point to a government report to say, "Yes, the Canadian government agrees with me. My loved one, my spouse, my sister or my child is being held not because they have done a crime but because they believed in the cause of freedom, democracy or religious freedom." The report will go on to say what the Canadian government is doing.

I will not cast aspersions in this House, because I do not think that would be parliamentary. However, I think it is fair to say that many observers out there have written about the fact that the cause of human rights has sometimes been forgotten when carrying out international diplomacy or economic trade. However, human rights should be something we stand on. Human rights should be something that demands transparency and accountability.

● (1120)

This private member's bill would get us there with respect to accountability and transparency. It would have the government tell us why it has not been taking action with respect to prisoners of conscience or individuals who believe that they are prisoners of conscience. There will be various groups of individuals and organizations that will look at this report and ask why a certain individual is not included or why there are only 10 prisoners of conscience in Venezuela, when surely there are many more than that. It would give family members and organizations the ability to push the government to help with care and advocacy and, hopefully, the release of their loved ones. As I said, these are some of the most honourable individuals I can imagine; they are people who have given their lives to the cause of liberty, democracy and freedom. As Canadians, we need to do everything we can to support them.

Private Members' Business

The next clause is with respect to the Magnitsky sanctions, which are, of course, named after Sergei Magnitsky. Magnitsky was a brilliant tax lawyer in Russia and one of the strongest fighters against Vladimir Putin's incredibly corrupt and devious regime. He stood up to Putin. Unfortunately, he ended up in a prison in Russia. A true warrior for the cause of integrity and honour, Magnitsky wound up passing away in that prison while fighting for what was right, for integrity and honour. The president of Russia, then and now, let him die there from a treatable medical condition that he would not allow him to get treatment for.

Magnitsky's friend and business colleague, Bill Browder, then went around the world trying to get Magnitsky sanctions in place. In my estimation, Magnitsky sanctions are incredibly powerful devices. They seek to put individual sanctions on some of the worst human rights violators in the world. Too often, in the past, human rights violators have gotten up in the morning, tortured victims, then hopped on their jets to attend cocktail parties in some of the most advanced economies around the world, hobnobbing with the world's elites. These are the lowest of the low; they deserve to be sanctioned and not to be given access to our country.

These Magnitsky sanctions are incredibly important tools in our tool box, and when the Magnitsky act was passed, there was a flurry of sanctions put in place for some human rights violators. We started towards the path of holding them accountable. It was a great step, I might add. However, in recent years, it has slowed down to an almost imperceptible trickle of people who have been named under the Magnitsky act. This is challenging.

What is being asked for in the second clause of my private member's bill is to look at giving Parliament oversight. We would not be taking away the power of imposing Magnitsky sanctions, although many legislative bodies around the world have done so. We are simply looking for the government to report back if the Senate, the House or a committee thereof says a person is terrible and is torturing people in Venezuela, Russia or Beijing. It then needs to find out why the government is not sanctioning that individual. All it would require is a very simple report, but it would add transparency and accountability to the government when it does not sanction a terrible human rights violator, when it is letting an individual get up in the morning and torture innocents, then, in the afternoon, fly their private jet to Toronto, B.C. or wherever to hobnob with some of our elites. It is a very reasonable bill in that it does not seek to go too far. It simply looks to hold the worst human rights violators in this world accountable.

The next section is with respect to the Broadcasting Act. During Vladimir Putin's illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, we saw that a foreign power can use Canadian airwaves to broadcast its propaganda. Fortunately, the CRTC did the right thing in pulling Russia's licence today, stopping it from broadcasting Vladimir Putin's hatred across Canadian airwaves. Unfortunately, there was no process in place, so the CRTC had to hodgepodge one together. This bill would give the CRTC a process to use when a genocidal state is using Canadian airwaves to broadcast its hatred.

• (1125)

We obviously do not want to restrict freedom of speech or freedom of expression unduly, so this would be a very limited prohibi-

tion in that it would need to be a genocidal state utilizing Canadian airwaves. The CRTC could then prevent it from broadcasting on Canadian airwaves. It is an oversight that this does not exist. The idea of a genocidal state broadcasting its hatred, propaganda and promotion of genocide on our airwaves is completely and utterly unacceptable. I am very proud of the proposed Broadcasting Act amendment.

The final amendment is about the prohibiting of cluster munitions. These are all great provisions, and they are all important to me, but this one is of particular importance and relevance to me. I have been to demining fields. We are talking about cluster munitions, but it is a similar concept in demining fields around the world. It is incredibly sad what cluster munitions and mines do to civilian populations. They primarily kill innocent civilians, and in many cases, children. Once the cluster munitions or mines are put down, they can take years or even decades to remove, making otherwise fertile farmland and areas where there could be schools and businesses completely useless for years and decades to come.

Even sadder is the fact that, often, these unexploded ordnances last for years and decades. The ones that are not found are the saddest of all; many children have lost their lives simply by walking somewhere. The really scary, sad and disturbing part is that cluster munitions are bomblets, or bombs of bombs. Imagine one bomb with thousands of little bombs inside that land all over. They are completely indiscriminate, which makes them particularly horrible and terrifying.

They land everywhere, and no one has a map or a marking of where these bomblets went because they are often dropped from thousands of feet up. The wind could take these things in a myriad of different directions. Therefore, mapping them out is nearly impossible. Even if countries that drop them wanted to remove them, it is very difficult to do so and requires a demining process.

The disturbing part is that these bomblets often look like shiny little toys. There have been many reports of small children going out to a play yard or a field and seeing these shiny toys; obviously, the worst happens. These tools are not even valuable when it comes to war. Because they are indiscriminate and not targetable, their value to an army is extremely limited. They are really just weapons of terror, weapons that are completely indiscriminate; because of that, they are particularly dangerous to civilians and children.

As part of this private member's process, I have had the ability to travel a bit in the country and meet with people in communities from all over who settled here in Canada, because they believe, as I do, that Canada is the greatest country on earth. They have told me their stories. They have told me about their suffering. More than once, in either one-on-one or group meetings, I have been brought to tears by their stories.

These individuals are people who have given up their lives, sacrificed their lives, for important things like making sure little girls have the opportunity to go to school; that children, regardless of where they live in the world, have the opportunity to seek an education and improve their lives; that people have the ability to vote for their leadership and not simply be told; that people enjoy freedom and have the right of personal self-determination; and that people have the right of liberty and are able to decide who they want to be, how they want to be and whom they want to love. These people need our help, and this is hopefully at least a small step in that direction, a step in re-establishing Canada as a human rights champion around the world, as it should be.

• (1130)

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for all the work he did on this bill. It was a pleasure to work with him on this.

One of the amendments the NDP brought forward at committee regarding this bill was to have a human rights strategy in place. Of course, it is very difficult to measure how the government is doing on human rights if there is no strategy to measure this by. Unfortunately, the Liberals took an opportunity to vote against bringing forward that amendment.

How does the member feel about our ability as parliamentarians, as the government, to be able to measure how well we are doing on human rights if we do not even have a human rights strategy in this country?

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, as members know, we supported that amendment and continue to support that.

My father, who was a businessman, used to say to me when I was young, “Son, what gets measured gets improved.” If we cannot measure something, it is very difficult to see whether we are improving or not. We simply do not know. I thought the NDP’s amendment was a great one and that it would give us the ability to measure how we are performing on the various human rights issues and to see whether we are getting better. As my father used to say, what gets measured gets better.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Madam Speaker, minutes after midnight on December 13, 1981, the secret police arrived at my family’s door and arrested my father. My father was a member of the Solidarity movement. He was arrested, detained and put in prison. Like many Solidarity activists, he was a prisoner of conscience. Afterwards, when we received letters of support internationally from people in countries like the Netherlands and elsewhere, as well as care packages, these things were really critical to maintaining my family’s spirits and my father’s spirits.

I just want to ask the hon. member how this legislation may help mobilize global support for prisoners of conscience, and their families as well, as they go through such trials.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, I thank your father for fighting for the cause of freedom. We would not be where we are in this country, and around the world in many of the liberal democracies we now enjoy, without the great service and sacrifice of people like your father, so thank you for that.

Private Members' Business

The idea for this legislation is that Canada would now put its stamp or seal behind those human rights advocates like your father and say that we, as a Canadian government, support them and are behind them, and that their family members can say, “Yes, the Canadian government says that my loved one is on the right side of history.”

• (1135)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the hon. member that he is to address questions and comments through the Chair and not directly to the member.

The hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his important bill. It is a step forward in terms of government transparency, which is what my question will focus on.

Bill C-281 does, however, raise some issues. Consider the case of Raif Badawi and his wife Ensaf Haidar, a past Bloc Québécois candidate. Mr. Badawi spent 10 years in a Saudi Arabian prison. Although he has been released from prison, he is not permitted to travel. He is not allowed to come here. In essence, he is still not really free. He is still over there.

It has been a long time. Canada has not been able to do anything for him. He served his 10 years in prison and remains in Saudi Arabia. The government has still not shown accountability. We have no idea what discussions the government has been having.

Apart from his bill, does my colleague have any ideas about how the government could be more transparent and take concrete action?

[*English*]

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, what I would say to that is that this legislation actually proposes a framework for human rights reporting and with respect to prisoners of conscience. The more we can raise the awareness of the Canadian public, and I know that all of Canada is in favour of human rights, the more we can get that case to build. I might say that the NDP amendment would have been helpful with that as well.

Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am speaking to Bill C-281 today and would like to comment on two main themes.

First, I would like to comment briefly on the portion of the bill that would amend the Broadcasting Act. My colleague, the hon. member for Pierrefonds—Dollard, began commenting on this during the debate at report stage, and I think it is worth highlighting a few points that come from this side of the House. Afterwards, I would like to speak to human rights generally and the government’s commitment to promoting and protecting human rights, both globally and here at home. This is a core part of our foreign policy and is essential to our party’s approach to politics.

Private Members' Business

Broadcasting plays an important role in Canadian society. It allows for Canadians to exchange ideas, enriches our democracy and can play an important role in advancing human rights. Bill C-281 would recognize this important role by prohibiting the issuance or renewal of broadcasting licences to broadcasters that are vulnerable to significant influence by certain foreign nationals or entities of concern. Measures to protect the broadcasting system from influences are important, especially when it comes to critical issues related to human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

That said, despite the intent behind this proposal, ensuring that broadcasts that go against Canada's fundamental commitment to human rights are not on the airwaves, the bill, in its original format, was troubling. I am glad that, thanks to Liberal proposals at the committee, it has been significantly improved. It is crucial to respect the independence of the CRTC as a quasi-judicial administrative tribunal that serves at arm's length from the federal government as a regulator for broadcasting and telecommunication. In Canada, the CRTC is our expert regulator, comprising professionals with comprehensive knowledge of the broadcasting industry. It is independent, and it is well known and recognized, as it operates outside of the political sphere and has done so since 1968. It must continue to act in the public interest and make use of the full regulatory tool kit. The bill would now ensure that the CRTC can use the full scope of its power to deal with broadcasters under the significant influence of an individual who has been sanctioned, or who has been implicated in genocide or other crimes against humanity.

Additionally, I would like to recognize the important role played by Canadian courts and by international tribunals to which Canada is a signatory, such as the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice, in making legal determinations of genocide and other crimes against humanity. While the House has an important role in shining a light on these types of bad acts and being at the leading edge of international responses, it is crucial that the political determinations we make in the House are not confused with decisions that have full legal standing both in Canada and abroad.

Next, I would like to speak to Canada's work in promoting and protecting human rights around the world, which goes far above and beyond the proposal in this bill. In fact, should the new reporting requirements for the government proposed in this bill go forward, I am confident Canadians would gain a better understanding of just how strong the government has been on this front. Just last month, the Minister of Foreign Affairs announced that Canada would be seeking a seat on the United Nations Human Rights Council for the 2028-30 term.

Human rights are the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. When there is greater respect for human rights globally, the world is more stable, prosperous and resilient. Unfortunately, they are also currently under attack, and the multilateral system that underpins these rights is under threat like never before. This is evident in challenges such as illegal wars of aggression against Ukraine, rising racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and discrimination and an intensifying backlash against the most basic rights of women, girls and 2SLGBTQI+ people.

In order to confront the challenges that lie ahead, we must work together to reinforce the foundation of human rights and strive to-

ward a more just tomorrow for everyone. Multilateral institutions play a crucial role in continued and effective engagement on human rights, online and off-line, and to holding countries accountable for their international human rights obligations, including respect for gender equality, the rights of freedom of expression, the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, and freedom of religion or belief. I encourage members of all parties to come together in support of initiatives that advance Canada's work on this matter, such as our candidacy for the UN Human Rights Council and many of the concepts proposed by this bill.

• (1140)

In her announcement, the Minister of Foreign Affairs outlined that Canada's candidacy will be based on six priorities. As a member of the council, Canada aims to support the vital and courageous work of human rights defenders, strive for a more inclusive future for all, advance reconciliation with indigenous people, prioritize gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in all of their diversity, reduce harms online, and work with others to address the adverse impacts of climate change, which Canadians across the country know all too well, given the wildfires raging across much of the country. These objectives are ambitious, but with determination and in close collaboration with other countries, indigenous partners and civil society we can advance these objectives and achieve a better future for all.

The minister also noted that the government's engagement on this issue is built on a desire to strengthen the international human rights system. It also reflects our approach here at home, where we stand up for the human rights of all Canadians. For example, we are currently celebrating Pride Month. It is a time for 2SLGBTQI+ communities and allies to come together to celebrate the resilience of the pride movement and to show the beauty and talent of our community, while also continuing to advocate for a safer and more inclusive Canada. It is necessary for us to keep in mind that, while it is important that we take the opportunity to recognize the hard-earned victories of the pride movement, we must continue pushing back on the sharp rise in anti-trans hate, anti-2SLGBTQI+ legislation, protests at drag events, the banning of educational books in schools, and calls against raising the pride flag. I am glad that, on this side of the House, working on that type of issue is a key part of our approach to human rights.

[*Translation*]

In that regard, I want to thank all the municipalities across the country that raised the pride flag on June 1. I want to thank them because it is important. Resistance is rising across the world. Last week's flag raising is humbling, and I want to thank all of the mayors who participated.

Private Members' Business

[English]

Canada's Human Rights Council candidacy adds to a consistently strong voice for the protection and promotion of human rights and the advancement of democratic values. It is without question that the human rights bodies of the United Nations are the foundation of a strong and effective international human rights system.

Canada is party to several international human rights instruments and disarmament conventions, including the Convention on Cluster Munitions, to which we acceded in 2015. This convention, in fact, takes inspiration from the work of another great former Liberal foreign affairs minister, the Hon. Lloyd Axworthy, who led the charge in the 1990s on banning the use of land mines. Cluster munitions pose a devastating and indiscriminate threat to civilians in conflict and post-conflict contexts. Having immediate and long-term effects due to high failure rates, these weapons are dangerous and hinder sustainable development and post-conflict recovery for affected societies.

Canada has played a critical role in encouraging the international community to accede to the convention and ultimately eradicate these deadly weapons from the world. Canada meets its international obligations outlined in the convention through the Prohibiting Cluster Munitions Act. We have also made significant investments to support programming that aims to eliminate cluster munitions and all unexploded ordnances of war. Over the past two decades, Canada has contributed over \$450 million to this end. Our international programming addresses key elements of explosive ordnance clearance work, including national implementation support, stockpile destruction, gender mainstreaming, risk education, training and victim assistance. This work is essential to the sustainable facilitation of the safe return of civilian populations, reconstruction of affected communities and the restoration of essential services for generations to come.

All countries have a duty to promote and protect human rights under international law and the United Nations charter.

I want to thank my hon. colleague for putting this bill forward, and I look forward to further debate.

• (1145)

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madame Speaker, before I begin my comments, I would like to say a few words. Quebec is in a very difficult situation right now. Over 150 forest fires are burning on the north shore, in Abitibi and in Lac-Saint-Jean. My colleagues are working on the front lines of that situation. Thousands of families have been evacuated.

Meanwhile, another tragedy has occurred on the north shore. Five people went capelin fishing and drowned. Four of those were children. It is not clear whether they were members of the same family, but it is a terrible tragedy.

I would like to say to the devastated families and the families who have been evacuated that we are thinking of them and they have our heartfelt sympathy. We are hoping for rain as soon as possible to put an end to the forest fires.

I thank my colleague for introducing Bill C-281. It is an important bill that is quite robust and touches on many issues. I think that, more than ever, we need greater transparency on human rights. I think that is one of the objectives of this bill.

This bill has four components.

The first objective of the bill is to increase government transparency. The government will be required to report to the House on international human rights issues. It will therefore be required to report more frequently. I will talk about that later.

The second objective of the bill is to impose new measures to counter corrupt foreign officials, particularly by requiring that the Minister of Foreign Affairs respond within 40 days to any committee report recommending sanctions against a foreign national under the Magnitsky Law.

The third objective of the bill is to prohibit the licensing of foreign propaganda broadcasting undertakings when the state is recognized by the House of Commons as having committed genocide or is facing sanctions. No one needs to be a genius to know that this refers primarily to China, but also to Russia and other states.

The fourth objective of the bill is to prohibit any investment in an entity that contravenes the Prohibiting Cluster Munitions Act. Still today, throughout the world, weapons that were once used in a war are still on the ground ten years later. Children often go through those areas where bombs may have fallen and where parts of those devices may still explode and cause serious injuries and deaths. Moreover, the victims are often children. It is unacceptable that that is still happening today.

Let us go back to the first component, government transparency regarding international human rights. I think that more than ever there is a need to ensure that Canada's actions advance the ongoing cases and issues of those who are unjustly detained. Transparency would allow for joint work with organizations such as Amnesty International. It would also enable families to be actively involved in a communication and dissemination strategy that is consistent with their needs. That would make it possible for civil society to support advocacy and grievances and for elected officials to follow up on real-life situations, which would help advance international human rights.

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I spoke earlier about the case of Raif Badawi. This is a clear case of unjust imprisonment. Mr. Badawi was imprisoned for 10 years simply for having posted things against his government on Facebook. His case received a lot of media coverage. His wife is still advocating for him. She is travelling around the world to talk about her husband's case, to talk about human rights and all these issues. In Canada, we are doing nothing. We have no news. We do not know what is happening. Mr. Badawi is no longer in prison, but he is still stuck in his country. He would like to come and join his children, whom he has not seen for 10 years. His wife is here and his children are growing up. It is outrageous that we have no news and that the government is not more transparent.

The second component, imposing new measures against corrupt foreign officials, speaks to all the foreign interference problems that have been talked about in recent weeks. It is completely inconceivable that foreign individuals in Canada can threaten Canadians here, in Canada. We have heard stories. In the Uyghur community, people have been threatened and harassed and families have split up. It is an inconceivable tragedy.

Of course, we also immediately think of the case of the Chinese diplomat linked to the member for Wellington—Halton Hills, which we discussed here for many weeks. Despite all the questions asked, we never truly learned what the government did or did not know. We never received much of an answer to that. I think it is really important, particularly since the government is not acting quickly to stop activities that jeopardize the safety of a Canadian individual. That is the situation. We asked questions, but we do not know what the government knows. We are unable to get to the bottom of things.

• (1150)

This bill will ensure that there will be more frequent reporting. Perhaps we may get answers.

I sit on the Special Committee on the Canada-People's Republic of China Relationship. Recently we submitted a report entitled "A Threat to Canadian Sovereignty: National Security Dimensions of the Canada-People's Republic of China Relationship". It is an unnecessarily long title, but it addresses human rights in China. The report states:

The report recounted threats and intimidation faced by individuals with personal connections or work related to the PRC at the hands of PRC state actors and their proxies. Among other things, witnesses spoke of:

Attempts to limit freedom of expression through threatening phone calls or emails, cyberhacking and physical confrontation;

I would also like to mention that the Canada—Hong Kong Parliamentary Friendship Group met with representatives from Hong Kong Watch last week. They reported situations similar to those disclosed by the witnesses who appeared before the special committee. These examples of threats and intimidation can be found in the report, which describes them as the "coordinated use of counter-protesters, Chinese international students, and pro-Beijing United Front organizations to block and intimidate peaceful demonstrations in Toronto, Montreal, Calgary, Vancouver and Ottawa".

Another example cited in the report is the "publication of private information online to intimidate protest participants".

The report continues as follows:

During the study, some witnesses alleged the harassment they experienced had been encouraged or instigated by PRC diplomats. The Special Committee therefore recommended that the Government of Canada convey, to the Ambassador of the PRC in Canada, that any interference with the rights and freedoms of people in Canada would result in serious consequences. It also recommended that the Government of Canada carefully review accredited diplomatic personnel in the People's Republic of China's diplomatic missions to Canada.

After much harassment in the House, Canada finally expelled the diplomat who had been involved with the MP. However, it was complicated and took a long time, and it had to be made public before the government decided to take action.

Canada can no longer afford to be complacent about situations like this. It is unacceptable. We are being laughed at. Swift, consistent responses are needed to counter this type of interference, which threatens our sovereignty.

The third element of Bill C-281 seeks to prohibit broadcasting licences from being issued to foreign propaganda companies when the House of Commons or Senate has recognized the foreign government as having committed genocide or when it is subject to sanctions.

The same special committee report mentions that the People's Republic of China has been identified "as one of the countries that has attempted to interfere in Canadian elections". That much is proven.

I remember when a representative from Hong Kong Watch appeared before the committee. I told her that there was a documented case of interference in the election of a municipal candidate in Brossard. The Chinese regime was sending messages in Mandarin to people in Brossard using a platform called WeChat to encourage them to vote for that candidate. I naively asked the representative from Hong Kong Watch whether such a thing were possible at the provincial or federal level, and she basically laughed in my face. She found the question to be completely ridiculous because the answer was so obvious to her.

It is clear that the Chinese regime has been attempting for years to influence municipal, provincial and federal elections here in Canada in any way possible. There is no doubt that issues are coming to light. People are talking about it more and more, but the government is still not doing anything about it.

I want to come back to another aspect of the special committee's report with regard to ACHK. It reads, and I quote:

The organization added, "[m]any Canadian political actors genuinely believe that they are interacting with community organizers and grassroots organizations, when in fact they are interacting with actors that have close connections with the Chinese consulates or the Embassy."

This happened in Brossard. We know that the Chinese police stations start out as community centres that help people with various issues, such as integration, poverty and employment. Then these centres slowly turn into intelligence centres.

• (1155)

It is not clear. There are grey areas. People naively thought that these centres had been shut down, but we recently learned that they are still open and operating. I am referring to the two centres in Brossard and the one in Montreal. They were supposedly shut down. The RCMP—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I apologize for interrupting the member, but I would like to point out to him that his time is up. I must now give the floor to the next speaker.

The hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

[*English*]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank colleagues of mine who have spoken to Bill C-281.

The New Democrats will be supporting this bill at third reading. I would like to thank the member for Northumberland—Peterborough South for bringing it forward. It has been a real pleasure to work with him and his team on this bill over the past few months.

The reason for this bill is that we want to make sure Canada's laws protect human rights. We want to strengthen that legislation. We want to strengthen how Canada acts with regard to international human rights. For me, I want to remember, while we do this work, that people's lives are at risk. These are people who are being detained, who have disappeared and who are suffering greatly. Canada could play an important role there.

I want to start my speech today by talking about a few of those people.

I want to talk about Vladimir Kara-Murza, who has recently been sentenced to 25 years in prison in Russia because he opposed Putin's illegal war in Ukraine. I know that a number of people from all parties are hoping that the government will offer Vladimir Kara-Murza honorary citizenship in Canada to help protect him.

I also know there are others. It has been over a decade, getting close to two decades, since Huseyin Celil, a Canadian citizen, has been able to see his family. There is also Dong Guangping, whose wife and daughter are Canadians. We do not know where he is right now.

There is a lot of work to do on human rights, and I want to make sure that we always centre this work on the people who suffer, the people who are impacted by this.

As many have said before me, this bill has four changes to pieces of Canadian legislation. It requires the minister to publish an annual report on human rights, as well as a list of prisoners of conscience for whom the government is actively working. It amends the Prohibiting Cluster Munitions Act. It amends the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act, the Sergei Magnitsky act. It also requires the issue or renewal of broadcasting licences in the case of genocide to be prohibited. Obviously these are all things that I think are very important and very strong to do.

We were happy to bring some amendments forward. That first piece about providing the list is important. I know the member for

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Northumberland—Peterborough South spoke to many families of victims, and they wanted more information; they wanted that there. We were also conscious that there are some concerns. We do not want to put people's lives in danger. We do not want to make situations worse. We always need to act with an abundance of caution when we are working with things that are very sensitive.

The NDP brought forward an amendment that would change the list to give the government the ability to protect people but still give information to families, parliamentarians, activists and human rights defenders around the world. It was a compromise, and a really strong one, that makes the legislation better. It was lovely to see support from all parties on that.

Our second amendment was on a human rights strategy. I have brought this up in this House before. We asked for there to be a human rights strategy in this country. Most Canadians probably feel we have one. We do not have a human rights strategy. We have no benchmark to measure how well the government of the day is doing in protecting human rights. That does not exist.

It makes sense to me, and I think it is a very common-sense thing, to include that and have the government do it. Unfortunately, the government chose to vote against that. It chose not to move forward on that in a way that makes me believe it simply did not want to do the hard work. It simply did not want to have to do the work to create that strategy and keep it updated.

It is very disappointing, particularly considering that the government is asking for a seat at the United Nations Human Rights Council as we speak. It is very disappointing, because time and time again, we hear the government talking about being defenders of human rights while at the same time failing time and time again to do the hard work to protect human rights. A perfect example of that for me is watching the Liberal government, as reported yesterday in *The Globe and Mail*, continue to sell more arms to Saudi Arabia than any other country aside from the United States, despite the fact that Saudi Arabia has an appalling human rights record, despite the fact that this does not align with our Arms Trade Treaty and despite the fact that the government continues to claim that it has stopped doing it.

• (1200)

As we see, there is a record of the government speaking about human rights, and talking about being human rights defenders, but failing to act when it comes to it.

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One of the things that I really want to talk about today is the piece in this bill around cluster munitions. This, for me, is the absolute ultimate in the Liberals' ability to say one thing when they are in opposition and do a completely different thing once they are elected as government. In the Prohibiting Cluster Munitions Act, section 11 carves out the ability for the Canadian military to use cluster munitions in the event it is working with another military that uses them. In 2013, the NDP worked very closely with the Liberal government to put restrictions in place to fix that loophole. Paul Dewar, the NDP foreign affairs critic at the time, said, "when we sign international agreements, it's important that we live up to our signature. It's important that the legislation we adopt does not undermine the treaty we negotiated and signed on to and accepted."

There is one other quote that I would like to share, if I could, which states:

Canada should not be escaping its responsibilities by choosing to implement a treaty in this way. It makes a mockery of our commitment. It makes a mockery of our understanding of what it means to actually put into effect and to put into operation a treaty obligation that we signed. It will provide for total confusion with respect to what Canada and Canadians troops have actually agreed to do.

That is why, while we support the bill going to committee, we have great difficulty with the way in which the government has chosen to interpret the treaty in clause 11 of the bill.

That sounds like it was Paul Dewar, but in fact, it was Bob Rae, speaking as a Liberal, saying how much Liberals disagreed with clause 11.

The language New Democrats chose in our amendment to close that loophole in Bill C-281 was the exact language that our former colleague Marc Garneau had used when he stood in this place and said that section 11 was a loophole that needed to be closed. Again, we find ourselves in a situation where the Liberals have said time and time again, when they were not in government, that they wanted to fix this loophole. Some of the pre-eminent voices within their caucus, Mr. Garneau and Mr. Rae, people who would be seen as good, staunch Liberals, wanted to fix that loophole and saw that as important, but when it came down to doing the work, when it came down to them actually fixing it, they chose not to.

It has been very difficult for me to listen to the government try to make excuses for this. It has been very difficult for me to listen to Liberals try to justify why they continue to support the loophole for cluster munitions, which is similar to why they continue to sell arms to Saudi Arabia. Before they were elected, they also said they would support nuclear disarmament, but whenever we asked them whether they would even attend the TPNW, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, even as observers, even the fact that many NATO members do attend as observers, they declined to participate.

My ask of the government members would be for them to please be the Liberals they were before they were elected in 2015 and to please think about nuclear disarmament and human rights the way they did before 2015 because, since 2015, their record has been appalling, and human rights are far too important for this continual politicization.

• (1205)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, given the critical nature of this debate, I wonder if you could confirm that the House has quorum.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will double-check.

And the count having been taken:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We do have quorum.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I welcome colleagues, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak about Bill C-281, the international human rights act, and to congratulate my colleague. Over this journey we have had together on this bill, I have been working to get his constituency's name right. It is Northumberland—Peterborough South. I want to recognize the member for Northumberland—Peterborough South for putting forward this bill. I spoke at report stage about the provisions of this bill, and I want to focus on something else at third reading, which is how people will be able to use this bill.

I spent the entire parliamentary recess week in the greater Toronto area, meeting with different communities, with the primary goal of sharing and discussing Bill C-281. There was a lot of support from different communities, from the Yazidi community, the Persian community, various African communities, the Hong Kong community and eastern European communities. There is a lot of support for this bill in the impact it would have. People were asking how we would use it and what concrete difference it would make.

My hope is that Canadians of all backgrounds would eagerly await, every year, the government's publication of its annual report on international human rights. People will be able to look through that report to say, "What does the government say it is doing? What are the areas where the government is not doing enough?"

They will then be able to hold the government accountable and say, "Why has it not talked about Ethiopia? Why has it not talked about Yazidis? Why has it not talked about Rohingya this year?"

They will be able to look to see where the areas of action have been and where the areas of inaction have been and then hold the government accountable to ask why more has not been done. They can then look at the following year's report to ask if there has been progress in relation to the previous year's report or not. Are there individuals that communities want to see the government advocating for, in terms of their release? Are those names in the report? If they are not in the report this year, there is a jumping-off point for advocating for their inclusion next year

Right now, so much of this advocacy, whether it concerns prisoners of conscience, human rights in general or listing individuals under various sanctions provisions, happens in a bit of a black hole of information. There are no requirements right now around this sort of reporting. If people want to advocate for individuals to be listed, for sanctions to be considered in various ways or for human rights advocacy, it can be very difficult to know what the government is doing and where the access points are for that advocacy.

This bill strengthens the Canadian government's engagement on human rights, we hope. It strengthens the tools that parliamentarians have, but it also provides broader tools for communities across the country who are concerned about human rights issues.

If one wants to see somebody sanctioned for human rights abuses they are involved in, one can advocate directly to members of Parliament, who can then put forward motions at committee. If one wants to know whether the government is doing anything on a particular human rights issue, one can look at the human rights report and ask if it is doing anything, if it is not doing enough or if one is satisfied. Then one can advocate for the government to change its approach and hope to see that change in approach reflected the following year.

This is important for communities of people who are concerned about human rights issues, not because this bill is going to usher in nirvana, and not because things will be perfect after the bill is passed, but because it provides critical tools of advocacy and mechanisms for people to know what is going on, to advocate and to make a difference.

• (1210)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member for Northumberland—Peterborough South has the floor for his right to reply.

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to start by thanking all of the individuals who played such important roles in getting this legislation before the House today, up for a final vote and, hopefully, off to the Senate.

I will start with thanking the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan. He worked very closely with me in drafting and putting this legislation together. I would like to also thank all of the non-government agencies and the families of victims who I had the opportunity to talk to, along with all the groups from various communities across the country and the world that have come together to signal their support. I would also like to thank Bill Browder for his support.

I have many thanks for the contributions from the members of the different parties who helped out, including the Bloc Québécois, the NDP and the Liberal Party. There were some substantial amendments made at committee. There was significant debate and long discussions. I am proud to say that I think we finished in a very good place.

There were a number of concerns. I do not think any one of our parties got exactly what we wanted out of the amendment process, but perhaps that is a signal that we got what we should get, with one exception. I thought the NDP amendment for a plan of strategy

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for human rights was excellent. I was sad to see it ruled out of order by the Chair.

As I said, this legislation has four critical parts that I believe would help the cause of human rights in Canada and around the world. The first of these respects prisoners of conscience, those heroes around the world who are fighting for important rights, such as for young girls to have the ability to pursue an education; for people to have the ability to live in a country free of government tyranny; and for people to pursue democracy, freedom and liberty and live their lives as they see fit without potentially fearing imprisonment or worse. The part on prisoners of conscience is critical.

The second critical part is having parliamentary oversight of Magnitsky sanctions. This is important. I am hopeful that this piece of legislation will not only allow Parliament to make its reports, but also encourage the government, maybe even future Conservative governments, to take the steps they need to make sure Magnitsky sanctions are put in place against some of the worst offenders. As I have said numerous times, it just seems shameful to me that, in this day and age, we allow violators of human rights to torture their victims in the morning and then take their private jets to fly around the world to hobnob with the world's elite in the afternoon.

Third, with respect to the Broadcasting Act, I think this is an amendment that only makes sense. Genocidal states should not be allowed to use Canadian airwaves to tout their propaganda. Just to add to that, we have seen what foreign interference can mean for our democracy and the challenges that can impose. Canadians should have a full, free and open ability to understand and give consent. We should also make sure that genocidal states are not broadcasting their hatred on Canadian airwaves. That seems to be only common sense.

Finally, with respect to cluster munitions, of course these are horrible, terrible things. Canada has had a leading role, going all the way back to the Harper government, in outlawing and making them illegal. This will reduce the ability of Canadian companies to finance the construction and manufacture of cluster munitions.

I am proud to be the sponsor of this bill and proud to be the member for Northumberland—Peterborough South.

• (1215)

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

[*Translation*]

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

[*English*]

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

Points of Order

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to order made on June 23, 2022, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 7, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO ORDER PAPER QUESTIONS

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order to draw attention to a procedural matter related to Question No. 1337, which I submitted on March 21.

In this Order Paper question, I asked for a detailed breakdown of spending from the mission cultural fund. For the sake of time, I will spare reading the text of the question into the record, but my point of order relates to a passage found on page 523 of Bosc and Gagnon, which states:

While oral questions are posed without notice on matters considered to be of an urgent nature, written questions are placed on the Order Paper after due notice, with the intent of seeking from the Ministry detailed, lengthy or technical information related to "public affairs"...Members may request that the Ministry respond within 45 calendar days, generally by adding a sentence to that effect either before or after the text of the question, or by so indicating to the Clerk when submitting the question.

With regard to Question No. 1337, the government stated as follows:

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

To restate, the government has stated it could not respond to the question in the 45 allotted days. As such, it did not answer the question, as required by the Standing Orders, within the allotted time. That is because Standing Order 39(5)(b) states:

If such a question remains unanswered at the expiration of the said period of 45 days, the matter of the failure of the ministry to respond shall be deemed referred to the appropriate standing committee. Within five sitting days of such a referral the Chair of the committee shall convene a meeting of the committee to consider the matter of the failure of the ministry to respond.

The key word here is "unanswered". I have indicated my desire to have the question answered in 45 days, per the Standing Orders, and the government has now stated that the question could not be answered within that timeline. Due to this, per the Standing Orders, after 45 days my question remains open without a response.

Before (5)(b) of Standing Order 39 came into effect in 2001, governments routinely ignored the 45-day deadline to answer questions. Following the adoption of this rule, the government began to respect the 45-day deadline. However, it appears that the government is attempting to circumvent this rule to thwart the intended protection offered to members of Parliament by Standing Order 39(5)(b). That is, it stated on the matter of the question that the government cannot respond within the time allotted.

I think it hopes that would hold water with the Speaker, and that is why this point of order requires a different level of scrutiny and response than previous rulings made on related matters in the past.

The Speaker often cites how what cannot be done directly cannot be done indirectly. The government's acknowledgement that it did not answer Question No. 1337 by saying it could not produce the information in the time allotted is an example of that principle.

The Speaker's rulings have established that access to information from the government is a fundamental privilege of a parliamentarian. It is also a critical aspect of the functioning of our system of democracy. When the government flouts its responsibility to provide this information, the system fails. That is why, in a related matter, many members of the press gallery are raising concerns about the breakdown of the access to information system.

The government has also begun to argue in its responses that time allotted to respond to questions could lead to incomplete and misleading information. That too is a contravention of the Standing Orders.

I ask the Speaker to consider this. If the government does not have the processes in place to answer questions, it is incumbent upon it to change those processes, not to contravene the Standing Orders. I ask that the Speaker respect this principle in their ruling. If the Speaker rules that the government can satisfy the Standing Orders by saying that it cannot respond to the question in the time allotted, then none of us should bother submitting Order Paper questions anymore.

● (1220)

While I suspect the government would not much mind that outcome, the House is governed by rules that allow parliamentarians to access information necessary to do their job for a reason. In this instance, the government's decision to flout the Standing Orders severely hampered my ability, as a parliamentarian, to scrutinize a government expenditure that has been in the news for many weeks. I hope you consider this impact in your ruling and I would like to explain why.

This question related to expenses in the mission cultural fund. Every year, the government spends millions of dollars on this fund that purportedly assists with Canada's diplomatic efforts abroad. Given the current state of geopolitics, this could be a reasonable expenditure.

The problem is that I and, by virtue of me not having this information, Canadians have no real way of knowing because there is precious little information regarding how this particular fund selects project and is managed and how success is measured. The government's decision to flout the Standing Orders has made this situation worse.

I require a response to this question because last year, the foreign affairs minister made blunt comments emphasizing Canada's lack of military power. She stressed that the federal government's current strategy is to continue to rely on soft power as the government's primary tool to influence other nations.

The concept of cultural diplomacy is the formal term for a notion that soft power can be exerted through sharing values like food, visual arts, music and literature. One of the government's primary vehicles regarding cultural diplomacy is the opaque and, frankly, questionably managed mission cultural fund.

Much has already been recently reported about the value for money that Canadian taxpayers may or may not get from this fund. More has been written about the provocative nature of some of the events that have been funded.

The bigger issue, and the issue I ask the Chair to rule on, is the government's muted and closed-door response to both of these issues. That is because you should not rule that the government's statement that it cannot provide this information in the time allotted is a satisfaction of the Standing Orders.

Very little has been said by the Liberal government to defend the program or describe how the fund is furthering broader diplomatic goals. How can I, as a parliamentarian, ascertain value for money if the government flouts, in the Standing Orders, questions about the matter?

For a government that loves nothing more than to loudly honk about spending money, the statement regarding my question raises many other questions. If the fund is not yielding impressive results, why hide them? Why not brag about how much has been spent, as it does with so many other programs? Why not disclose where the expenditures remain and what they accomplished? What criteria was used to select projects and the recipients of contracts?

Coming back to the matter at hand, my point of order simply asks you to rule that when the government substantively ignores much of the substance of an Order Paper question by saying it cannot respond within the time allotted, it should be considered an open question and it could also be considered a failure to answer for the purposes of Standing Order 39(5)(b).

That way the government's refusal to answer a written question can be referred to a committee for review. It is unacceptable for the government to state that it cannot provide the information in the 45-day time period. That is not my problem. I ask the Chair to rule in my favour that this question remains open.

• (1225)

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, I understand that the member did receive an answer to the question. She may not like the answer, but she did receive one.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, like the previous member, I stand today to address some of what I believe are very serious challenges when it comes to the questions posed related to the Order Paper questions.

I would read from the Standing Orders of the House of Commons. This is the September 2021 edition where 39(5)(b) states:

If such a question remains unanswered at the expiration of the said period of 45 days, the matter of the failure of the ministry to respond shall be deemed referred to the appropriate standing committee. Within five sitting days of such a referral the Chair of the committee shall convene a meeting of the committee to consider the matter of the failure of the ministry to respond. The question shall be designated as referred to committee on the Order Paper and, notwithstanding Standing Order 39(4), the member may submit one further question for each question so designated.

Points of Order

The member who put the question may rise in the House under Questions on the Order Paper and give notice that he or she intends to transfer the question and raise the subject matter thereof on the adjournment of the House, and the order referring the matter to committee is thereby discharged.

There is a growing trend when it comes to the responses that the government has brought forward to Order Paper questions that I have seen and with the questions that I have brought forward to this House.

I would specifically refer to Question No. 604 put forward by me, which was signed by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence. The information provided in that answer varies differently from information that was both reported in the public and information that I received via members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

For context, for the Speaker and for those watching, this has to do with a number of Canadian Armed Forces personnel who were put on leave due to their choice of not—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to indicate that I get the hon. member's point and I will take the information under advisement.

I want to remind members who are getting up on this point of order that our precedents are clear that it is not for the Chair to rule on the content of the responses to written questions.

Indeed, in a ruling on a similar matter, on April 25, 2022, at page 4310 of the Debates, the Chair stated:

The Chair is of the view that ruling on the completeness of responses to written questions is tantamount to ruling on their content, and that is not the Chair's role.

Therefore, although the hon. member is mentioning that the information was different, he may not like the information that he received, but he did receive a response.

I will go to another point of order if the hon. member is finished. If he wants to continue on with respect to the information he just provided, as I indicated, he may not have been satisfied with the information he received, but it is very clear that it is not the responsibility of the Chair to rule on the information he has received.

I would ask the hon. member to wrap it up, please, because points of order and questions of privilege need to be succinct and to the point and should not drag on.

The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, absolutely. Personally, I would not want to drag it on. I would just point to Standing Order 19 on points of order, which indicates the effort of being succinct certainly when addressing these fundamental questions we have before us.

Points of Order

There are three specific questions. To ensure that I am in fact succinct, I would simply reference specifically the other two questions I am calling the Chair to look at, not just with respect to the government having provided a response, but as to whether or not that response was satisfactory.

With respect to the work we do within this place, it is fundamentally important that Canadians can trust the information that is provided. Therefore, this has far less to do with whether I am satisfied with the response, as that is not even relevant to the discussion, but about the government hiding behind procedure and the ability to simply reply by saying it cannot reply, or in some cases it simply seems like it is not willing to do the work.

I would refer you to Question No. 286, signed by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. There is a very clear unwillingness on behalf of the ministry to provide information. Again, it is not that I am dissatisfied with the answer, but the fact that it seems there is an unwillingness on the part of the government to provide any information related to the substance of the question. I may not like the answer, but it is not the responsibility of the government to decide whether or not it likes the question.

I would further refer you to Question No. 565, signed by the then parliamentary secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, which has to do specifically with the work that is being done at the ethics committee, of which I am a part. The issue is not whether I agree with the substance, but that the government seems to be using the 45-day timeline requirement to simply not table a response in this place. It can then wash its hands of anything to do with those important questions that, in some cases, my constituents bring forward, like I referenced with—

• (1230)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am satisfied with the information that I have received.

Does the hon. member for South Surrey—White Rock also want to weigh in on this point of order?

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Madam Speaker, I rise on a different point of order.

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

Does the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill want to add to this point of order?

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Madam Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. I just want to respond to the deputy House leader's assertion that I did not like the response.

For your information, and for that of the table staff who are perhaps providing you information, the point is that the government said that it could not respond to the question in the time allotted. Therefore, it has stated that it could not respond.

Whether or not I like that or the government likes that is immaterial; the reality is, the government, by its own admission, said that it could not respond to the question in the time allotted. *Ergo*, the question remains open. *Ergo*, the Standing Orders have been violated, and I ask you to review that similarly.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Though I appreciate the additional information, I am not sure whether the government was indicating that it would not respond at all, so I will take the information under advisement.

Is the hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil rising on this point of order?

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am rising on the same point of order. I want to thank the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill for bringing this very important matter to your attention, because I too have a similar situation. I am not going to reference all of the Standing Orders, as I think the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill has done that, but this is in relation to Question No. 1357. If you will indulge me, I asked this question of the government:

With regard to government expenditures related to vacations by the Prime Minister outside of Canada, since November 4, 2015, broken down by each vacation: (a) what was the date and location of each trip; (b) for each vacation in (a), what were the total costs incurred by the government, including those incurred by security and support staff, for (i) accommodations, (ii) per diems, (iii) other expenses, broken down by type of expense; (c) what was the total amount of expenses related to the trips, such as flights, incurred by the government that were reimbursed by the Prime Minister; and (d) what number of travellers were [reimbursed]....

It is not that the government did not respond within 45 days. It did not answer the questions that I had asked. It only referred to the Privy Council Office.

Again I refer to the importance of the intervention by the member for Calgary Nose Hill. On behalf of Canadians and the people I represent in Barrie—Innisfil, I note that my question was not answered. The government needs to respond to ensure the transparency and openness that these Order Paper questions call for. I want you to consider that in your deliberations as well.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will certainly consider that.

The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George is also rising. Is it on this point of order?

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, it is on a separate but similar point of order.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Okay. It is on a separate point of order.

I will indicate that I have heard enough on this particular matter. I will take the information under advisement and will come back to members if required.

There are quite a few points of order. Other members had their hands up before the hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George, so I am going to the member for South Surrey—White Rock.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order in relation to the vote that took place on Friday, June 2, 2023. I want to express my thanks to the Speaker for returning to the House with the results of his investigation into the technical issues that were experienced. With the indulgence of the Chair, I would like to make a few brief points to add some context and then ask for a clarification from the Speaker.

First, as the chief opposition whip, I would point out that votes on a Friday are rare and unusual. In my caucus, we allow members who do not have further responsibilities in Parliament on Fridays to travel back to their constituencies to tend to community and family matters. This is a policy that helps members who have long commutes to and from their ridings.

In the Conservative caucus, we have 14 members from Saskatchewan, 29 from Alberta and 13 from British Columbia. That is 56 members from the west. To accommodate these members and others who travel great distances to perform their elected responsibilities, governments have generally avoided forcing these kinds of votes on Fridays. However, the government is in a rush to pass its budget implementation legislation, something the NDP is eager to help it do.

When the parliamentary—

• (1235)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I remind the hon. member not to go into debate and to go into the issue itself, because what the hon. member is bringing up is debate. If she can get to the exact point, that would be better.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Madam Speaker, I am trying to get there.

To put this in context, when the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader surprised the House with a motion to proceed to orders of the day, a non-debatable motion, the Liberals triggered a vote on short notice, catching many members off guard, and we—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): This is going into debate. The hon. member—

Hon. Kerry-Lynn Findlay: Madam Speaker—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have the floor right now.

I want to remind the hon. member that what she is providing right now is more debate. The hon. member and all members in this House are well aware that votes can be had at any time and that we need to be ready to respond if required.

If the hon. member wants to discuss the technical issues that were experienced, based on the report of the Speaker I am willing to entertain that. I am not willing to entertain debate on the issue.

The hon. official opposition whip.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Madam Speaker, I am trying to provide context because we are seeking clarification from the Speaker, including in my own situation, where I had no use of my camera on my computer and had to switch to my phone. As you may recall, I also did not have the proper headset. I appreciate that my vote was counted, but these things happened on a Friday. I am certainly going to encourage all members of the House to make sure they have proper equipment and access at all times regardless, because of what you just said.

The clarification I seek is this: is the Chair contemplating the question of privilege raised by the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader? As you are aware, the parliamentary

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secretary rose in this place following the vote and accused the Conservatives of being in contempt of Parliament, which is a serious accusation. Such an accusation would normally be raised as a question of privilege and would then be contemplated by the Speaker, who would decide if there was a prima facie case of privilege. I note that the member did not explicitly state that he was raising the matter as a question of privilege.

It is a common practice for other members to return to the House to make arguments as they see fit if the matter is being considered as a question of privilege. Therefore, it would be helpful to all members if the Chair clarified whether a question of privilege is being contemplated. For our part, I can assure the House that the Conservative caucus holds the highest regard for the institution of Parliament. We do, however, have contempt for the Liberal-NDP government that is in the process of forcing a budget through.

Some hon. members: Debate.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: That said, I thank the Chair for clarification on this issue.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I appreciate that members are trying to indicate that this is debate, but I am the Chair and am well able to decide whether it is debate or not.

I want to advise the member that no question of privilege was raised. I have no way of knowing whether someone is contemplating one. It is not something we will need to come back to the House on.

As for voting, as indicated, every member in the House has a responsibility to ensure that they have the necessary tools, whether it is their headphones, their phone or their computer. There are already procedures in place, which are spelled out, for what to do if they are not able to vote.

As indicated, the technical team looked on our side, the side of the House, to see if there were issues technically and none were seen. I want to remind members that they all have responsibilities. We know it is a privilege to go into our ridings when the House is sitting, and we need to make sure we have the tools with us to react immediately, as required.

The hon. official opposition House leader has a point of order.

• (1240)

DECORUM

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Madam Speaker, this is on a different point, but it does relate to a decision by the Chair.

I want to seek clarification on the use of the word “phony” in the House of Commons. You will recall that, last week, I referred to the special rapporteur, David Johnston, as the “phony rapporteur”, because the Conservatives simply believe it is a fake job.

Points of Order

The job is fake. The idea that he is independent is fake. He himself has acknowledged that he answers to the government, not to Parliament and not to the people of Canada. In fact, his order in council lists him as a special adviser to the Prime Minister. There is no independence around somebody who is employed by the government, who is employed by the Prime Minister and who has acknowledged that he is not independent. That is point number one—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. If individuals want to have conversations, they need to take them outside. Individuals can approach me and try to have a conversation quietly here, but they cannot have one across to each other while I am trying to listen to a point of order before the House.

The hon. official opposition House leader.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, as I was saying, it is our contention and belief, as more and more Canadians are realizing, that the position of the rapporteur is fake and the idea that there is independence around it is also fake. The government may believe something different, but it is certainly our right as opposition members of Parliament to make that assertion.

On Thursday, my question was interrupted by the Speaker because of that word, and that really puzzled me, because I have sat in that chair before and I know the exercise that one must go through in listening to interventions and assessing whether they are orderly or disorderly. It is truly a context-driven exercise.

When I used the expression “phony rapporteur” last week, I certainly was not imputing motives on the part of any hon. member or suggesting that any member was deliberately misleading the House. In my view, the use of the word “phony” was acceptable and parliamentary in the circumstances. Citation 490 of Beauchesne's identifies a list of examples of expressions that, between 1958 and the mid-1980s, were held to be parliamentary. They are actually in Beauchesne's, in a list of words that have been ruled parliamentary. Not only is it not on the list of unparliamentary words, but it is on the list of parliamentary words. I refer you to page 147 of Beauchesne's sixth edition.

“Phony” appears on that list with four separate rulings in support of it being a parliamentary expression: Mr. Speaker Michener, on July 7, 1959, at page 5624 of the Debates; Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole Charles Rea, on July 11, 1959, at page 5849 of the Debates; Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole Charles Rea, on May 19, 1960, at page 4051 of the Debates; and Chair of Committees of the Whole Herman Batten, on April 21, 1967, at page 15206 of the Debates.

Perhaps more importantly, the expression has been in common use in the House since that time. Punching the term “phony” into the House's website search engine for parliamentary publications reveals hundreds of occasions when the term appears in Hansard. I know that I heard it often when I served as the chair occupant between 2006 and 2015.

Here is one example by then leader Bob Rae, at page 6077 of the Debates, from March 12, 2012, which has a lot of resonance in this debate. It states:

...if the hon. member is so certain about his phony allegations, perhaps he would agree with me that the time has now come for a royal commission into what happened in the last election and what happened in previous elections to ensure that it never happens again.

On February 14, 2013, the member for Charlottetown, at page 14160 of the Debates, referred to a minister's “phony performance”. On April 1, 2015—

• (1245)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I think I have heard quite a bit on this. The hon. opposition House leader has been in the Speaker position before, so I know he is well aware of the following:

In dealing with unparliamentary language, the Speaker takes into account the tone, manner and intention of the Member speaking, the person to whom the words at issue were directed, the degree of provocation, and most important, whether or not the remarks created disorder in the Chamber. Thus, language deemed unparliamentary one day may not necessarily be deemed unparliamentary on another day. The codification of unparliamentary language has proven impractical as it is the context in which words or phrases are used that the Chair must consider when deciding whether or not they should be withdrawn.

Given the fact that the hon. Speaker has already ruled on this, it is not a matter that I am prepared to continue to entertain.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, I take the point. I anticipated that you were going to mention that ruling, so I have something that I would like you to consider. We do have question period later on today—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would ask the hon. member to wrap it up in one minute.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: I will do my best, Madam Speaker.

You are absolutely right that there is context and that it is the Speaker's job to judge many factors when considering whether or not a term or a word is unparliamentary. However, I put it to you that it is a tactic of the government to take offence at words or phrases that have been used before, and they caused the disorder—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): This is becoming a point of debate, so I am going to shut it down. The Speaker has already ruled on this. I will certainly take the additional information the member has provided under advisement, and we will come back to the House if need be.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, on that point of order—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have just closed down this particular point of order by the House leader of the official opposition. I have already stated that. If the hon. parliamentary secretary has a different point of order, I will come back to him, because somebody else has one.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Points of Order

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, you said that you would take it under advisement. If you do, I would like to add something to it, which is that, if you need other examples of comparison for this, you might want to refer to Wayne Easter's Canadian heritage moment when he referred to the then leader of the opposition as a "pigeon", and the Speaker responded to that at the time. I would be happy to share the video of that if you would like to see it.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have heard enough on this particular issue. As I said, the Speaker has already ruled on this. I do not see us coming back to the House, but we will certainly look at the information provided and will come back if need be.

If individuals want to have conversations, I would ask them to take them outside.

The hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa.

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order to draw to your attention to proceed—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. The hon. official opposition House leader may want to take his conversation outside.

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, it is a procedural matter related to Question No. 1013, which I submitted on November 23, 2022. My question was:

With regard to the government's spectrum licensing, broken down by designated tier: (a) how many spectrum licenses are currently unused; (b) how many license holders have (i) failed to meet the deployment requirement, (ii) deployed less than 50 percent of their spectrum license; (iii) deployed less than 75 percent of their spectrum license, (iv) deployed less than 100 percent of their spectrum license; (c) what is the breakdown of each response in (a) and (b), by spectrum license—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind the hon. member that I really do not need to know what the question was and that he should just tell me what the issue is.

Again, if the member is not satisfied with the answer from the government, that is not something the Chair would rule on. I would ask that he explain exactly what he is raising in the point of order, without going into all of those details.

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, this is a very detailed question, and it goes on through all the different spectrums, which is a very complicated subject. What we attempted to do was try to peel the onion back and understand what will actually be going on with the government with spectrum management in the coming days. However, the bottom line is that the government did not answer anyone, did not refer to any cause, did not even refer to megahertz or gigahertz, and did not use a technical term at all for a very technical question.

I am asking you, Madam Speaker, to refer to Standing Order 39(5)(b), which states:

If such a question remains unanswered at the expiration of the said period of 45 days, the matter of the failure of the ministry to respond shall be deemed referred to the appropriate standing committee. Within five sitting days of such a referral the Chair of the committee shall convene a meeting of the committee to consider the matter of the failure of the ministry to respond.

As I noted, or was trying to note, my questions were not answered. Failing to answer these questions prevents me from fulfill-

ing my duties as a member of Parliament. Failing to answer this question on this particular subject matter raised in an Order Paper question is preventing me from fulfilling my duties as shadow minister for rural economic development activity.

I ask you, Madam Speaker, to rule that when the government significantly ignores the substance of an Order Paper question, this should be considered a failure to answer, for the purposes of Standing Order 39(5)(b). That way, the government's refusal to answer a written question can be referred to a committee for review.

• (1250)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I thank the member very much. However, I want to remind members that, while members should have access to relevant and accurate information to ensure that they can fulfill their parliamentary functions, it is not for the Chair to evaluate the content of responses to written questions. Again, this is a response from the Speaker. As with Oral Questions, it is acceptable for the government, in responding to a question, to indicate to the House that it cannot supply an answer.

Again, I will take the additional information that the hon. member has provided and come back to the House if need be.

The hon. member for Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte has a point of order as well.

Mr. Doug Shipley: Madam Speaker, there seems to be a bit of a pattern developing here. I also would like to bring forward my issue with a non-answer, actually a failure to answer my question that was put, which is Question No. 1002. This is a very short question. It is not that I did not like the answer; I did not get an answer. In its answer, the government is saying it did not answer. I will put this into the record to show you another quick instance. My short question was:

With regard to meetings and other communications between the Prime Minister, the Minister of Public Safety or their exempt staff, and the RCMP commissioner, Brenda Lucki, since January 1, 2020: what are the details of all such meetings or other communications, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) type of communication (text message, group chat, in-person meeting, etc.), (iii) participants, (iv) subject matter, (v) agenda items or summary of discussion, (vi) decisions made, if any?

This is where I would really like to get into the details—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, I do not need the details of questions. I have an idea of the question that has been put forward. I would just encourage greater co-operation between members and ministers in their exchange of information and correspondence. This is all part of what has been discussed.

I am going to go to orders of the day.

I have a question of privilege. The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

*Privilege***PRIVILEGE**

ALLEGED BREACH OF GOVERNMENT OBLIGATION TO APPOINT OFFICER OF PARLIAMENT

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, my understanding is that, having stood to be recognized on a question of privilege, my standing should have come prior to that piece of business being moved, so I would seek a ruling from the Chair on that item and ask for you to come back to the House.

I gave notice to the Speaker's office about the question of privilege that I am raising. It concerns the government's not appointing a Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner. I would like to draw attention to pages 80 and 81 of the third edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, which states:

Any disregard of or attack on the rights, powers and immunities of the House and its Members, either by an outside person or body, or by a Member of the House, is referred to as a "breach of privilege" and is punishable by the House. There are, however, other affronts against the dignity and authority of Parliament which may not fall within one of the specifically defined privileges. Thus, the House also claims the right to punish, as a contempt, any action which, though not a breach of a specific privilege: tends to obstruct or impede the House in the performance of its functions; obstructs or impedes any Member or officer of the House in the discharge of their duties; or is an offence against the authority or dignity of the House, such as disobedience of its legitimate commands or libels upon itself, its Members, or its officers. As the authors of *Odgers' Senate Practice* (Australia) state: "The rationale of the power to punish contempts, whether contempt of court or contempt of the Houses, is that the courts and the two Houses should be able to protect themselves from acts which directly or indirectly impede them in the performance of their functions." In that sense, all breaches of privilege are contempts of the House, but not all contempts are necessarily breaches of privilege."

At page 82, there is a list of those offences. They include "interfering with or obstructing a person who is carrying out a lawful order of the House or a committee". In this case, the government is refusing to fill the position of an officer of Parliament who is charged with carrying out the lawful orders of the House. On the same page, it also lists as an offence. "failing to fulfill any requirement of the House, as declared in a code of conduct or otherwise, relating to the possession, declaration, or registration of financial interests or participation in debate or other proceedings."

Without an Ethics Commissioner in place, there is no one on duty to ensure that members fulfill the requirements of the House, as described by the House in law and in its rules. There are serious questions that remain unanswered, like that of Michael Sabia, the former deputy minister of finance, who is now with Hydro-Québec. Mr. Sabia and the finance department were repeatedly lobbied by Hydro-Québec throughout his tenure as the deputy minister. Hydro-Québec approached Mr. Sabia about a job there, but Mr. Sabia declined to pursue it until the budget was released. He knew what the job was, and, lo and behold, the budget contained direct benefits for Hydro-Québec. There are many questions arising from this case that can be answered only by the Ethics Commissioner, and there is not one. Did Mr. Sabia report that job offer? Hydro-Québec lobbied finance, and both the company and the former deputy minister stood to benefit from the decisions he just made in government. It is actions like these that damage the public trust in institutions.

The Liberal government, this one in particular, its Prime Minister and its ministers, has a record of repeated ethical breaches that further reinforce the question of privilege I am raising now about the need for an Ethics Commissioner to be appointed.

There are several references in reports that have been tabled in the House, which I would like considered. They include the "Trudeau Report" and the "Trudeau II Report". Both of these outline the first time in the government's history that a prime minister has been found guilty of breaking ethics laws. We also have the now intergovernmental affairs minister who was found guilty of breaking the Ethics Act, and the then president of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, who had given a contract worth \$24 million to a family member. The same is true with the former finance minister. We have seen repeated reports of breaches of this code.

• (1255)

Madam Speaker, I want to refer you to Joseph Maingot's 2nd edition of *Parliamentary Privilege*, page 227. It says, "In the final analysis, in areas of doubt, the Speaker asks simply: Does the act complained of appear at first sight to be a breach of privilege...or to put it shortly, has the Member an arguable point? If the Speaker feels any doubt on the question, he should...leave it to the House." This citation is in reference to a ruling from March 21, 1978, at page 3975 of Debates, where the Speaker cites the report of the U.K. select committee on parliamentary privileges, and from a ruling of October 10, 1989, at pages 4457 to 4461 of Debates.

In a ruling of October 24, 1966, at page 9005 of Debates, the Speaker said:

In considering this matter, I ask myself, what is the duty of the Speaker in cases of doubt? If we take into consideration that at the moment the Speaker is not asked to render a decision as to whether or not the article complained of constitutes a breach of privilege...and considering also that the Speaker is the guardian of the rules, rights and privileges of the house and of its members and that he cannot deprive them of such privileges when there is uncertainty in his mind...I think, at this preliminary stage of the proceedings the doubt which I have in my mind should be interpreted to the benefit of the member.

Finally, on March 27, 1969, at page 853 of the Debates, the Speaker ruled:

[The member] has, perhaps, a grievance against the government in that capacity rather than in his capacity as a Member of Parliament. On the other hand, honourable Members know that the House has always exercised great care in attempting to protect the rights and privileges of all its Members. Since there is some doubt about the interpretation of the precedents in this situation, I would be inclined to resolve the doubt in favour of the honourable Member.

We have an unprecedented situation, in which the government has an obligation, based on laws passed by members duly elected to the House, to appoint one of those guardians, one of those whose position allows them to safeguard the confidence of Canadians in this democratic institution. AS in the question I raised with respect to the former deputy minister, Mr. Sabia, testimony at the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, which now appears in Hansard, was heard from spokespeople from the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner who said they are unable to fulfill their obligations because of the vacancy in this role.

Members have the right to be able to file with the Commissioner, and the Commissioner then has an obligation to investigate these complaints and whether or not a breach of the act has occurred. In this case, it is incredibly serious. It deals with a deputy minister of the Crown then taking a position, a lucrative one, with a company like Hydro-Québec, which benefited substantially from the budget Mr. Sabia presided over as the deputy minister. Once that cash hit the table, he was out the door and into a job at Hydro-Québec.

It is only reasonable that members of the House, on behalf of Canadians, in order to ensure their confidence in the processes we have in place, would be able to raise that with an independent officer of Parliament so there could be an investigation. If that officer of Parliament were to find there was in fact a breach, there are ramifications for that; if not, then the matter is disposed of.

This is only one example, because we are not going to hear from all members of the official opposition today on other issues they have observed and that they would like investigated or raised with the Ethics Commissioner, because no one is in that position. In fact, when a standing committee of the House did send for a representative from that office, the office had no one to send except a communications director. I have checked, and if the Speaker consults the act, they are not going to find that members of the House are to raise concerns with the GR director, the PR director or the comms director for the offices of independent officers of this place.

• (1300)

They do not have powers that are given to them by statute or by law. The government has that obligation. It also has the power to appoint someone on an interim basis, but it is refusing to exercise that power. What this demonstrates is that the government is availing itself of the ability to mind the store without anyone counting the register at the end of the day.

All members of this House were duly elected by their constituents. The official opposition is composed of members who have exercised the right to raise issues to the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner. That independent office has, in the past, found breaches by ministers of the Crown and by other designated public office holders.

Madam Chair, I am asking for you to consider this question, come back to the House and make a ruling on whether my privilege, as a member of this House, has been violated by the government's actions and inactions in this case.

• (1305)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I thank the hon. member for bringing this to my attention. Certainly, we will get back to the hon. member on that.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023, NO. 1

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-47, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

Government Orders

[English]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There are 904 motions and amendments standing on the notice for the report stage of Bill C-47. I will get to the points of order after I am finished.

[Translation]

Motions Nos. 690 and 750 will not be selected by the Chair because they could have been presented in committee. Motions Nos. 456 to 683 will not be selected by the Chair because they are repetitive and could have been presented in committee.

[English]

All remaining motions have been examined, and the Chair is satisfied that they meet the guidelines expressed in the note to Standing Order 76.1(5) regarding the selection of motions in amendment at the report stage.

Motions Nos. 1 to 455, 684 to 689, 691 to 749, and 751 to 904 will be grouped for debate and voted upon according to the voting pattern available at the table.

[Translation]

I will now put Motions Nos. 1 to 455, 684 to 689, 691 to 749 and 751 to 904 to the House.

[English]

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC) moved:

Motion No. 1

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting the short title.

Motion No. 2

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 2.

Motion No. 3

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 4.

Motion No. 4

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 5.

Motion No. 5

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 6.

Motion No. 6

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 7.

Motion No. 7

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 8.

Motion No. 8

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 9.

Motion No. 9

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 10.

Motion No. 10

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 11.

Motion No. 11

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 12.

Motion No. 12

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 13.

Motion No. 13

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 14.

Government Orders

Motion No. 67

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 69.

Motion No. 68

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 70.

Motion No. 69

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 71.

Motion No. 70

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 72.

Motion No. 71

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 73.

Motion No. 72

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 74.

Motion No. 73

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 75.

Motion No. 74

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 76.

Motion No. 75

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 77.

Motion No. 76

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 78.

Motion No. 77

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 79.

Motion No. 78

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 80.

Motion No. 79

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 81.

Motion No. 80

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 82.

Motion No. 81

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 83.

Motion No. 82

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 84.

Motion No. 83

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 85.

Motion No. 84

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 86.

Motion No. 85

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 87.

Motion No. 86

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 88.

Motion No. 87

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 89.

Motion No. 88

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 90.

Motion No. 89

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 91.

Motion No. 90

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 92.

Motion No. 91

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 93.

Motion No. 92

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 94.

Motion No. 93

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 95.

Motion No. 94

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 96.

Motion No. 95

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 97.

Motion No. 96

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 98.

Motion No. 97

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 99.

Motion No. 98

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 100.

Motion No. 99

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 101.

Motion No. 100

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 102.

Motion No. 101

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 103.

Motion No. 102

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 104.

Motion No. 103

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 105.

Motion No. 104

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 106.

Motion No. 105

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 107.

Motion No. 106

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 108.

Motion No. 107

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 109.

Motion No. 108

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 110.

Motion No. 109

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 111.

Motion No. 110

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 112.

Motion No. 111

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 113.

Motion No. 112

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 114.

Motion No. 113

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 115.

Motion No. 114

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 116.

Motion No. 115

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 117.

Motion No. 116

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 118.

Motion No. 117

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 119.

Motion No. 118

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 120.

Motion No. 119

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 121.

Motion No. 279

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 281.

Motion No. 280

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 282.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1355)

[English]

FILIPINO HERITAGE MONTH

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, June is Filipino Heritage Month in Canada and I would like to wish a happy Filipino Heritage Month to Canada's Filipino community.

This past weekend, I attended the Filipino Canadian National Congress convention in Halifax with the member for Halifax West, and I was reminded again how this community was making a difference in every corner of Canada.

One of the fastest-growing communities in Canada, they are our doctors and nurses, our caregivers and restaurateurs, our sports stars and business owners. So many were on the frontlines in the pandemic, working so we could stay home and bend the curve.

With the MP for Mississauga—Streetsville and Senator Gigi Osler as role models to the next generation, I hope we will see even more Filipino Canadians taking their place in public life.

I look forward to celebrating with everyone this month.

Mabuhay Canada. Mabuhay Philippines.

* * *

• (1400)

HUNTING, FISHING AND TRAPPING

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to champion the outdoor way of life that millions of Canadians hold dear.

With over eight million avid anglers, two million passionate hunters and countless others who relish our great outdoors, we must defend and promote this cherished heritage. These pursuits not only provide immeasurable personal benefits, but also contribute a staggering \$18 billion to our national economy.

Let us not forget that hunting, fishing and trapping are a huge part of Canada's history, which shaped us into the resilient nation we are today. However, the past eight years of the Liberal government have brought unprecedented frustration to some of those who hunt and fish, such as fishing closures that are not based in science, delayed decisions on selective marked fisheries and inaction to control pinnipeds that are devastating fish populations. There is also the full-on ideological attack on lawful gun owners that would have banned thousands of rifles and shotguns used by hunters.

Only Conservatives truly respect those who hunt, fish and trap. Only Conservatives will prioritize conservation. Only Conservatives will safeguard Canada's outdoor way of life, generate new opportunities and ensure abundance for generations to come.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

RAISING OF ITALIAN FLAG

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada and Italy have been partners and loyal friends for more than 75 years. In this spirit of deep friendship founded on common values and in honour of the *Festa della Repubblica*, every member is invited to the raising of the Italian flag in front of the Centennial Flame tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

The simple tricolour design embodies the essence of Italy. The bright green symbolizes hope, growth and the fertile lands of the Italian peninsula. The pure white represents faith, purity and peace, as well as the commitment to harmony. Finally, the vibrant red symbolizes courage, strength and the indomitable spirit of the Italian people. It evokes Italy's determination and immense pride in its heritage.

A domani mattina.

* * *

CLIMATE ACTION

Ms. Monique Pausé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today, June 5, we are marking the 50th anniversary of World Environment Day. This year, the UN is urging us to do more to tackle the use of single-use plastic. We must be more responsible, but that is not all I want to talk about today.

On this World Environment Day, our thoughts go out to the thousands of Quebeckers and Canadians whose lives have been devastated by the widespread forest fires. In Quebec, the SOPFEU has responded to 416 fires that are still burning. This is an absolute disaster.

Climate change has a real impact on people and on our forests. We need to start a real green transition and really move away from oil, but, for the time being, let us say thank you to the thousands of men and women who are fighting these fires. Let us also thank the armed forces for supporting them and for supporting the people affected by the fires.

They help us keep hope alive. We thank them.

*Statements by Members***AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES PREVENTION FUND**

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a region with numerous lakes and rivers, the Eastern Townships face many challenges in terms of preserving their waters and ecosystems. Last month, the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard announced the new aquatic invasive species prevention fund, which will provide \$875 million over the next five years for projects across the country.

My colleagues from the Eastern Townships and I have announced that \$644,000 from this fund will be going to the Regroupement national des conseils régionaux de l'environnement du Québec, which includes the Eastern Townships CRE, or regional environment council. I thank the Eastern Townships CRE and all the regional partners for their co-operation in seeking lasting solutions to protect our water.

On that note, my colleague from Compton—Stanstead has shared an excellent handbook for boaters that will soon be delivered to households across Sherbrooke to raise awareness of our vulnerable lakes and rivers.

By working together, we can protect this precious collective resource.

Happy World Environment Day.

* * *

[English]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our planet and our country are literally burning. Objectively, the Liberal environment minister is making it worse. Not only has he allowed Canada's greenhouse gas emissions to climb to a record high, but he has also done so while dogmatically enforcing policies that are not getting the job done and are making the cost of living worse.

That is because the Liberals' deficit-fuelled inflation crisis means that Canadians cannot afford to replace their high-emissions cars, even if they want to, or make improvements to energy efficiency in homes they do not have or cannot afford to live in.

We need to address climate change and make life more affordable. Today, I beg the Liberals to do smarter things, including getting more public transit bills, building more emissions-free electricity plants and, more importantly, cancelling policies that do not work, such as ineffective, inflation-causing deficit spending and taxes.

None of us can afford to allow these failures to continue. We just need to look outside today.

* * *

• (1405)

HESPELER VILLAGE MARKET

Ms. Valerie Bradford (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am thrilled to announce the seventh season opening of the Hespeler Village Market, a vibrant and community-centred hub that is a haven for local vendors and shoppers alike.

Nestled in the heart of Hespeler village, this eagerly anticipated market brings together a diverse array of vendors showcasing their finest products and creations. However, it is more than just a place to buy and sell. It is a celebration of Hespeler's rich culture, heritage and craftsmanship. Visitors can expect to discover an abundance of fresh produce, baked goods, unique artworks and so much more. Beyond the stalls, the Hespeler market also serves as a gathering space for events and entertainment. It is a cherished meeting spot where neighbours can connect, families can explore and memories can be made. It is truly the hub of Hespeler.

I ask members of the House to join me in celebrating the opening of the Hespeler market, and I encourage my colleagues to pay Hespeler a visit and experience this one-of-a-kind market first-hand.

* * *

LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL POSTER CONTEST WINNER

Mr. Churence Rogers (Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an amazing accomplishment of a young lady living in my riding of Bonavista—Burin—Trinity. Her name is Trinity Hogan, and she recently participated in a peace poster competition hosted by Lions Clubs International.

Ms. Hogan, hailing from Port Rexton, placed first in both the local contest and the eastern Newfoundland school contest. Following that, her poster was sent to Lions Clubs International, where it placed in the top 23 from over 600,000 entries globally.

Along with the entire community, I am inspired by Trinity's poster and message for global peace. I am also hopeful for our tomorrow because of youth like Trinity.

I want to congratulate Trinity Hogan on behalf of this House and my entire riding, and I would like everyone to join Trinity in her wishes for peace and hope.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the cost of the Liberal government is driving up the cost of living. The more the Liberals spend, the more things cost. They have added more than \$60 billion in new spending, and what do Canadians get? They get more inflation, more taxes, higher costs and worse government services.

Statements by Members

Canadians are struggling. Mortgage payments and rent have doubled under the Liberal Prime Minister, and that is if one is able to afford a home or find a place to live to begin with. The cost of food is at a 40-year high, driving more than 1.5 million Canadians to food banks in a single month. Now, the Liberals are adding a second carbon tax, increasing the price of food and necessities that will cost the average family another \$600 per year.

Things have gotten so bad that retired seniors are trying to re-enter the workforce, because they have to choose between heating and eating. After eight years of the Liberal Prime Minister, everything feels broken, and Canadians have less money in their pockets.

Conservatives will bring home a government that works for people who work. It is time to bring back common sense for the common people.

* * *

ATTACK ON AMRITSAR TEMPLE

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for many, the sacred place of worship is Jerusalem, Mecca or Varanasi. For the Sikh community, that place is the Harmandir Sahib, globally known as the Golden Temple.

However, in June 1984, the most sacred place of worship for Sikhs was stormed in an orchestrated military operation. In this gruesome attack, thousands were killed, many at point-blank range, and the sarovar turned red with blood. The Akal Takht was blasted. The Sikh Reference Library, containing thousands of manuscripts, paintings and scriptures, was torched to the ground. Forty other gurdwaras around the country were also attacked, and, 39 years later, Sikhs around the world still remember this tragic day.

The Sikh community will forever send its prayers to the victims of this massacre, while also praying that such a dreadful attack on a place of worship never happens again. We shall never forget 1984.

* * *

● (1410)

THE BUDGET

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal budget is the work of a finance minister who says one thing and does another. She does not answer a single question asked of her in this House, and she lectures Canadians who do not agree with her. The \$60 billion in new spending pours gas on the inflationary fire. She admitted that to be true. She said she would not do it, and she did it anyway. She told Canadians that the budget would be balanced in 2027. Now, she says it will never be balanced. She said the debt ratio would go down, but she cannot tell this House the number, because it went up.

Canadians cannot afford the Prime Minister or the government. They think we can spend our way to prosperity, but the last eight years have created a crisis. There is good news, though. Conservatives will deliver lower prices and more powerful paycheques by capping spending, ending the deficits and scrapping the carbon tax. Those are our demands of this budget. The choice is clear. It is freedom versus control, prosperity versus poverty and technology versus more taxes.

There have been enough lectures from the minister. Canadians cannot afford to be duped by her any longer.

* * *

THE BUDGET

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, “Water, water everywhere, so let's all have a drink.” At least Homer Simpson thought so as he scooped up a mouthful of sea-water to quench his thirst. Of course, while it may have the illusion of relief, drinking ocean water will not cure thirst; it will only make it worse. That is a lot like the Liberal budget. It is full of salt water.

Canadians are parched with inflation caused by massive Liberal deficits. Even prominent Liberals, such as John Manley, Bill Morneau and the finance minister herself admitted that bigger deficits would make the problem worse. Not only are the Liberals salting the water by tripling the first carbon tax and introducing a second one, but they are also racking up \$63 billion in new inflationary deficits. Extra spending means extra borrowing, which means higher interest rates for Canadians.

Therefore, the illusion that Liberals are offering in response to the cost of living crisis will actually just make things worse. Canadians will not be fooled. They are smarter than Homer Simpson and the finance minister, and they are demanding the real relief that Conservatives are offering. We are offering the fresh water of lower taxes, an end to inflationary deficits and a stop to the waste and mismanagement.

* * *

[Translation]

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF GÎTE AMI

Hon. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last Monday was the 40th anniversary of Le Gîte Ami, a veritable beacon of compassion and community in my riding.

Over the past four decades, this extraordinary organization has touched countless lives by providing shelter and support to those in need. Le Gîte Ami has become an integral part of our region, providing shelter, food and a glimmer of hope to the most vulnerable among us. Its commitment to the fight against homelessness and poverty has transformed lives and inspired a wave of positive change.

Thanks to the dedication of its staff and volunteers, Le Gîte Ami has built a legacy of compassion, unity and resilience. It has fostered a sense of belonging and restored dignity to people facing unimaginable challenges.

Statements by Members

On this milestone anniversary, let us pay tribute to Le Gîte Ami for its outstanding contributions to the people of Outaouais. May its light continue to shine, lighting the way to a more inclusive and compassionate society. Congratulations for 40 amazing years.

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[English]

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENT WEEK

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today, during Canadian Environment Week, to honour all the work of indigenous land guardians and the movement of indigenous land protection, a hopeful, inspiring movement that is integral to protecting the lands and waters of this special place we call home.

It is based on the premise that the people best positioned to protect the land are the people of the land. I think of the Haida, whose modern land guardians have been patrolling the lands and waters of Gwaii Haanas since 1981. I think of the Kaska, whose bold vision for land protection in northern B.C. is called Dene K'eh Kusan in Kaska, translating to "Always will be there." I think of the late Jarett Quock, whose work with the Tahltan land guardian program was so important and whose leadership is so dearly missed.

There are over 120 land guardian programs in Canada; I do not have enough time to speak of all of them. Suffice to say that, at a time when we are bombarded with bleak environmental news, indigenous land protection and land guardians are a source of hope. I am very proud that the NDP stands with indigenous land guardians and indigenous nations in this important work.

* * *

● (1415)

[Translation]

FOREST FIRES IN QUEBEC

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, forest fires are currently burning across Quebec on a terrifying scale. The fires cover an area roughly equivalent to the Island of Montreal. People have had to be evacuated from Abitibi—Témiscamingue and northern Quebec, as well as the north shore. The smog filling the sky is a reminder that this situation is not normal.

Once again, at a time of crisis, we can count on the solidarity of the men and women who have been evacuated and who are co-operating with public safety authorities. We can count on the solidarity of the SOPFEU, the firefighters have come from all over Quebec, as well as the rest of Canada, France, Portugal and the United States, to battle the blaze. They are all working together tirelessly to fight this devastating fire. We can also count on the solidarity of members of the armed forces who are providing operational support in many ways, starting with aid for evacuees. Lastly, we can count on solidarity between levels of government, because we can and must work hand in hand when dealing with a disaster of this magnitude.

These forest fires will be put out. We will face them together, and we will defeat them together.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I wish everyone good luck.

* * *

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals want to blame emissions on the senior who simply wishes to visit her grandchildren or the farmer who takes the bounty off his field and turns it into finished goods to go on grocery store shelves. The Liberals would rather penalize the single mother who has to drive long hours to provide for her family than face the fact that it is neither making a difference for the environment nor, certainly, for Canadians. Adding insult to injury, the government is planning to up the tax by adding a second one on July 1. The Liberals sure know how to party, do they not?

Canadians cannot at all afford this, and they are calling for change. Seniors are delaying their retirement, students are using food banks at astronomical rates and half of all Canadians are reporting that they are close to bankruptcy. The answer to climate change is not more taxation but, rather, more technology. This means that Canadians are the solution rather than the problem. They are the way forward. They are the problem solvers; they are the innovators that this nation needs. It is time for the government to celebrate them as such.

On this side of the House, we are calling on the government to axe the tax.

* * *

RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS

Ms. Joanne Thompson (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on May 12, the Hon. George Furey retired as the 45th speaker of the Senate. He was appointed in 1999, and at the time of his retirement, he was its longest-standing member. He is, however, much more than this. George was born in 1948, a year before Newfoundland joined Canada. He knew loss and challenges from a young age, as well as the importance of family, hard work and resilience. These guiding principles served him well as a teacher, principal, lawyer and politician.

I am pleased to join Canadians and Newfoundland and Labradorians from all political stripes in celebrating of George's retirement. I would like to thank Karen, George's wife and best friend, his four children and their families for sharing him with this country and my home province.

I look forward to watching how George shapes a traditional retirement. He has served his country and province as a statesman and courageous leader while maintaining humility and decency.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, six months ago, the Minister of Finance promised a balanced budget by the year 2027. She said that deficits fuel inflation by throwing fuel on the inflationary fire. She was right. Her budget has added \$60 billion of inflationary fuel. That amounts to \$4,200 per family.

Will the Minister of Finance finally recognize that Canadians can pay no more and put before the House a plan to balance the budget in order to bring down inflation and interest rates?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, the Conservatives are demonstrating that they are completely irresponsible and that the only thing that matters to them is partisan parliamentary bickering.

Today, the Conservatives are attempting to prevent Canadians from receiving the assistance that the budget will give them. For example, in this budget we will enhance the Canada workers benefit. It will provide assistance for workers most—

• (1420)

The Speaker: The hon. leader of the official opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is irresponsible are policies that drive up inflation and interest rates at a time when Canadian consumers are carrying the highest debt load in the G7. The fact is, consumers have the highest levels of debt. The total debt of all consumers in Canada is greater than the Canadian economy.

The inflation the minister is causing and admits to causing with her inflationary spending will drive up interest rates on the backs of these same indebted consumers, potentially leading to a crisis.

Will the Minister of Finance balance the budget in order to reduce inflation and interest rates before there is a crisis?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is truly astonishing is the Conservative Party's entirely irresponsible and immature position. They would rather engage in partisan bickering than do something to help Canadians.

I will explain what is in the budget and what Canadians need. The measures include automatic advance payments of the Canada workers benefit and doubling of the tradespeople's tools deduction. There are many other things, and I will list them—

The Speaker: The hon. leader of the official opposition.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was just six months ago that the minister promised a balanced budget by the year 2027. She said that deficits fuel inflation. The former finance minister John Manley, a Liberal, said that while the Bank of Canada was slamming on the brakes of inflation with higher rates, the government was slamming the gas with higher spending. This could cause the whole engine to blow when all

Oral Questions

that mortgage debt Canadians hold comes up for renewal unless the rates come down.

Therefore, will she act now to put in place a plan to balance the budget to bring down inflation and interest rates?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am truly appalled by the reckless and irresponsible behaviour we are seeing from the Conservatives today. They are showing that they prefer adolescent partisan games over actually delivering support to Canadians.

Therefore, let us talk about what they are preventing Canadians from getting with their parliamentary childishness. They are preventing Canadians from getting the doubling of the tradespersons tool deduction. They are preventing us from putting in place an anti-flipping tax that is going to stop speculation in—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is truly reckless is driving up inflation and interest rates on Canadian consumers who are the most indebted in the entire G7. In fact, the combined consumer debt is almost bigger than the entire Canadian economy. When the monster mortgages that Canadians took out, with the advice of the government back in 2021-22, come into higher rates for renewal there could be a massive mortgage meltdown.

Therefore, will the finance minister do what she promised only six months, and that is to stop putting fuel on the inflationary fire, balance the budget to bring down inflation and interest rates, yes or no?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, someone who advised Canadians to opt out of inflation by investing in crypto is pretty ill-positioned to offer economic advice of any kind. What is he doing instead of providing a responsible economic plan? He is blocking the support that Canadians need, real measures in our budget implementation bill, for example, cracking down on predatory lending. Who could be opposed to that? Is that not what Canadians need right now? The Conservatives, with their frivolous childish behaviour, are stopping Canadians from getting that support.

* * *

[Translation]

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Quebec families and communities are being hit hard by major forest fires. That includes fires in other places too.

Oral Questions

The Conservatives are here to support any government action necessary to protect Canadians and control the forest fires.

I thank the minister for the briefing he gave me and I would like to give him the opportunity to update the House and all Canadians on the forest fire situation and on what the government is doing in response to it.

• (1425)

[English]

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the strong advocacy from every member of the House on behalf of their communities.

There are currently 370 wildfires burning in Canada, 217 of which are out of control. There have been over 26,000 evacuations from communities right across the country. In response to a request for assistance from the Provinces of Alberta, Quebec and Nova Scotia, we have deployed the Canadian Armed Forces into those three provinces. In each location, Canadian Armed Forces are now in the field assisting with firefighting efforts.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would like to express our solidarity with the Quebecers who have been evacuated as a result of the forest fires and with all those who are worried. We stand with them. Our MPs are on the ground, and I want to point out that governments are currently working well together.

We are going to have to have a frank discussion about climate change but, in the short term, we must deal with the fires and fully support the victims.

Will the government accept our help and work with us?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are all concerned about this situation.

First of all, I want to thank the firefighters for their work and acknowledge their courage. Quebec reached out with a request last Saturday and we answered yes within hours. The Canadian Armed Forces has deployed 150 service personnel. We will continue to be there for Quebecers.

* * *

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, CBC revealed that David Johnston hired crisis communications firm Navigator. He has the right to hire whoever he wants. That is not the problem. What is strange is that he did not hire this crisis management firm when he was in crisis last week, after he submitted his report that said no to a public inquiry. He hired the firm on the first day of his mandate.

Did Mr. Johnston already know, from the start, that he was going to oppose the public inquiry that Quebecers and Canadians are calling for?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my

colleague is well aware that the simple answer to his question is no. Mr. Johnston took the time to look at all of the documents and he interviewed a number of people who were directly involved in the matter of foreign interference. Mr. Johnston took his job seriously and worked independently to come to his findings. That is something that would also do some good in the House of Commons.

* * *

[English]

HOUSING

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, based on a recent survey, nearly half of homeowners and over half of renters in our country are struggling to make their monthly payments. I know that neither the Prime Minister nor the Leader of the Opposition have ever had to worry about this, but it is scary. On top of that, the Bank of Canada is poised to very likely increase interest rates, which will make the situation even worse.

When will the Prime Minister take this seriously and take steps to bring down the cost of rent?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government absolutely understands the challenges that people are facing with the cost of living, particularly Canadians who rent. That is why last fall we provided a top-up to people who needed support paying their rent. That is also why we are very glad that on July 5 we are going to be able to provide the grocery rebate, which is targeted at 11 million vulnerable Canadians and Canadian families that need that support the most.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government needs to start acting like it is a crisis.

[Translation]

The Bank of Canada will likely raise interest rates, which will make matters worse and put even more pressure on workers. This government has done nothing to deal with the greedy corporations that are massively contributing to the rising inflation.

Does this government stand with workers or with big corporations?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government stands with all Canadians in every region and in every province in our country.

That is why we are helping the most vulnerable on July 5 with important targeted support. That is why, to us, jobs and economic growth are the most important targets and that is why we are proud that 900,000 jobs have been recovered.

This is a success for Canadians.

• (1430)

[English]

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Liberal government, the finance minister has never found a tax that she did not like, a pocket that she did not want to pick or a deficit that she did not want to run. Thanks to her endless spending, we have a crisis. Canadians are paying more for groceries, more to fill up on gas and more to heat the home, if they can afford one.

Will she finally stop the reckless deficits, stick to a single thing that she told Canadians and tell us in which month of the year never will she balance the budget?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to recklessness, what is reckless is the Conservatives playing childish parliamentary games and stopping Canadians from getting the supports they need.

Let me list, for Canadians listening, some of the things the Conservatives are blocking.

They are blocking an improvement in registered education savings plans, a change that will make it easier for students to get the money their parents have saved up to pay for their education. They are blocking a ban on cosmetic testing on animals. They are blocking our efforts to cut the criminal—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Thornhill.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister can continue to lecture Canadians, but that will not pay their bills. She can continue to pretend like everything is fine, but that does not change the fact that people are hurting, and they are hurting because of her inflationary deficits, the tax increases and the broken promises of her boss's failed economic track record.

She said that she would balance the budget. She said that the debt ratio would go down. She said that there would be no more out-of-control spending. She did not keep her word. She does not answer questions in the House. Why would anybody trust anything she says?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would never lecture Canadians, and I will take no lessons from the Conservatives. This is the childish, irresponsible group of MPs who are today blocking the essential measures in our budget implementation legislation.

They are blocking the clean tax credits we put forward, which are going to drive jobs and growth, and climate action. They are blocking an extension of the seasonal EI program. I would like to know what particularly their MPs from Atlantic Canada feel about that frivolous action by their—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister pretended to have an inflationary epiphany back in November. She admitted that deficits lead to inflation finally. She said that she did not want to pour fuel on the fire of inflation. She promised no more deficits after 2027, the same deficits that gave Canadians the worst cost of living crisis in history.

Oral Questions

It only took her six months after that to do a massive flip-flop and admit in her failed budget that she would never end her deficit spending and poured a \$60-billion jerry can of fuel on the inflationary fire she started.

Will she stand up and admit she misled Canadians and end her inflationary deficit spending?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me suggest one reason why the Conservatives are resorting to these reckless, desperate and childish parliamentary tactics. It is because they do not want Canadians to remember how badly they coped with the 2008 recession.

In 2008, it took Canada 110 months for employment to recover. After the COVID recession, which was much deeper, it took just 24 months for employment to recover.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives will continue to block the Liberal-NDP government from piling on an extra \$4,200 of debt on the backs of struggling Canadians.

The finance minister's deficits are continuing to fuel inflation, driving up the cost of everything, and driving more Canadians to food banks than ever before. Her inflationary spending made housing more unaffordable, and rents and mortgages have doubled because of the government's failed policies.

When will the finance minister finally show some responsibility and balance the budget so interest rates can come down and Canadians can finally afford to live and heat their homes?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's GDP grew by 3.1% in the first quarter of this year. That is the fastest growth in the G7. We have recovered more than 900,000 jobs since the trough of COVID.

By contrast, after 2008, the Conservatives failed to support Canadians and failed to help Canada recover from the 2008 recession. In fact, as David Dodge said, "because it was obsessively focused on reducing the federal deficit...the Harper government unnecessarily contributed to"—

• (1435)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Stephen McNeil, the former Liberal premier of Nova Scotia, stated that if provinces continue to spend beyond their means, inflation will persist and continue to put pressure on household budgets.

Former Liberal minister John Manly also stated that it is like driving with one foot on the gas and the other on the brake. It is not a good plan for controlling the direction of the economy.

The Prime Minister is not listening to the opposition or to his Liberal friends. We have been clear: The government must balance the budget now.

Will the Prime Minister act in the interest of future generations?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the utmost respect for the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, but I would like to give him some advice. He should listen to Canadians.

Canadians told us three things. They want help with the cost of food. That is exactly what we are doing with the grocery rebate, which will help 11 million Canadians. Second, they want us to invest in health care because they want family doctors. Third, they want us to invest in the economy of the future to build tomorrow's economy, the economy of the 21st century.

That is exactly what we are doing, and the Conservatives would do well to listen to Canadians sometimes.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all we do is listen to Canadians. What Canadians are telling us, on this side of the House, is that they are struggling, that they do not have enough money and that everything is more expensive. Why is everything more expensive? It is because of the inflationary measures taken by this government. That is quite clear. Everyone is saying so, even former Liberal ministers and prime ministers. This is not working.

With all due respect to my colleague, can he tell the House if they are going to end their inflationary measures so Canadians can keep more money in their pockets, yes or no?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the people of Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles who are listening to the debate in the House today are a little surprised. The government is proposing measures to help people, precisely because, as the member pointed out, people need a little help. When Canadians need some help, they know which side of the House to turn to.

That is exactly why the Minister of Finance included food assistance measures in her budget. The grocery rebate will help 11 million Canadians, many of whom, I agree, will certainly be in the Quebec City region and Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

We need to help Canadians in their time of need. That is exactly what we are doing.

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is impossible to get answers about Chinese interference. When the Bloc Québécois asks how many elected officials in total have been the target of threats or disinformation campaigns, the government refuses to answer. When the Conservatives ask how many Chinese police stations remain open, it refuses to answer. When the NDP asks about the relationship between the special rapporteur's staff and the Liberal Party, it refuses to answer. Then, when all three parties call for a public inquiry, the government still refuses. This is an affront to democracy.

Where will we find the answers if the government refuses to provide them and refuses to hold a public inquiry?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to reassure my colleague. Our government continues to take this issue very seriously. The fight against foreign interference is a serious issue. David Johnston has an ardent new defender, the Conservative leader. Yes, it is true. He called Mr. Johnston "a very credible individual".

Despite all the history between Mr. Johnston and the Conservatives, we will continue to place our trust in him to determine the next steps on this important issue.

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that did not answer my question, but anyway. The Liberal solution is full of holes. We have a Prime Minister who hides the truth from citizens and who wants to force the opposition leaders to join him in his secretive practices. He wants to let them in on the secret, while keeping Quebecers and Canadians in the dark.

The Liberals are looking at this problem from the wrong angle. The problem is not that the public knows that China is interfering in democracy. On the contrary, the problem is that China is able to continue interfering behind the scenes. The problem is the darkness, not the light.

When will the government launch an independent public inquiry?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think my Bloc Québécois friend might be confused about who kept Canadians in the dark. The Conservative Party did absolutely nothing to address foreign interference, despite the fact that our intelligence agencies raised the issue publicly in 2013. Our government did the opposite. We implemented measures to counter foreign interference. We strengthened them every time the experts advised us to do so, and we are going to do exactly the same thing when it comes to Mr. Johnston's recommendations.

Oral Questions

• (1440)

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this government talks about opposition leaders but says nothing about China's interference. That is what we need to address, and yet, as a result of the Johnston report, there will be no inquiry into the Chinese police stations, no inquiry into the electoral candidates backed by China, no inquiry into the intimidation of the Chinese diaspora, and no inquiry into the threats against our elected members. What is the use of allowing Mr. Johnston to continue to do his work if he himself is telling us that he will not be investigating Chinese interference in our democracy?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to my colleague, our government has a list of meaningful action that has been taken with respect to foreign interference with the creation of new powers for CSIS, with the creation of a new national coordinator in the fight against foreign interference and with a public consultation for the creation of a new foreign agent registry. We are prepared to work together with the Bloc and with all members in the fight against foreign interference to better protect our democratic institutions.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, food costs are up. Inflation is up. Mortgage payments are up. Rental payments are up. Faith in the Prime Minister is down.

When will the Prime Minister end these inflationary deficits, scrap the tax and bring back the common sense of the common people?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure there was a question in there, but I do not mind actually sharing with the Conservatives—

The Speaker: I want to remind hon. members, there is a little chattering and I am not pointing at either side here, that this chamber is much more technically advanced than our old chamber, and it picks up everything. If someone is speaking and someone next to the microphone, not even next to it but a couple of seats away, says something, it will be picked up.

I just want everyone to keep that in consideration while someone is speaking.

The hon. Minister of Families, please start over so that we could hear the whole thing. It will be nice and quiet.

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure my hon. colleague asked a question there, but I do not mind enlightening him on the measures that we have taken to help Canadians with the high cost of living.

For example, we brought forward the Canada housing benefit that helps millions of Canadians who are low-income renters. We brought forward the Canada dental benefit that has helped over 300,000 Canadian children access the dentist, and the Canada child

benefit, which is now up to almost \$7,000 a year per child under the age of six for the lowest-income Canadians.

I would also mention the grocery rebates, which would be going out to 11 million Canadians this July.

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Liberal deficits drive inflation and Canadians are paying the price.

John Manley said that government fiscal policy is making it harder to contain inflation, and Stephen Poloz said that government deficits last year made the Bank of Canada raise interest rates higher, which means Canadians are paying a higher price for government spending. Just last month, inflation went higher when the Minister of Finance said Canadians should expect inflation to go lower.

Is there a plan to end inflationary deficits and spending to bring down inflation and interest rates?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I also do not mind providing a bit of a history lesson to Conservatives, because, in fact, when the Liberals left government in 2006, they left the Conservatives with a big, healthy surplus. What did the Conservatives do? Well, they actually brought in years of deficits while cutting services and going through a global recession.

On the other hand, what did we do? We invested in Canadians. We have supported Canadians. In fact, we know that inflation is high, but when it comes to food inflation, a new report today actually announced that Canada is the second-lowest in the world when it comes to food inflation.

We know there is more to do. We know we need to support Canadians. We are doing the right thing.

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we are proud of a record that, during the last recession, cut taxes for Canadians.

However, let us talk about energy and food costs, which are some of the biggest contributors to inflation. It is puzzling that the government continues to increase taxes on both fuel and food and making them more expensive by continuing to increase the carbon tax. These carbon taxes, as the central bank says, are inflationary, and this government wants to impose a second carbon tax, which will just make food and fuel more expensive, because we have to ship the food to the table and farmers use fuel in their operations.

When will the government realize that its policies are making inflation worse?

• (1445)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 2016 was the worst year for forest fires in Alberta, and already we are on the verge of surpassing this on June 4. We have just seen the worst forest fires in the history of Nova Scotia, and this is only June 4. Quebec asked the federal government over the weekend, because it said it could not handle all the forest fires it is seeing, and it is only the beginning of June.

Oral Questions

What is the response from the Conservative Party of Canada? It is to let make pollution free again. Let us allow the largest polluters in Canada to pollute as much as they want. Let us stop using the most effective tool to fight climate change, which is carbon pricing—

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

HOUSING

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, people across the country are hurting because of the housing crisis. They are paying exorbitant prices or are being forced to move. The Liberals are not building enough social or affordable housing and are not investing enough to maintain existing housing.

Yesterday, the NDP leader and I visited an affordable housing complex in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce that had to condemn and close entire apartment units for lack of money to maintain and renovate them. That is ridiculous.

When will the Liberals wake up and make serious investments in accessible housing for everyone?

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

We agree with him that housing is currently difficult to find and that it is much more expensive. We created the first national housing strategy, which invested in affordable housing and recognized the right to housing, because we need legislation to tackle market speculation. That is exactly what we are doing.

* * *

[*English*]

DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the raging wildfires in Alberta have left countless communities devastated. As families were allowed to return home, I joined some in the East Prairie Métis Settlement to witness the destruction and mourn the loss of their homes, cultural heirlooms and family memories.

Despite being hit the hardest, first nations and Métis settlements have only received lip service from both the provincial and federal governments. Will this government take its relationship with first nations and Métis settlements seriously and provide immediate housing supports to those who have lost everything?

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with the member that, last week, the Prime Minister and several of us met with the Métis National Council, for example, and talked about working with the Métis National Council to actually implement a priority on emergency management. I also want to assure the member opposite that Indigenous Services Canada and the Government of Canada have been work-

ing closely with first nations and Métis communities impacted by these fires, and we will continue to support them in every way possible.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, June marks National Indigenous History Month, which is an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the contributions of first nations, Inuit and Métis across Canada as well as their culture, languages and heritage. It is also an opportunity to reflect on historic wrongs, how they have impacted relationships with indigenous people and the ongoing work to advance reconciliation.

The reality of Canada's colonial history, including dispossessing indigenous people from their lands, continue to be felt to this day. Can the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations please update this House on the work Canada has been doing to advance reconciliation to address past harms—

The Speaker: The hon. minister.

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last year, we resolved a record number of 56 specific claims for \$3.5 billion in compensation. In addition, this past April, we reached a historical settlement with Treaty 8 first nations, which will return just over 44,000 hectares of land to those communities. We are also addressing a number of past harms, namely the harms caused by the tragedy of residential schools and the destruction of language and culture, with the Gottfriedson settlement earlier in January for \$2.8 billion.

While National Indigenous History Month is the occasion to reflect on everything that is going well in this country for indigenous peoples, it is also a reminder that we—

• (1450)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on July 1, the Liberal government is introducing a second carbon tax, an additional money grab from the pockets of cash-strapped Canadian families. With people already struggling to put food on the table, keep the lights on and make rent, how can the government justify yet another hurdle for them to overcome?

Running historic deficits and racking up reckless debt may be desirable for the government, but for many Canadians it is not an option. Will the government do the right thing and cancel its planned carbon tax increases?

Oral Questions

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for Calgary Nose Hill for her comments earlier in this House. She actually talked about climate change, which her leader has never done and very few of the members of the Conservative Party have done. She begged us to do smarter things like public transport. Well, every time we have proposed public transport, they have voted against it. She said, “building more emissions-free electricity plants”. That is exactly what we are trying to do with our clean electricity regulations, but the Conservative Party opposes them.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, clearly the members opposite are not listening to the people who have put them here.

Canadians are going to be hit by an average of \$1,500 annually under carbon tax 1, and under carbon tax 2 it is an additional \$573. That is over \$2,000 for an average family. The Liberal government needs to reduce interest rates and get inflation under control. It could start today.

I will ask this again after being given such a lacklustre answer the first time. Will the government exercise some common sense and cancel its planned carbon taxes, yes or no?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my hon. colleague that in their 2021 platform, the Conservatives were proposing to put in place carbon pricing. It was not a plan for the environment, but at least they were talking about it. It was a plan to encourage people to pollute more. That is not the polluter pays principle, but we are getting there. They even refused last week to let us table their own platform in this House. They are so ashamed, yet it is not the first time they have told Canadians they were going to put in place carbon pricing and then walked back on their promises.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we know, the Minister of Finance said last November that deficits fuel inflation. What happened after that? A few months later, Liberal Party supporters told her they wanted deficits.

That is certainly not good news for someone who dreams of becoming the leader of the Liberal Party, but that is how Liberal supporters responded. What is especially bad news for all Canadians is that there is going to be a second Liberal carbon tax.

Will the Minister of Finance confirm the Parliamentary Budget Officer's conclusion that it will cost families in Quebec an extra \$436, on average?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my hon. colleague that, in his party's election platform during the last campaign, the Conservatives proposed introducing a clean fuel standard. The difference between them and us is that, when they come to power, they do exactly the opposite of what they said they would do.

We on this side of the House are doing exactly what we said we would do. We are committed to fighting climate change, creating

good jobs and supporting the economy. That is exactly what we are doing.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have absolutely nothing against the Minister of the Environment, but my question was for the future leader of the Liberal Party or at least, its aspiring future leader, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

Why? Simply put, the matter directly affects the wallets of every Canadian family. The Parliamentary Budget Officer said it would cost Quebec families \$436 on average.

Could the Minister of Finance, Deputy Prime Minister and aspiring prime minister tell Canadians whether or not this is true?

Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Sport and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are constantly harping on about the deficit, but let me remind them that when the Harper government came to power, after the Liberal Party, it was left a budget surplus that it burned through. The Conservatives burned through the surplus by cutting revenues, services and programs. Every time something goes wrong, the Conservatives' first instinct is to make sweeping cuts.

We, on the other hand, have decided to help Canadians. We are asking the Conservatives to get a move on so that we can pass the budget and let Canadians reap the benefits.

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CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, Reuters reported about another \$3 billion for the Trans Mountain pipeline. Ottawa co-signed two other loans, in late March and early May, and finally published them quietly last week on a website that has little traffic.

Climate change is happening now; it is happening today. We are right in the middle of it.

How much longer will the federal government persist in wasting billions of dollars to export dirty oil in the middle of a climate crisis?

● (1455)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as Canadians, we know how important it is to get a fair price for our resources on the market. It is important for Canada. It is important for all Canadians.

I would go so far as to say that, from the perspective of Canada's economic sovereignty, it is very important for me.

I want to emphasize that the government does not intend to be the long-term owner of the project.

Oral Questions

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, these billions of dollars in loans co-signed by the federal government, where can they be found? They are in the Canada account.

The criteria for the account are set out in black and white. They state, and I quote, “the risks are assumed by the Federal government”. In other words, taxpayers are accountable for every penny invested in Trans Mountain.

Who still has the nerve today to say that it is more useful to invest these billions of dollars in Trans Mountain than in combatting disasters caused by climate change?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government does not intend to be the long-term owner of this project.

Our government also understands the importance of economic sovereignty and of Canada having control over its exports and natural resources.

Yes, I agree with my colleague regarding climate change. That is why Canada has invested \$120 billion in our plan for the green industrial transition.

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[English]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, carbon tax 1 will add 41¢ a litre to the price of gas. Now carbon tax 2 will add another 17¢ on top of that. To make matters even worse, they are going to tax these taxes by adding GST. It all adds up to a whopping 61¢ a litre. These taxes will make everything more expensive while Canadians can barely make ends meet.

It is time to take their foot off the gas. When will they axe the tax?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I was saying earlier, Canadians are battling forest fires right across the country. It is likely going to be the worst year for forest fires in the history of Canada. While this is happening, just last week in this House, the member for Red Deer—Mountain View rose to tell Canadians that climate change is normal. It is not that they do not care about climate change. It is not that they do not want to even understand it. They do not believe it is a problem, so why have any plans to fight climate change? Why have any plans to help Canadians adapt to what is a changing climate, as more and more Canadians face the impacts of climate—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Confederation.

Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as Canadians plan their summer vacations, many are shocked with skyrocketing costs: motel prices, food prices and in particular gas prices. The Liberal carbon taxes will add a shocking 61¢ to a litre of gas, and do not forget the GST on top of that. Not all Canadians get to jet off on a vacation where taxpayers pay for the fuel.

What is the Liberal government going to do to make sure Canadians can afford the gas to see their families, to see their friends and to see their country?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over my time as a parliamentarian, I have had the honour and privilege of getting to know the hon. member and I respect him deeply. However, I have to say that when we are dealing with the consequences of climate change at home, we know we need to reduce our pollution. We also know the most cost-effective way to combat climate change is to put a price on pollution.

With respect to this specific policy, eight out of 10 Canadian families are going to receive more. What the Conservatives are advocating for is to take that money away from families so they can give it to polluters. This is nonsensical policy. We are going to continue to advance an ambitious environmental agenda and make life more affordable at the same time.

* * *

● (1500)

[Translation]

FINANCE

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after hours and hours of delay caused by the Conservative filibuster, thanks to the hard work of the Liberal members, the Standing Committee on Finance reported on the budget implementation bill last week.

Unfortunately, the Conservatives keep delaying this bill's progress in the House.

Can the hon. Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance explain to the House how the measures in this bill will help Canadians and why it is so essential to pass it quickly?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Fredericton for that excellent question.

After more than 28 hours of delay caused by the Conservatives, the Standing Committee on Finance was finally able to refer Bill C-47 back to the House. This bill will allow us to move quickly on getting out the Canada workers benefit, improving the registered education savings plan and reducing the tax burden for merchants by reducing their credit card fees.

I ask the Conservatives to stop their ridiculous politicking and get this bill passed.

*Oral Questions**[English]***CARBON PRICING**

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the tax-and-spend Liberals are at it again. It is not bad enough that Canadians are skipping meals and going to food banks because they cannot afford to eat and heat with the punishing taxes that the government is going to triple. Now the Liberals want to double down with a clean fuel tax and put a tax on the tax. The combination of these taxes will raise the price of gas 61¢ a litre, costing thousands of extra dollars to Canadians who cannot afford it.

When will the Liberals axe carbon tax 1.0 and 2.0 and the tax on the tax?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at a time when the country is literally on fire and tens of thousands of Canadians have had to flee their homes, it is incredulous that the Conservatives continue to denigrate efforts to fight climate change. I am sorry, but it is hard to believe them when they say they take the environment seriously. It is even harder to believe them when they talk about affordability, because every time we have put forward measures to support Canadians, they have voted against them.

This July 5, the grocery rebate will be going out to Canadians, \$467 on average. We will continue to be there for Canadians.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me give members some reality. There has been a carbon tax for years that has done nothing to stop forest fires in this country, and it will never stop forest fires. It is a tax plan; it is not an environment plan. The only thing the carbon tax does is punish hard-working Canadians.

Will the Liberals quit double doubling down on the triple carbon tax and axe the tax?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this question highlights that the Conservative Party of Canada has no understanding whatsoever of the science of climate change. It is as if we can flick a switch and climate is going to be all right. It is this magical thinking that by investing money in cryptocurrency, all is going to be good with the economy in Canada. This is the same thing.

If the Leader of the Opposition will not take a briefing on Chinese interference, maybe he will take a briefing on climate change. My department would be very happy to provide that to him and any member of the Conservative Party of Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the Liberals are saying, the carbon tax will have an impact on Quebec—we just have to talk to farmers and truckers. As if that were not enough, this government wants to add a second tax, a tax on a tax. That tax represents \$436 per family per year in Quebec. Canadians are already struggling with rising interest rates and inflation. People are sick and tired of this.

Will the Prime Minister give them a break and abandon his second carbon tax?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we all know, Quebec has had a carbon exchange for a long time, so the federal price on pollution does not apply.

Our government has a number of measures to help the agricultural sector. One of them is the agricultural clean technology program, which is open right now. I encourage producers who want to acquire these new technologies to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and become more resilient in dealing with climate change to take advantage of this program.

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*[English]***THE ENVIRONMENT**

Mr. Charles Sousa (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on World Environment Day, we recognize our shared responsibility to protect our planet and to fight climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, now and in the future. This year, the theme for World Environment Day is “Solutions to Plastic Pollution”. This is an opportunity to highlight the initiatives taken by Canada, such as the banning of certain harmful single-use plastics to preserve the cleanliness of our shores.

Can the Minister of Environment and Climate Change tell us what solutions our government is putting forward to reduce plastic pollution?

● (1505)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his advocacy on this issue.

Happy World Environment Day. I am happy to announce that in just a few weeks, on June 20, the single-use plastic ban will come into full force. Following that date, harmful plastics such as straws and plastic cutlery will no longer be able to be used in, sold in or imported into Canada. This is news worth celebrating. Plastic products are harmful to our wildlife, our oceans and our lakes. That is why our government continues to take action toward having zero plastic waste before 2040.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, despite the clear damages from abandoned vessels to food security, marine life and the environment, the Liberals have not done enough. Locals know this damage well as abandoned vessels, or what locals call “vessel graveyards”, line our coasts. First nations and community groups are willing to clean up the government's mess. All that is missing is the government's political will.

Therefore, will the Liberals immediately provide the necessary funding to first nations and locals to clean up these harmful, destructive vessels?

Business of Supply

Hon. Omar Alhabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last year, the Prime Minister announced the renewal of the oceans protection plan, which is the largest investment Canada has ever made in protecting our oceans and our waterways. Part of that plan is working collaboratively with coastal communities and indigenous communities to make sure that we maintain the health of our waterways, including collaboration on removal of abandoned vessels. We have been dedicating the resources to work with indigenous communities to do so, and we will continue to do so.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago, I asked the government why the budget for the Canada summer jobs program had been drastically cut by 30% compared to last year. At the time, the Prime Minister told me that the budget had simply dropped back down to prepandemic levels. However, when we look at the numbers, we see that the budget for this program is now \$60 million less than it was in the years before the pandemic.

Given the impact that this will have on community organizations, municipalities, the agricultural industry, small businesses and, of course, job opportunities for young people, can the Prime Minister assure us that he will remedy this situation in the next budget?

[English]

Hon. Marci Ien (Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, youth come first and foremost in this country, and we have a suite of programs under the youth employment skills strategy, including Canada summer jobs program. We have gone back to prepandemic levels because employment for youth has gone down some 20%. There are several programs within this suite, and I would be pleased to chat with the member more about them.

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CARBON PRICING

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while Canadians are struggling to choose between heating their homes and feeding their families, and while record numbers of Canadians are going to food banks, with nearly 1.5 million Canadians going to food banks in a single month, the response from the Liberal government is to increase the tax on everything.

With carbon tax 2, Canadians are going to be paying more than 61¢ a litre in tax on gas, which is going to not only raise the price of getting to doctor's appointments, but also raise the price of food production for our farmers who make our food. Why is the government continuing to hammer Canadians with higher taxes?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives know that it is actually the contrary. Since we have come into office, we have lowered taxes for middle-class Canadians, and we have increased benefits for low-income Canadians. We have also lowered child poverty by half since we came into office in 2015.

It does not mean that we do not know there are Canadians who are struggling, which is why, on July 5, we will be bringing forward a second grocery rebate that will be providing, on average, \$467 for families of four in this country. It is also why we brought forward affordable child care. If Conservatives truly care about affordability, they have an easy thing to support—

● (1510)

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

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—CARBON TAX

The House resumed from June 1 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: It being 3:10 p.m., pursuant to order made Thursday, June 23, 2022, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the member for Mégantic—L'Érable relating to the business of supply.

[English]

Call in the members.

● (1540)

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

(Division No. 345)

YEAS

Members

Aboultatif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Berthold	Bezan
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chambers
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	Deltell
d'Entremont	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Findlay
Gallant	Généreux
Genius	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd

Business of Supply

Lobb
Martel
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Melillo
Morantz
Motz
Nater
Patzner
Perkins
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Ruff
Schmale
Shields
Small
Steinley
Strahl
Thomas
Uppal
Vecchio
Vien
Vis
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams
Zimmer — 115

Maguire
Mazier
McLean
Moore
Morrison
Muys
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Poilievre
Reid
Richards
Rood
Scheer
Seeback
Shipley
Soroka
Stewart
Stubbs
Tochor
Van Popta
Vidal
Viersen
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson

Green
Hajdu
Hardie
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Idlout
Jaczek
Joly
Julian
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lametti
Lapointe
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lemire
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
May (Saenich—Gulf Islands)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Mendicino
Michaud
Morrice
Murray
Ng
Normandin
Oliphant
Pauzé
Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski
Rays
Rodriguez
Romanado
Saks
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Singh
Ste-Marie
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Therrien
Trudeau
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Vignola
Virani
Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi — 209

Guilbeault
Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Ien
Johns
Jowhari
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Larouche
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maloney
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
O'Connell
O'Regan
Perron
Plamondon
Qualtrough
Robillard
Rogers
Sajjan
Samson
Savard-Tremblay
Schieffe
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sinclair-Desgagné
Sousa
St-Onge
Tassi
Thériault
Thompson
Trudel
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Villemure
Weiler
Yip
Zarrillo

NAYS

Members

Aldag
Ali
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Ashton
Bachrach
Bains
Barron
Battiste
Beech
Bennett
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blanchet
Blaney
Boissonnault
Bradford
Brunelle-Duceppe
Casey
Chagger
Champagne
Chatel
Chiang
Collins (Victoria)
Coteau
Damoff
Desbiens
Desjarlais
Dhillon
Dong
Dubourg
Duguid
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gaheer
Garrison
Gazan
Gill

Alghabra
Anand
Angus
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Baker
Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bendayan
Bérubé
Bittle
Blair
Blanchette-Joncas
Blois
Boulerice
Brière
Cannings
Chabot
Chahal
Champoux
Chen
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier
Dabrusin
DeBellefeuille
Desilets
Dhaliwal
Diab
Drouin
Duclous
Dzerowicz
El-Khoury
Fergus
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Fry
Garon
Gaudreau
Gerretsen
Gould

PAIRED

Members

Bergeron

Sorbara — 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS***[Translation]***HEALTH**

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure and honour to table, in both official languages, a report on COVID-19 rapid test procurement and distribution.

* * *

*[English]***GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

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

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the following two reports of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. The first is the 11th report, in relation to Bill C-41, an act to amend the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to other acts. The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

The second is the 12th report, in relation to the motion adopted on Wednesday, May 31, regarding the Taliban regime and human rights.

* * *

DEFENCE OF CANADA MEDAL ACT (1946-1989)

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-335, An Act respecting the establishment and award of a Defence of Canada Medal (1946-1989).

She said: Mr. Speaker, Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine has been difficult to watch from afar. As one of Ukraine's closest allies, Canada has and will continue to support the efforts of those brave individuals defending their homeland. This conflict, in many ways, may conjure memories of Canadians working with our allies in other democratic nations to ward off a common foe: the Soviet Union and eastern bloc nations during the Cold War, which lasted from 1946 to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

Many Canadians served their nation during this tense period in our history. To properly acknowledge their hard work and sacrifice, I am proud to introduce an act respecting the establishment and award of a defence of Canada medal for the men and women who served Canada during the Cold War.

[Translation]

This medal would be awarded to individuals who served in the Canadian Armed Forces, including reserves, as well as police organizations, emergency measures organizations and civilian assistance organizations, such as St. John Ambulance.

[English]

This act represents the vision of an Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking resident, retired captain Ulrich Krings, and has widespread support across the country, especially from those who worked so hard to keep us safe and prepared during those unsettling times.

I am very pleased my colleague from North Island—Powell River, who is also the NDP critic for Veterans Affairs, is seconding my bill.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

* * *

● (1545)

STRENGTHENING REPORTING OBLIGATIONS FOR SEX OFFENDERS ACT (NOAH'S LAW)

Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-336, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Sex Offender Information Registration Act (Noah's Law).

He said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to present my first private member's bill, the strengthening reporting obligations for sex offenders act, Noah's law, which is seconded by the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

This bill would empower vulnerable people, such as women and children, by legislating the compliance of highly-likely-to-repeat sex offenders with conditions outlined under the Sex Offender Information Registration Act, or SOIRA, under court orders.

For most people, September 16, 2021, was an uneventful day, but for Cody McConnell, it was the day his life was destroyed by a tragic event when his 24-year-old fiancée, Mchale Busch, and his 16-month-old son, Noah McConnell, were murdered by a 53-year-old registered sex offender who was deemed highly likely to reoffend. Because of this horrible and devastating event, Cody McConnell does not want anyone else to experience what he went through and still endures every day.

Noah's law would allow a court to order highly-likely-to-repeat offenders to comply with SOIRA for 30 years, in order to protect the public; to complete a sexual behaviour rehabilitation/treatment program before the termination of the order; to increase the frequency of reporting to a registration centre before moving to a new address; and to make it an offence for offenders to fail to report to a registration centre in accordance with SOIRA.

Routine Proceedings

I would like to acknowledge Laura MacRae, the lawyer and family friend of Cody McConnell who drafted Noah's law. I am also extremely pleased to have Senator Boisvenu introduce Noah's law into the Senate tomorrow afternoon. I would like to acknowledge the hon. member for Red Deer—Lacombe as well for supporting Noah's law by sponsoring petition e-4460. The petition has been online for just over a week and already has over 1,100 signatures.

My heart goes out to Cody McConnell and his family and friends. Mchale Busch and Noah McConnell have not been forgotten. Their deaths should lead to meaningful change within Canada's criminal justice system so that no other family will have to go through a tragedy like this again, and this bill would do just that. MPs and senators should quickly pass this bill. I would also like to thank Cody McConnell and his family and friends who came from Alberta to join us today.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC) moved that the 20th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts presented on Thursday, October 20, 2022, be concurred in.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to be able to speak to this very important committee report. It has been an honour for me to work as part of the team on the public accounts committee. I will be sharing my time.

The 20th report deals with the public accounts themselves, which are the volumes that come out every year, detailing the government's spending. There are various important items in the report. I particularly want to highlight the dissenting report the Conservatives submitted, because it talks about an issue that is top of mind for many Canadians: the carbon tax. Our dissenting report highlighted how the public accounts revealed key information about the cost to Canadians associated with the carbon tax, and, in fact, the action we want the government to take, namely to cancel the carbon tax.

The dissenting report from the Conservatives highlights something we have been saying in the House for a long time, which is how the cost of the Liberal government is driving up the cost of living. We are seeing out-of-control spending by the government and higher taxes. This is driving up the cost of living for many Canadians and the more those costs are seen in terms of taxes, as well as higher prices, which are the result of inflation. Every time the government spends money, it has an impact on Canadians in terms of higher prices and higher taxes. The dissenting report from Conservatives highlights how grocery prices are up; they are rising at the fastest pace in 40 years. The average family of four is now spending over \$1,200 more each year to put food on the table. We have seen particularly astronomical increases in costs in areas like housing and rent.

The carbon tax applies to the fuel that Canadians use, as well as to the goods that need to be transported using fuel, which is almost everything. It is the things we eat and many of the things we buy. The carbon tax is baked into those costs, and Canadians are seeing those costs increase. In the past, the government has tried to claim that this is a tax that will not cost anybody anything, a rather convenient but absurd claim. The public accounts revealed, and Conservatives were able to identify in our exploration in the public accounts committee, the enormous cost to Canadians associated with the carbon tax. One way the carbon tax is obviously not neutral is the GST. The GST is charged on top of the carbon tax; it is a tax on a tax. I recall a time when a former Conservative MP, the late Mark Warawa, I believe, put forward a private member's bill to take the GST off the carbon tax, but Liberals opposed it. They voted in favour of double taxation, which is clearly not revenue-neutral.

For Canadians who are concerned about the cost of the carbon tax, I am sorry to say that, as long as the Prime Minister remains in office, it is going to get worse. The Liberal plan is to triple the carbon tax, and to do so in the coming years. Hopefully we will see a Conservative government reverse those plans. The Conservatives' plan is not only to not increase the carbon tax, but also to eliminate the carbon tax. We want to bring tax relief to Canadians. We want to focus on deploying technology, not taxes, as the tool required to move us toward our environmental objectives.

The Liberals do not have an environmental plan. Their plan is clearly not working. Their only plan is to increase taxes on Canadians, and this is hurting Canadians. It is driving up the cost of living and making everything harder for Canadians. I am—

● (1550)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member has a phone that is vibrating.

The hon. member.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I apologize for that and I apologize to the interpreters.

Canadians are struggling because of increasing costs, and these costs are the result of a failed fiscal policy from the current government. We listen to the way the government talks about spending, and whenever things go wrong, it is not the Liberals' fault. Whenever the Liberals are spending money, they have no sense of the source of where that money comes from. We hear members of the government, ministers and other members, say that costs are high and things are challenging. It is as though when bad things are happening, they wonder, "How did this happen? We have been in power for eight years and costs are going up; surely it has no relationship to the policies we have pursued."

Routine Proceedings

It is actually very clear to Canadians that there is a direct, causal link between the decisions the government has made and the pain Canadians are experiencing. It is the Liberals' policy to increase taxes, especially in the area of the carbon tax. We actually just had a vote on what is, in effect, a second carbon tax that the Liberals want to impose. Not only do they want to triple the existing carbon tax, but they also have a second carbon tax in mind. They are constantly lying awake at night trying to think of creative new ways of taxing Canadians. The result is that Canadians are paying more. They are paying more to the government, but also, as government spending continues to grow and in even greater proportions outstrip the amount we are seeing in terms of tax increases, we are seeing rising prices driven by inflation and by more money chasing fewer goods.

All of this was in the Conservatives' dissenting report for the public accounts committee. Conservatives have called for tax relief for Canadians. We have called for more freedom for removing the gatekeepers, for eliminating the carbon tax, for not imposing a second carbon tax, for not having a tax on a tax and other such attacks on Canadians' efforts to live an affordable, prosperous life.

There are some other things I will share from the discussions we had around the study of the public accounts at the public accounts committee. It was interesting to me to note that there are instances where the government has provided loan forgiveness to various corporations. They could be very large and profitable corporations that have benefited from loans from the government, to which the government says it is going to forgive those loans, so, effectively, those loans turn into a subsidy. Therefore, as part of the public accounts discussion, we asked whether the government would be willing to provide the names of those companies and to release information about who is benefiting from a corporate subsidy. It seems to me to be a common sense proposition that, at the very least, if a large profitable corporation is benefiting from a federal government subsidy in the form of debt forgiveness, that is, the stakeholders took a loan they were supposed to pay back and did not pay back, and the government says they do not have to pay it back, then at that point, they should have to tell not only the government; Canadians should also be able to know that the company benefited from a public subsidy.

Many people would want to ask questions, and the company operators should be expected to provide some kind of explanation. Corporate welfare should not be something that is provided in secret. Maybe it should not be something that is provided at all, but certainly it is not something that should be provided in secret. Therefore, we asked, as part of the public accounts committee process, whether more information could be given with respect to which companies are benefiting from such loan forgiveness. That information was not forthcoming.

We have asked for similar information through Order Paper questions as well, by the way. Some points were raised earlier today about the government's not answering Order Paper questions and that it provides what are very clearly non-answers to Order Paper questions. Answers are supposed to provide information. Again we see, in the public accounts committee, in responses to Order Paper questions and in other areas, this decline in terms of the willingness of the government to provide information in general in re-

sponse to queries from members of Parliament, committees, the public and journalists, etc.

However, as I say, the main thrust of our dissenting report is about the fact that life has become more expensive. It has been eight years under this Prime Minister. Everything feels broken. Costs are up. Rent, housing and food are up and the government members want to behave as if it is not their fault and it is all some accident, as if to say, "How terrible that bad things keep happening to the country while we are in charge" and "What terrible fate we have."

• (1555)

That is obviously not the case. The Liberal government is pursuing policies that are making life less affordable. It is piling taxes on taxes. It has the second carbon tax, in addition to the tripling of the first. Inflation is up because of government spending. We have seen the accumulation of more debt under the Prime Minister than in the entire history of the country up until this point.

It is clear that the Liberals are not working. Their policies are not working. They are not making life better for Canadians. They are not making life better for the middle class and those working hard to join it.

That is why we need an alternative policy prescription that recognizes the creativity, potential and creative genius in every individual, and that seeks to harness that creativity to create more space and opportunity for individuals to go out and pursue their own ideas without the kinds of impediments that we are constantly seeing from the Liberal government. We need to unleash the creative potential of Canada by removing the gatekeepers and the barriers, and that includes reducing the regulatory burden on Canadians and lowering taxes. That is why we have put forward concrete policy proposals that move us toward—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It is time for questions and comments.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, once again, it is disappointing to hear Conservatives' stance on climate change, which is, "Don't worry about it."

The hon. member's province is on fire. There are fires raging out of control across the country, and the Conservatives are heckling. They are not serious about this. They are completely unserious about climate change as an existential threat.

I want to ask the hon. member a question. When residents of his own province, and other provinces across the country, are evacuating, why does he raise a point to make pollution free in this country?

• (1600)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, the hon. member would like us to believe that the Liberals have a plan.

Routine Proceedings

How is that plan going? The carbon tax was supposed to fix this problem, but then the member comes to me to say that we still have a problem. The Liberal plan is not working. The Liberal plan is not achieving results. Conservatives do not believe that increasing taxes on Canadians is the solution. The more effective alternatives, the ones we have proposed, emphasize technology and not taxes.

Let us be honest about this. The carbon tax was an excuse that the government put forward, calling it an environmental plan, with the goal of simply generating more revenue.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague a question about the 20th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

The third recommendation in the report has to do with transparency in Crown corporations. I would like to hear his thoughts on this subject, specifically, the lack of transparency in Crown corporations, because no one knows how the money is spent, but it is public money, after all.

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, that is an excellent question from my colleague.

It is a generally a pleasure working together on the public accounts committee, although today we had to sit through extensive filibustering from the Liberals because they do not want to allow us to look at documents from the Trudeau Foundation. Nonetheless, it is usually a pleasure, and any lack of pleasure is not the fault of the hon. member.

The third recommendation, which the member points out, calls on the Government of Canada to consider requiring Crown corporations to divulge all expenditures in the same manner as federal departments, and it goes on from there. As the member would recall, sometimes we have to negotiate to break through filibusters with government members of the public accounts committee. If I remember right, I suspect that there was some negotiation required. I would have preferred a stronger recommendation there, but it points in the right direction.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, for a number of days now, the Conservatives have been blocking the budget that would bring in dental care, only because the NDP forced it. That would benefit about 11,000 people in the member's riding, on average. It would also bring in a grocery rebate that would benefit about 10,000 people in his riding, and affordable housing, which both governments, Conservative and Liberal, have been incredibly negligent on. The NDP brought that in.

More importantly, the member's motion, which is clearly a dilatory motion, is designed to block the request the NDP will be putting forward for an emergency debate tonight on the forest fires that have consumed British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Nova Scotia, Quebec and Ontario. They are right across the country. We want an emergency debate. The member knows full well that the emergency debate is coming forward, but he is trying to block the request that would surely be granted.

How could the member do that, given that in his province, and provinces across the country, Canadians are suffering and need this debate?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I am surprised that the NDP House leader knows so little about the procedural workings of this place. I had no idea that New Democrats were planning to request an emergency debate.

Maybe it is on the member's Twitter. I do not follow him on Twitter, so I really had no idea, but—

Mr. Peter Julian: It is in the media. It is on TV and in the newspapers.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would please ask members to listen to the answer the hon. member is giving to the question he was asked.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I have raised a motion that is not a dilatory motion. It is a debatable motion. We are debating it. When the debate on this concludes, we will proceed with the daily routine of business, which will provide the member an opportunity to make his request for an emergency debate.

I suggest that, if he wants to learn more about these procedural issues, the Conservative House leader would probably be available to share a little more with him about what happens during a concurrence debate and what happens afterward.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I know the tactics behind concurrence debates, which push Routine Proceedings out a long time. Let me set that aside. The Conservative strategy on delay is also in the media.

I do want to take my friend up on the idea that government is responsible for the high prices of fuel and food price increases. It is very clear that Putin's attack on Ukraine created volatility and higher prices for fossil fuels globally. It is also very clear that the climate crisis interrupts food supply chains, as do other events. I would say to the hon. member that there are many things I would criticize the government for, and they are very different than what my hon. colleague would criticize them for, because the government has not done enough to address the climate crisis. It continues to think it makes sense to build a \$30-billion pipeline.

However, is my hon. colleague's position really that all of the increased prices in Canada have nothing to do with Putin's attack on Ukraine, have nothing—

• (1605)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan some time to answer the hon. member's question.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, of course there is a wide variety of factors that impacts energy prices. There is a wide variety of factors that impacts prices for anything, but when we add a tax on top of energy prices, then we are saying that, whatever the market price would have been, we will make it higher by taxing it. It is inevitably true that, regardless of what the market price will be and the other factors influencing it, the carbon tax has, as its purpose, to increase the price of fuel.

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, because he did it to me, I believe if you seek it, you would find unanimous consent to wish the member for Kingston and the Islands a very happy birthday today.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That is hardly a point of order, although we do wish a happy birthday to the hon. parliamentary secretary.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn has the floor.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, it was a scam all along, and Conservatives knew it from the beginning. The Liberals and the NDP sold this carbon tax as something that would fix the environment, and the higher it went, the better the environment would get. The weather would get better. They also said that Canadians would get more back in their pockets than what they would pay into the scam in the first place. Were they wrong? Boy, were they wrong. The Conservatives were right all along.

Now the Liberals and the NDP have nowhere to hide. This was a scam that made the cost of gas, groceries and home heating even more expensive. Remember that at first they sold it as a levy? They said it would be a levy for your Chevy. They said that the more one drove, the more one would have to pay, so maybe people would change their habits. Boy, was that wrong.

It does not take a government economist to see that Canadians were sold a bill of goods. The PBO says that low-income Canadians were hit the hardest by this scam. We are already seeing Canadians suffering today because the Liberal-NDP government spent and put Canadians further into debt than all governments before them combined. It made inflation go up.

We have seen 1.5 million Canadians visiting a food bank in a single month. We have seen one in five Canadians skipping meals in this country. One in four Canadians today are having to borrow money from their friends and family just to put food on their table, and now more and more Canadians who are being driven to food banks are asking for medical assistance in dying because they are hungry. This is the state of Canada today under the Liberal-NDP government.

When my family and I came here, we came here to live the Canadian dream. Under the Liberals and their costly coalition partners of the NDP, that Canadian dream is dead. Canadians are working harder than ever before, sometimes two or three jobs, and they are not getting anything back in return. They are paying higher taxes than ever before because the government continues to spend. It continues to break its promises. It promised a balanced budget in 2015. It said it would balance the budget, and by 2019, there would be no more deficit spending. It is 2023, and it still continues to break that promise. It is breaking that promise on the backs of hard-working, struggling Canadian families.

There are these continued failed experiments, such as carbon tax number 1, and now they are introducing another one, carbon tax scam number 2. That does not have any phony rebates with it. The first carbon tax scam is going to cost each and every Canadian household an average of \$1,500. The second scam is going to cost

every single Canadian household on average \$537. That is more than \$2,000 on the backs of hard-working Canadian families.

I talk to newcomers to this country all the time, and they have the same complaint. They ask us, "Why did we leave the country we came here from? We came to Canada looking for a better future. We were promised a lot. We were promised a better future. We were promised a safer future. We were promised that we could get ahead with the more work that we put in." Now they feel like they were scammed.

They come here working harder than ever. At the end of the day, they have a Liberal-NDP government working against them and their hard work, so much so that now one in five newcomers are thinking about packing up and leaving this country. Most are only living here for about two years. They cannot afford the cost of living, and they have a government that is dead set on making sure that they take more from these newcomers than Canadians. With their carbon tax scam 1, they told Canadians they would get more back in their pockets. They promised, "We'll take some money from you, and we promise to give you more back." Conservatives did not believe that in the first place. We knew it was a scam all along.

● (1610)

In my home province of Alberta, Albertans will be paying \$2,500 more into this scam than what they get back. In Ontario, it is almost \$2,000. This carbon tax scam was not as advertised from day one. Thank God the Parliamentary Budget Officer exposed the truth and the scam behind what the Liberals were selling for years. Do members remember when they promised that it would not go over \$50 a tonne? They broke right through that promise, like they did when they said they would balance the budget.

More Canadians are finding it harder to eat and heat their homes. We hear about seniors having to cover themselves with blankets during the wintertime just so they do not have to pay the high heating bills they keep getting every single month. Heating bills have almost doubled across this country. Why? It is because the climate zealot, ideologically based Liberal-NDP government blocked and stopped any energy projects from being built in this country. They could have helped not only lower the price of energy in this country, but lower the cost of the fuel to heat our homes, of goods and even of food. However, the government continues to block them over and again. Why? It is because it wants to look woke. It seems like the more the Liberals go woke, the more Canadians go broke.

We have an environment minister who, as far as I know, is the only one in this House who has worn handcuffs and an orange jumpsuit at the same time. He is dead set on making sure our energy costs are the highest in the entire world. Not everyone has the luxury of having transit close to them or being able to ride a bike everywhere they go. We have hard-working Albertans and people who live in northern parts of Canada who have no other choice than to drive pickup trucks. What are the Liberals doing? They are punishing the people who are trying to make this country better, the people who are literally building this country with their hands and putting in hard work to make Canada the best place in the world. What is the government set on doing? It is punishing them. It is punishing our seniors and each and every worker in this country.

It is sad that newcomers to this country are not seeing the same opportunities that my family and I saw. We did not come from a really great background. We struggled for many years. There was a deal back then that Canada had: If someone put in the work, they would get something in return. However, with the government, the harder people work, the more they pay and the more they will be punished. Never before in my life have I seen people who used to volunteer their time and donate their money to food banks standing in those food bank lines themselves. That is the sad state of this country after eight years of the Liberal-NDP government.

It is sad to see people who do not want to stay in Canada and help contribute anymore because they do not see the point in that. Some people have risked their lives and have left everything behind to come to this country, and now they want to pack up and leave and take their talent, energy and entrepreneurial spirit because the government continues to attack them and make everything more expensive.

That is why the Conservatives will bring in a common-sense plan, cancel both these carbon tax scams and solve the problem using technology and not taxes.

With that, I move:

That the debate be now adjourned.

• (1615)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
The question is on the motion.

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

Mr. Adam Chambers: Madam Speaker, it is nice to see you again. I would ask for a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
Call in the members.

• (1700)

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

Routine Proceedings

(Division No. 346)

YEAS

Members

Aboultiaf	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Berthold	Bezan
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chambers
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	Deltell
d'Entremont	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferrier	Findlay
Gallant	Généreux
Genius	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Maguire	Martel
Mazier	McCaulley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Motz
Muys	Nater
O'Toole	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Perkins
Poilievre	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ruff
Scheer	Schmale
Seeback	Shields
Shipley	Small
Soroka	Steinley
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vis	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Williams
Williamson	Zimmer— 114

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker

Routine Proceedings

Barron
Battiste
Beech
Bennett
Bittle
Blair
Blanchette-Joncas
Blois
Boulerice
Brière
Cannings
Chabot
Chahal
Champoux
Chen
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Coteau
Damoff
Desbiens
Desjarlais
Dhillon
Dong
Dubourg
Duguid
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gaheer
Garrison
Gazan
Gill
Green
Hajdu
Hardie
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Idlout
Jaczek
Joly
Julian
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lametti
Lapointe
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lemire
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
Mathyszen
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Mendicino
Michaud
Morrice
Murray
Ng
Normandin
Oliphant
Pauzé
Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski

Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu
Bendayan
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blanchet
Blaney
Boissonnault
Bradford
Brunelle-Duceppe
Casey
Chagger
Champagne
Chatel
Chiang
Cormier
Dabrusin
DeBellefeuille
Desilets
Dhaliwal
Diab
Drouin
Duclos
Dzerowicz
El-Khoury
Fergus
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Fry
Garon
Gaudreau
Gerretsen
Gould
Guilbeault
Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Ien
Johns
Jowhari
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Larouche
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maloney
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
O'Connell
O'Regan
Perron
Plamondon
Qualtrough

Rayes
Rodriguez
Romanado
Saks
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Singh
Ste-Marie
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Therrien
Trudeau
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Vignola
Virani
Weiler
Yip
Zarrillo

Robillard
Rogers
Sajjan
Samson
Savard-Tremblay
Schiefke
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sinclair-Desgagné
Sousa
St-Onge
Tassi
Thériault
Thompson
Trudel
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Villemure
Vuong
Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi— 208

PAIRED

Members

Bergeron

Sorbara— 2

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

The Speaker: 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 Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, Housing; and the hon. member for Nunavut, Northern Affairs.

* * *

CANADA EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE ACT

BILL C-35—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise that agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the following: report stage and third reading of Bill C-35, an act respecting early learning and child care in Canada.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the Crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the respective stages of the bill.

* * *

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023, NO. 1

BILL C-47—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise that agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the following: report stage and third reading of Bill C-47, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that a minister of the Crown will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the respective stages of the bill.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I request that the ordinary hour of daily adjournment of the June 6, June 7 and June 8 sittings be 12 midnight, pursuant to the order made Tuesday, November 15, 2022.

The Speaker: Pursuant to order made Tuesday, November 15, 2022, the request to extend the said sittings is deemed adopted.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened at length to the interventions today by the member for Calgary Forest Lawn, as well as the Conservative who preceded him.

I could not help but reflect on the fact that both these members ran in the 2021 election on a carbon price, which they are so adamantly opposed to now. They are so opposed that they have introduced 10 opposition motions in this House in the last 18 months to that effect, none of which have gained the support of any colleague in this House outside of Conservative MPs.

Can the member reflect on the fact that he ran in an election where he promised to price pollution, but he is now actually speaking out against it and moving countless motions to that effect?

• (1705)

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, speaking of elections, let me congratulate Alberta and all Albertans for electing another UCP Conservative majority that once again rejected the Liberal-NDP government, including the job-killing carbon tax, the inflationary carbon tax—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): May hon. members afford the courtesy to the hon. member to answer the question?

The hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn has the floor.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Speaker, I am just as excited as they all are that Albertans rejected the same failed carbon tax the Liberal-NDP government keeps boasting about. I congratulate Albertans, Danielle Smith and the UCP majority government—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, Edmonton is entirely orange now. All MLAs

Routine Proceedings

across Edmonton are now New Democrat, and most MLAs in Calgary are actually New Democrats as well. I think that the member neglected to say that the Conservatives have lost the cities, of course, in Alberta.

More importantly, what this member is doing with his dilatory motion is blocking the request for an emergency debate tonight on wildfires that have swept through Alberta, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia. This shows profound disrespect by Conservatives to those volunteer firefighters who are persevering and fighting the fires, as well as people in northern Alberta who are fighting the wildfires. Conservatives are saying they do not give a damn—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Speaker, let me just start off by reminding the member that Edmonton is in Alberta and that Albertans overwhelmingly selected a majority Conservative government, rejecting the same carbon tax that we are debating right now.

He wants to talk about disrespect. We can talk about the one in five Canadians who is skipping meals and the 1.5 million people who are visiting food banks because that party is making food, groceries, home heating and fuel more and more expensive with the failed carbon tax. We cannot call that party an opposition party anymore, because it is part of the government.

It has failed to hit a single emissions reduction target, yet it is making things worse for those struggling Canadians and putting more tax on the backs of Canadian families.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, here is a rebuttal. What do the Conservatives block? They are blocking dental care for seniors, people with disabilities and families with youth under the age of 18. They are blocking a grocery rebate that about 11,000 people in his riding would benefit from. They are blocking affordable housing.

In fact, the Conservatives are being pyromaniac gatekeepers, blocking all those things that the NDP has forced the government to do, which would actually benefit people in his riding.

Why are the Conservatives going through this charade?

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Speaker, let me be very clear. What Conservatives are blocking is this Liberal-NDP government piling another 4,200 dollars' worth of debt on to the struggling backs of hard-working Canadians. That is what we will continue to block.

Routine Proceedings

We have two simple asks. The Liberal-NDP government needs to lower the deficit and lower the inflation. We see nine out of 10 young people blocked out of home ownership, and we see mortgages and rents going up. That is because these two parties got together and put Canadians further into debt than any government before them combined, which raised the interest rates. Today, we have a housing crisis along with a crisis of cost of living. It is because of the failed policies of this government.

Conservatives will continue to stand up for Canadians, make sure that we lower the price and bring it home for them.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the members of the House for rejecting that motion to adjourn; this gives me the opportunity to speak to this very important issue. I found it interesting that it was a report from the public accounts committee that was looking to be concurred in, but little was actually said about the report.

Instead, there was just a lot of talk about a price on pollution, something that the Conservatives should realize they have lost the war on. They keep fighting this fight thinking that, somehow, more members in the House are going to change their opinion on the matter. That is just not true.

Canadians should know what is really going on right now, which is that the soldiers of the Leader of the Opposition are doing his dirty work for him. Earlier today, in a news conference, he said that he was going to put up every roadblock possible to ensure that we could not get the budget through.

I have news for Conservatives. We are absolutely going to be here as long as it takes to get the budget passed. We are going to pass the budget; we are not going to bend to their two ridiculous demands in the process. We can keep playing these games all they want. We can sit here into July if they want, but we are going to deliver for Canadians. That is what we have been sent to do.

Canadians should also know about the games the Conservatives played on Friday. There is a great montage and summary of all that, which I have shared on Twitter. This shows the extent to which they used the hybrid provisions that we have in the House, provisions that are there to assist members in participating from outside this chamber, in order to delay absolutely everything.

I hope that Canadians are aware of that. Typically speaking, on any given motion like this, we would have maybe one or two people who would have to raise a point of order after the debate. They would do this if something happened to their phone, where they were not able to utilize it properly or it flagged and said to “please verify”. Do we know—

• (1710)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman is rising on a point of order.

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary knows full well that we are debating the budget bill. This has nothing to do with the budget.

Second, because this has relevance, the Speaker, on Friday, committed to looking into all the problems we had during that vote.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That has been dealt with, and there has been a ruling by the Speaker.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, the member is not even aware of what we are debating right now. I do not blame him, because the Conservatives are up to so much stuff over there. Just for his information, we are debating a concurrence motion that his colleague put forward from the public accounts committee. That is what we are debating, but I am not surprised that Conservatives are absolutely clueless as to what is going on in this House right now, given the fact that 40 Conservative members, on Friday, raised a point of order after the vote and wasted a total of 23 minutes just in one voting exercise. So—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Marty Morantz: Madam Speaker, we are debating a concurrence motion. I do not see what the relevance to the concurrence motion is. This member—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member knows that there is a lot of leeway on relevance, and I will allow it. The hon. member has 20 minutes to bring us back to relevance.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, the relevance is that I am speaking to the motive for placing this concurrence motion before the House right now. That is the relevance of it. Nonetheless, I think it is important that we get back to the business at hand.

Therefore, I move:

That the House do now proceed to Presenting Petitions.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The question is on the motion.

[*Translation*]

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

[*English*]

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Call in the members.

• (1755)

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

(Division No. 347)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Barron
Battiste	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Blaney
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Cannings
Casey	Chagger
Chahal	Champagne
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Fergus	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Garrison
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jowhari	Julian
Kayabaga	Kelloway
Khalid	Khera
Kmiec	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lattanzio
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson	Mendès
Medicino	Miao
Miller	Morrice
Morrissey	Murray
Naqvi	Ng
Noormohamed	O'Connell
Oliphant	O'Regan
Petitpas Taylor	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Robillard

Routine Proceedings

Rogers	Romanado
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Singh	Sousa
St-Onge	Sudds
Tassi	Taylor Roy
Thompson	Trudeau
Turnbull	Valdez
Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Virani	Weiler
Wilkinson	Yip
Zahid	Zarrillo
Zuberi— 171	

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Berthold	Bezan
Blanchette-Joncas	Block
Bragdon	Brassard
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chabot
Chambers	Champoux
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	Desbiens
Desilets	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Findlay
Fortin	Gallant
Garon	Gaudreau
Généreux	Genuis
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kitchen
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Larouche	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lemire
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Maguire	Martel
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Michaud	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	Normandin
O'Toole	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Perkins	Perron
Plamondon	Poilievre
Rayes	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Roberts

Routine Proceedings

Rood	Ruff
Savard-Tremblay	Scheer
Schmale	Seeback
Shields	Shiple
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Small	Soroka
Steinley	Ste-Marie
Strahl	Stubbs
Thériault	Therrien
Thomas	Tochor
Tolmie	Trudel
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vignola	Villemure
Vis	Vuong
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Williams	Williamson
Zimmer— 141	

PAIRED

Members

Bergeron

Sorbara— 2

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

PETITIONS

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, I am honoured to table a petition. The petitioners are asking for support for Bill C-257, which would add protections for people who have political differences to make sure they are valued the same as other human rights in the federally regulated sphere. This is an important initiative, and certainly these petitioners need to be heard by their government. I hope the government will respond accordingly and favourably.

BIRD WELFARE

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present petition e-4281, signed by almost 2,000 Canadians. The petitioners point out that a major source of bird mortality is collisions with windows and buildings. The Canadian Standards Association has a bird-friendly design standard that is already practised by many architects, builders and municipalities. These designs significantly reduce bird mortalities, at minimal cost.

The petitioners ask that the federal government include this standard in the national building code, and they also ask for a national plan to reduce the mortality of birds from building and window collisions.

JUSTICE

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise for the seventh time on behalf of the people of Swan River, Manitoba, to present a petition on the rising rate of crime.

The common people of Swan River are demanding a common-sense solution to repeal the Liberal government's soft-on-crime policies, which have fuelled a surge in crime throughout their com-

munity. A surge of robberies by repeat offenders has forced nearly every business to install bars on their windows and buzzers on their doors. Now many local businesses are considering closing their doors for good. To say that crime has significantly impacted the local economy is an understatement.

The people of Swan River demand that the Liberal government repeal its soft-on-crime policies, which directly threaten their livelihoods and their community. I support the good people of Swan River.

• (1800)

THE ENVIRONMENT

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

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

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

One is in support of Bill C-257, which seeks to include political rights within human rights. As members know, unfortunately many Canadians are discriminated against because of their political beliefs. This legislation seeks to protect their political rights and the freedom of expression associated with them.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from a group of petitioners who are against the expansion of MAID to include infanticide. They believe that the lives of children are sacred and that MAID should not be extended to infants.

SURF GUARD SERVICES

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to table a petition on behalf of residents of British Columbia and visitors to the Pacific Rim National Park Reserve.

The petitioners call on the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to reinstate the surf guard tower and surf guard services, and to extend the duration of the surf guard program to accommodate the growing number of emergencies as well as visitors at Long Beach in the Pacific Rim National Park Reserve.

Emergencies at Long Beach are attended by Parks Canada, in collaboration with the Canadian Coast Guard, Westcoast Inland Search and Rescue, B.C.'s Emergency Response Group and the RCMP. However, rescues initially fall into the hands of surfers, beachgoers and the surf schools that operate in the park.

In February 2018, a man died at Lovekin Rock. In May 2018, in the same area, a woman died. In March 2016, four people were saved by the Canadian Coast Guard and Canadian Armed Forces. In August 2021, another man drowned at the same spot.

Basically, lifeguards watched over that beach as part of the Pacific Rim National Park Reserve surf guard program for 40 years, until the Conservative government cut the program in 2012. The petitioners are calling on the government to reinstate this program so that no more lives are lost.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise today to put the voices of 35 Canadians on the record through a petition in support of Bill C-257.

These Canadians agree that democracy is important, and they want to safeguard it. They think no one should be discriminated against based on their political beliefs. It is something we all believe in strongly on the Conservative side of the aisle.

We hope that we can get this bill passed quickly so that Canadians will not face discrimination for thinking differently, which we have seen the Liberal government do time and time again. We are hoping we can get this bill passed to protect the rights of Canadians across the country.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of many Canadians who are concerned about human rights protections in Turkey, Pakistan and Bahrain.

The petitioners are saying that Turkish and Pakistani officials have committed gross human rights violations against thousands of Turks, including eight Turkish Canadians. They say that Turkish officials have killed hundreds, including Gökhan Açikkollu.

The petitioners say that Turkish officials have wrongfully detained over 300,000 people without any reason. They say that multiple human rights violations and gross human rights violations are happening because of Turkey.

The petitioners say that the Canadian government should closely monitor human rights in Turkey and sanction Turkish officials who have committed gross human rights violations against eight Canadians. They are calling on Turkey and Pakistan to end all human rights violations and wrongful detentions.

• (1805)

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I will present today is from Canadians across the country who want to draw the attention of the House of Commons to the Liberal Party platform of 2021, where the Liberal Party was jeopardizing the charitable status of hospitals, houses of worship, schools, homeless shelters and other charitable organizations that do not agree with the Liberal Party on the matter of abor-

Routine Proceedings

tion. Many Canadians depend on and benefit from these charitable organizations.

The petitioners point to the fact that the Liberal government has previously tried to impose a values test on the Canada summer jobs program. They are calling on the House of Commons and the government to protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on a political and ideological neutral basis without discrimination on the basis of political or religious views, and to affirm Canadians' freedom of expression.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I will present is from Canadians across the country who are concerned about the comments from Louis Roy of the Collège des médecins du Québec, who recommended that euthanasia be expanded to babies from birth to one year of age when they have severe deformities or serious syndromes. This proposal to legalize the killing of infants is deeply concerning to these Canadians, and they state that infanticide is always wrong. The petitioners call on the government to block any attempts to allow the euthanization of children.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the final petition I will present today is from Canadians across the country who want to be protected against discrimination. Canadians can and do face political discrimination, and it is a fundamental right of Canadians to be politically active and vocal. It is in the best interests of Canadian democracy to protect public debate and the exchange of ideas.

The petitioners are in support of Bill C-257, which would add protection against political discrimination to the Human Rights Act. They are calling on the Government of Canada and the House to pass this bill and defend the right of Canadians to peacefully express their political opinions.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to present a number of petitions to the House today.

The first petition is the same as the petition my colleague presented with respect to the human rights situation in Turkey, Pakistan and Bahrain. The petitioners are concerned about officials in all three of these countries committing human rights violations against thousands of Turks, including Turkish Canadians in particular.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners are concerned about the killing of hundreds by Turkish officials, including the killing of Gökhan Açıkkollu. Also, the petitioners say that Turkish officials have wrongly detained over 300,000 people without reason and that multiple international human rights groups have confirmed gross human rights violations in Turkey.

The petitioners call on the government to closely monitor the situation in terms of human rights in Turkey, to sanction those officials who have committed these violations against these Canadians as well those involved in the killing of Gökhan Açıkkollu, and to call on the governments of Turkey, Pakistan and Bahrain to end all human rights violations in their respective countries.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition highlights the ongoing, horrific and unjust detention of Mr. Huseyin Celil.

The petitioners note that they were very pleased to see the release of the two Michaels who had been detained for 1,000 days in China. They note that Mr. Celil has been detained for over 5,000 days, that he is a Canadian citizen and a person of Uyghur ethnic origin who had been vocal on advocating for the human rights of Uyghurs. Of course, Uyghurs face ongoing genocide, as has been recognized by the House and most of the parties in this place.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to take a number of steps to support the human rights of Uyghurs and to seek the release of Mr. Celil: demand that the Chinese government recognize Mr. Celil's Canadian citizenship and provide him with consular and legal services in accordance with international law; formally state that the release of Mr. Celil from Chinese detainment and his return to Canada is a priority of the Canadian government of equal concern to the unjust detention of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor; appoint a special envoy to work on securing Mr. Celil's release; and seek the assistance of the Biden administration and other allies around the world in obtaining Mr. Celil's release.

COVID-19 MANDATES

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition is one I had a number of copies of and has been in my desk for a little while. It is, in some respects, a little bit dated, but I think it is always worth a reminder. The petition calls on the Government of Canada to end all COVID-19 mandates. I am pleased to table that as well.

● (1810)

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am going to table a number of petitions that relate to the human rights situation in Hong Kong.

First of all, the petitioners note how recent Hong Kong graduates can apply for open work permits under a temporary public policy for Hong Kong residents. In June 2021, there were two pathways, stream A and stream B, announced to Hong Kongers who worked or studied in Canada to obtain permanent residency in Canada.

Stream B required graduates to have one year of work experience in Canada and have graduated within the last five years from a Canadian or foreign equivalent post-secondary school. On February 6 of this year, Canada announced an extension and expansion of the

open work permit program for eligible Hong Kong residents by extending the open work permit for an additional two years. However, this extension failed to address time constraints that stream B applicants face while pursuing eligibility for permanent residency. The 2016-17 graduates who met the five-year graduation requirement at the time of applying for the open work permit are falling out of eligibility to apply for permanent residency under stream B of this scheme by the time their work permits are received and they have fulfilled the hours of work requirement.

The petitioners call upon the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to remove the five-year restriction to include all persons who fulfill the educational credential requirements of stream B.

HONG KONG

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition is also about the situation in Hong Kong.

The petitioners note the injustices that have been inflicted against Hong Kong and how people who have been involved in the democracy movement might have faced politically motivated prosecutions and, as such, they might be considered inadmissible to Canada under the current approach being taken. The petitioners are concerned about people being asked for police certificates and so forth. It would be difficult for those who have been involved in the democracy movement and faced politically motivated prosecutions to get those certificates.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to recognize the politicization of Hong Kong's judiciary; to affirm its commitment to render all national security charges and convictions irrelevant and invalid in relation to section 36(1)(c); to create a mechanism by which Hong Kong people with pro-democracy movement related convictions provide an explanation for such convictions on the basis of which government officials can grant exceptions to Hong Kong people who would otherwise be deemed inadmissible; and to work with the United Kingdom, the United States, France, Australia, New Zealand and other democracies to waive criminal inadmissibility of Hong Kong people convicted for political purposes who otherwise do not have a criminal record.

With that, I move, seconded by the member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry:

That the House do now adjourn.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion.

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

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Mr. Speaker, we are requesting a recorded vote, please.

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1855)

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

*(Division No. 348)***YEAS**

Members

Abouttaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Berthold	Bezan
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chambers
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Davidson
Deltell	Doherty
Dowdall	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Gallant
Généreux	Genuis
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kitchen
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Lantsman	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lloyd	Martel
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Motz
Muys	Nater
O'Toole	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Perkins
Poillievre	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ruff
Schmale	Seeback
Shields	Shiplely
Small	Soroka
Steinley	Strahl
Stubbs	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vis	Vuong
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Williams	Williamson— 106

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Angus	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach

Routine Proceedings

Badawey	Bains
Baker	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Champoux
Chatel	Chen
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Dancho	DeBellefeuille
Desbiens	Desilets
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Drouin	Duclos
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Fergus	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Garon	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gill
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jacek
Johns	Joly
Jowhari	Julian
Kayabaga	Kelloway
Khalid	Khera
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Kwan	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Larouche	Lattanzio
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lemire
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod	McPherson
Mendès	Mendicino
Miao	Michaud
Miller	Morrice
Morrissey	Murray
Naqvi	Ng
Noormohamed	Normandin
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Pauzé
Perron	Petitpas Taylor
Plamondon	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Rayes

Routine Proceedings

Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Sahota	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sarai	Savard-Tremblay
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Singh	Sousa
Ste-Marie	St-Onge
Sudds	Tassi
Taylor Roy	Thériault
Therrien	Thompson
Trudel	Turnbull
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vignola
Villemure	Virani
Weiler	Wilkinson
Yip	Zahid
Zarrillo	Zuberi— 202

PAIRED

Members

Bergeron

Sorbara— 2

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 1400, 1409, 1413, 1416 and 1418.

[Text]

Question No. 1400—**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:**

With regard to the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, in reference to section 83.05 of the Criminal Code: (a) what procedure is followed by the department to determine whether a state is a state supporter of terrorism; (b) does the Russian Federation meet the criteria under the aforementioned section of the Criminal Code to be designated as a state supporter of terrorism, and what is the detailed explanation for how the determination was made; and (c) what other legislation, criteria, or factors are used by the department to designate a country as a state supporter of terrorism?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the list of state supporters of terrorism is not provided for under section 83.05 of the Criminal Code but is pursuant to section 6.1 of the State Immunity Act.

Section 83.05 of the Criminal Code provides for the Governor in Council, GIC, on the recommendation of the Minister of Public Safety to establish a list of terrorist entities.

Under the Criminal Code, “entity” means a person, group, trust, partnership, fund or an unincorporated association or organization.

In order to be listed, the GIC must be satisfied that there are reasonable grounds to believe that “[s. 83.05(1)(a)] the entity has knowingly carried out, attempted to carry out, participated in or facilitated a terrorist activity”; or “[s. 83.05(1)(b)] the entity has knowingly acted on behalf of, at the direction of or in association with, an entity” involved in a terrorist activity.

Determining whether to designate an entity is based on information, intelligence and legal analysis. It involves cross-government consultations and the preparation of security or criminal intelligence reports, which are independently assessed by the Department of Justice to ascertain whether an entity meets any of the thresholds for listing as set out in subsection 83.05(1) of the Criminal Code.

With regard to part (b), the list of state supporters of terrorism is not provided for under section 83.05 of the Criminal Code but is pursuant to section 6.1 of the State Immunity Act, which is described in the answer to part (c).

With respect to the list of terrorist entities pursuant to the Criminal Code, the process of adding or removing entities is iterative and ongoing. The Government of Canada does not disclose the specifics of this publicly.

In respect of a foreign state, the “terrorist activity” definition in the State Immunity Act has the same meaning as in subsection 83.01(1) of the Criminal Code, provided that a foreign state set out on the list referred to in subsection 6.1(2) does the act or omission on or after January 1, 1985.

With regard to part (c), with respect to the List of State Supporters of Terrorism, created in 2012 pursuant to section 6.1 of the State Immunity Act, the Governor in Council can create a list of states where there are reasonable grounds to believe that a state has provided support to a listed terrorist entity under the Canadian Criminal Code. “Support” is defined in the State Immunity Act as an act or omission in relation to a listed terrorist entity that, had it been committed in Canada, would be punishable under specific counterterrorism provisions of the Criminal Code. As such, upon the recommendation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs in consultation with the Minister of Public Safety, the Governor in Council has the authority to list foreign states that have supported a terrorist entity named pursuant to the Criminal Code. By being placed on this list, states lose their immunity from the jurisdiction of Canadian courts in relation to actions brought against them in connection with their support of terrorism under the Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act.

Question No. 1409—**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:**

With regard to the Wrecked, Abandoned or Hazardous Vessels Act, broken down by fiscal year since 2011-12: (a) what is the total number of penalties issued to (i) individuals, (ii) corporations; (b) what is the total dollar amount collected through fines issued under the act; and (c) what is the total number of vessels (i) forfeited to the government, (ii) retained pending payment of a fine, (iii) disposed of for the purpose of payment of a fine?

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as of April 2023, and since the coming into force of the Wrecked, Abandoned or Hazardous Vessels Act in July 2019, 105 vessels of concern situations were resolved with the collaboration of the owner. Transport Canada has issued only one penalty to an individual since 2011-12. The fine was issued in 2020-21 and was for \$ 5,000. The account/debt has been registered with the Canada Revenue Agency, but no payment has been received. Transport Canada did not forfeit, retain pending payment of a fine, or dispose of for the purpose of payment of a fine, any vessel since 2011-12.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1413—Mr. Stephen Ellis:**

With regard to Marine Atlantic's decision to have its new ferry built at a shipyard in China: (a) what is the value of the contract for the new ship; (b) did Marine Atlantic study the economic impact of choosing a shipyard in China as opposed to a Canadian shipyard, and, if so, what is the impact, including the (i) number of jobs created overseas as opposed to in Canada, (ii) approximate dollar value of economic benefits, both direct and indirect, for the economy in China as opposed to the Canadian economy; (c) did Marine Atlantic invite Canadian shipbuilders to submit proposals related to the construction of these vessels, and, if so, which shipbuilders submitted proposals and why were those proposals not accepted; (d) does Marine Atlantic plan on altering its procurement processes in the future to ensure that it purchases vessels built in Canada, and, if so, what are the details of such a plan; (e) what action, if any, has the minister responsible taken to ensure that future vessel procurement involves construction at Canadian shipyards; and (f) will Marine Atlantic be required to pay import duties on the vessel, and, if so, what is the dollar value and percentage that is expected to be paid in duties?

Hon. Omar Alhabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (e), Marine Atlantic Inc. is an independent Crown corporation that operates at arm's length from the Government of Canada and is responsible for managing its business decisions and operations, including those related to procurement.

For the capital work that is done for its vessels, Marine Atlantic continues to conduct its refits and maintenance in Canada, as operationally feasible, to support the regional economy.

With regard to part (a), the bareboat charter has a cost of approximately \$100 million.

With regard to part (b), Marine Atlantic pursued a competitive procurement process open to domestic and international bidders for the five-year charter of a newly constructed vessel. Stena North Sea Ltd. was the highest ranked proponent. The economic impact of the shipyard selected by Stena to construct the vessel was not considered within the competition.

With regard to part (c), the competition was open to domestic and international suppliers experienced in the operation and chartering of Ro-Pax vessels. Stena North Sea Ltd. was the highest ranked proponent based on the established evaluation criteria.

With regard to part (d), Marine Atlantic's procurement processes are subject to domestic and international trade treaties.

With regard to part (f), Marine Atlantic does not anticipate being required to pay import duties.

Question No. 1416—Mr. Stephen Ellis:

With regard to the Vaccine Injury Support Program: (a) how many applications for financial compensation were (i) received, (ii) approved, (iii) rejected; (b) how much has been paid out through the program; (c) what is the average payout for approved applicants; and (d) what types of injuries were approved for compensation, and how many claims were related to each?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the pan-Canadian vaccine injury support program, VISP, provides financial support to people in Canada in the rare event that they experience a serious and permanent injury as a result of receiving a Health Canada authorized vaccine, administered in Canada, on or after December 8, 2020. The program also provides death benefits and support for funeral expenses in the rare case of a death as a result of receiving a Health Canada authorized vaccine.

The VISP was launched on June 1, 2021, and is being administered independently by Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton Consult-

ing Inc., RCGT, with Public Health Agency of Canada, PHAC, funding. PHAC is not involved in individual cases, including in the determination of decisions regarding causality or compensation.

As the independent third party administrator, RCGT oversees all aspects of claims intake and assessment and is responsible for providing periodic public reporting on program statistics. Public reporting began on December 1, 2021, and data on the VISP is updated twice a year. Latest public reporting can be found at: <https://vaccineinjurysupport.ca/en/program-statistics>.

The Province of Québec continues to administer its long-standing vaccine injury compensation program, VICP. Information on Québec's VICP, including program statistics, can be found at: <https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/advice-and-prevention/vaccination/vaccine-injury-compensation-program#c3895>.

With regard to part (a), as of RCGT's last public report on December 1, 2022, RCGT had received 1,299 claims; 221 claims had been assessed by a medical review board and 50 had been deemed eligible for compensation; and 171 of the claims assessed by the medical board were deemed ineligible for compensation and 209 claims did not meet the eligibility criteria. Further information with regard to program statistics can be found at the following link: <https://vaccineinjurysupport.ca/en/program-statistics>.

The Province of Quebec updates its program statistics annually. As of March 31, 2022, Quebec's VICP had received 410 claims; 199 claims were assessed by a medical committee and 56 had been deemed eligible for compensation; and 143 of the claims assessed by a medical committee were not deemed eligible for compensation and 45 claims received were not pursued. Further information with regard to program statistics can be found at the following link: <https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/advice-and-prevention/vaccination/vaccine-injury-compensation-program>.

With regard to part (b), from June 1, 2021, until December 1, 2022, a total of \$2,779,277 in compensation has been approved or paid by RCGT.

From the inception of the program in 1988 until March 31, 2022, Quebec's VICP has paid a total of \$7,853,000 in compensation.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to part (c), the amount of compensation an eligible individual will receive is determined on a case-by-case basis, depending on the nature of the injury. Eligible individuals may receive income replacement indemnities, injury indemnities, death benefits, including coverage for funeral expenses, and reimbursement of eligible costs such as otherwise uncovered medical expenses. Given the different types of supports available, the average dollar value of successful claims would not represent the amount an eligible claimant may receive through the VISP or VICP.

With regard to part (d), serious and permanent injury is defined as a severe, life-threatening or life-altering injury that may require in-person hospitalization or a prolongation of existing hospitalization, and results in persistent or significant disability or incapacity, or where the outcome is a congenital malformation or death. In compliance with privacy laws and policies, PHAC only collects information relevant to program administration. As per the terms and conditions of the funding agreements with RCGT and the Province of Quebec, PHAC will never receive disaggregated data on details on the nature of injuries for which claims are being submitted or approved from RCGT and Quebec.

Question No. 1418—Mr. Robert Kitchen:

With regard to the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC): (a) what is PHAC's Management Response and Action Plan for future pandemic or epidemic events; and (b) what are the details of all emergency preparedness exercises and simulations that PHAC has been involved in, since January 1, 2020 including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) entities and organizations involved, (iv) summary of the exercises or simulations, (v) observations and results?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), since the start of the pandemic, the Public Health Agency of Canada, PHAC, has conducted several reviews and assessments of its emergency response activities, including linkages with key emergency management plans. During this time, these plans have provided a useful framework for establishing key governance and operational structures to drive response activities in accordance with internationally recognized best practices.

The collective learning from Canada's experience with the COVID-19 pandemic is informing PHAC's preparedness planning for future pandemic or epidemic events together with a broad range of federal, provincial, territorial, FPT, and indigenous partners and multiple multisector partners, building on all key components of the public health response to COVID-19 including strengthening surveillance, wastewater monitoring and detection of infectious diseases; improving early monitoring and warning processes; updating and testing our emergency plan; securing and distributing vaccines, therapeutics, and other equipment; enhancing public health risk communications and trust building among people living in Canada; and developing evidence-informed public health guidance.

The Office of the Auditor General, OAG, published four reports concerning COVID-19 performance audits related to pandemic planning, health surveillance, early warning of public health threats, border measures, strategic stockpile and procurement support of vaccines. Further information concerning the AG's report findings can be found at the following link: <https://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca>. Further information concerning PHAC's management response action plans to address the various OAG report recom-

mendations can be found at the following link: [Audit reports - Canada.ca](https://www.auditreports-canada.ca).

PHAC's work and other forward-looking pandemic preparedness work is already under way as part of several PHAC management response action plans in response to OAG audits related to COVID19.

For example, PHAC is already working with provincial and territorial, PT, partners to build on information sharing, management, and technology improvements; PHAC has established a new centre for integrated risk assessment; PHAC has established a new centre for data management, innovation and analytics; PHAC has restructured its border and travel health program to better respond to the changing pandemic and increase its focus on compliance; PHAC continues to work with FPT partners and vaccine manufacturers to manage its supply of COVID19 vaccines, make surplus vaccine doses available to other countries for donation, and prepare for potential pandemic influenza vaccine readiness; and PHAC continues to support and improve vaccine information data sharing among FPT health authorities and indigenous partners, health care professionals and vaccine manufacturers.

Drawing from lessons learned, PHAC will continue to support the health and well-being of Canadians and prepare for future pandemic or epidemic events.

We know how important it is to take stock of what we've learned through this pandemic, to prepare for future health emergencies. We can always do more, that's why our government has committed to a COVID response review in the future. In the meantime, we will keep working with provinces and territories to improve our health care system and keep Canadians healthy and safe.

With regard to part (b), since January 1, 2020, PHAC has led or contributed to 21 emergency preparedness exercise activities. This includes 15 discussion-based exercises such as seminars, workshops or tabletop exercises, and six operations-based exercises such as drills, command post or full-scale exercises.

Exercise activities included various partners internal to the health portfolio, other federal departments and provincial, territorial and/or municipal partners as required for the designated subject matter and scenarios. The exercises aimed to meet targeted objectives developed for each individual activity, testing relevant plans and processes involved in the emergency response. In addition, the exercises highlighted best practices, gaps and opportunities for improvement moving forward.

Routine Proceedings

In processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the principles set out in the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act. The requested information in part (b) concerning emergency preparedness exercises and simulations is considered to be protected information, therefore the specific details have been withheld due to confidential business information.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURN

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, furthermore, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 1399, 1401 to 1408, 1410 to 1412, 1414, 1415, 1417 and 1419 could be made orders for return, these would be tabled immediately.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1399—Mr. James Bezan:

With regard to personnel employed by the Department of National Defence (DND) or the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF): (a) how many individuals are currently employed by (i) DND, (ii) CAF; (b) how many of the individuals in (a) are (i) civilians, (ii) regular forces, (iii) reserve forces; and (c) of the individuals in (a) (ii), what is the breakdown by (i) Canadian Army, (ii) Royal Canadian Navy, (iii) Royal Canadian Air Force, (iv) Canadian Special Operations Forces Command, (v) Canadian Forces Intelligence Command, and what is the rank for each?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1401—Mr. James Bezan:

With regard to the federal civil service, as of April 1, 2023, broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation or other government entity: (a) how many employees or full time equivalents are currently employed; (b) what was the amount spent on salaries, benefits and other compensation in the last fiscal year; and (c) what is the breakdown of (a) and (b), for government entities with both civilian and enlisted or officer employees such as the Canadian Armed Forces or the RCMP, by type of employee?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1402—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to travellers entering Canada and the ArriveCAN application: (a) how many travellers entered Canada between January 1, 2023, and April 15, 2023; (b) how many and what percentage of the travellers in (a) submitted their information through ArriveCAN prior to their arrival in Canada; and (c) what is the breakdown of (a) and (b) by the type of point of entry used (air, land, sea)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1403—Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:

With regard to government interactions and expenditures related to Canada 2020, since October 1, 2022, broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation, or other government entity: (a) what are the details of all expenditures, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) description of goods or services, including the volume, (iv) related events, if applicable, including the dates, locations, and the title of each event; (b) what are the details of all sponsorships the government has provided to Canada 2020, including the event (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) sponsorship amount, (iv) title, and the purpose of sponsoring the event; and (c) what are the details of all gifts, including free event tickets, received by ministers, ministerial staff or other government officials from Canada 2020, including the (i) date, (ii) recipient, (iii) value, (iv) description of the gift, including the volume and the event date, if applicable?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1404—Mr. Frank Caputo:

With regard to stakeholder consultations on bail reform conducted by the Minister of Justice or the Department of Justice since October 1, 2022: (a) how many stakeholders have been consulted; and (b) what are the details of each consultation, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) groups and individuals consulted, (iv) names or titles of those who conducted the consultation, (v) summary of the feedback received, (vi) form of the consultation?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1405—Mr. Kevin Vuong:

With regard to the Recovery Fund for Arts, Culture, Heritage and Sport Sectors under budget 2021, and the amendment to the contribution agreement for the funds awarded to the Harbourfront Centre in Toronto signed on November 10, 2022: (a) what specifically did the amendment change in the initial schedule and the initial project list; (b) how did the amendment respect the contribution agreement requirements and fiscal responsibility towards the project; (c) how did the amendment represent good stewardship of public funds; and (d) did the amendment reference the need for the Harbourfront to consult with the public on the changes to the schedule and the project list?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1406—Mr. Blake Desjarlais:

With regard to the Village at Griesbach administered by the Canada Lands Company, since the acquisition of the property: (a) how does the Canada Lands Company define affordable housing for the purposes of this property and what is the associated dollar amount to be considered affordable for this project; (b) what is the number of units that are (i) under \$600 per month, (ii) under \$800 per month, (iii) under \$1,000 per month, (iv) under \$1,500 per month, (v) under \$2,000 per month, (vi) over \$2,000 per month; (c) what is the total number of units that meet the definition in (a) that are (i) planned, (ii) currently under development, (iii) completed; (d) what is the total number of units that do not meet the definition of affordable and are (i) in planning, (ii) currently under development, (iii) completed; and (e) what is the total amount of funding that has been (i) committed, (ii) finalized, (iii) advanced to the applicants?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1407—Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:

With regard to the national inventory of wrecked, abandoned or hazardous vessels, broken down by fiscal year since 2011-12: (a) what is the total number of vessels added to the inventory located (i) on the Pacific coast, (ii) on the Arctic coast, (iii) on the Atlantic coast, (iv) in the Great Lakes, (v) in the St. Lawrence Seaway; (b) what is the total number of vessels removed from the inventory located (i) on the Pacific coast, (ii) on the Arctic coast, (iii) on the Atlantic coast, (iv) in the Great Lakes, (v) in the St. Lawrence Seaway; (c) what risk categories does the government use to prioritize the removal of vessels; (d) what is the current number of vessels in the inventory, broken down by risk category; and (e) does the government have an estimate of the number of abandoned vessels not included in the inventory?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1408—Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:

With regard to government funding for the removal of wrecked, abandoned or hazardous vessels, broken down by fiscal year and department or agency since 2011-12: (a) what are the details of all projects or initiatives led by First Nations, Inuit or Métis communities or organizations, including the (i) group receiving funding, (ii) date the funding was received, (iii) total amount of funds committed, (iv) location of the vessel or vessels identified for removal, (v) current status of the vessel or vessels; and (b) what is the total number of Indigenous-led projects or initiatives that were denied funding for the removal of the vessels?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1410—Ms. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay:

With regard to individuals who entered Canada through land crossings in British Columbia: (a) how many individuals entered through irregular or illegal crossings, in total and broken down by month since January 1, 2022; and (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by approximate geographic location of the crossings?

(Return tabled)

S. O. 52

Question No. 1411—Mr. James Bezan:

With regard to the Department of National Defence (DND) and the government's announcement in August 2019 titled "Canada negotiates new armoured combat support vehicles": (a) on what date will the 360 light armoured vehicles (LAV) from General Dynamic Land Systems Canada be put into service; (b) what are the names of each variant type of LAV purchased; (c) how many of each variant type was purchased; and (d) on what date is DND expected to complete the sign off or final approvals for the LAVs which are still at General Dynamic Land Systems Canada?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1412—Mr. John Brassard:

With regard to the increase in the number of public service employees between 2016 and 2023: (a) what was the total number of public service workers as of (i) January 1, 2016, (ii) January 1, 2023, in total and broken down by department or agency; and (b) what was the total number of positions added to the public service between January 1, 2016, and January 1, 2023, broken down by occupational group, level, Treasury Board classification, and department or agency?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1414—Mr. Dean Allison:

With regard to government contracts with Baylis Medical since January 1, 2020, broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation, or other government entity: (a) what are the details of all such contracts, including, for each, the (i) date of the contract, (ii) value, (iii) description of the goods or services provided, including the quantity and whether the goods were manufactured by Baylis Medical or by a third party, (iv) manner in which the contract was awarded (sole-sourced, competitive bid, etc.), (v) date on which the goods or services were delivered; and (b) for each of the contracts in (a), did the company live up to its contractual obligations, and, if not, what corrective action was taken by the government?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1415—Mr. Warren Steinley:

With regard to carbon offsets purchased by the government, since January 1, 2016, broken down by year: (a) how much was spent by each department, agency, Crown corporation, or other government entity; and (b) what are the details of each purchase, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) cost, (iii) amount of emissions that the purchase was meant to offset, (iv) vendor?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1417—Mr. Luc Berthold:

With regard to expenditures related to the Prime Minister's trip to Montana in April 2023: (a) what were the total costs incurred by the government for (i) accommodations, (ii) per diems, (iii) other expenses, for the flight crew and government officials who travelled to Montana in connection with the Prime Minister's trip; (b) in what city or town did the flight crew and government officials stay at in Montana; (c) how much did the Prime Minister reimburse the government in relation to the flight for this vacation; (d) did the Prime Minister reimburse any other expenses related to this vacation and, if so, how much and what was the reimbursement for; (e) did any government officials travel to Montana in a method other than on the Challenger flight which carried the Prime Minister and, if so, how many officials travelled through other means, and how much was spent on their airfare; and (f) are there any costs incurred or expected to be incurred by the government related to the trip that are not included in the response to (a) and, if so, what are those costs or expected costs, broken down by item and type of expense?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1419—Mrs. Laila Goodridge:

With regard to the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF): (a) what is the number of individuals in the CAF, broken down by type (civilian, military, reserve) and branch as of (i) January 1, 2016, (ii) January 1, 2020, (iii) January 1, 2023; and (b) what is the number of individuals at each military rank as of (i) January 1, 2016, (ii) January 1, 2020, (iii) January 1, 2023?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, finally, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

WILDFIRES IN CANADA

The Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform the House that I have received notice of a request for an emergency debate. I invite the hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay to rise to make a brief intervention.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise to ask for an emergency debate on the urgent and escalating wildfire situation in Canada.

I want to first say that our hearts are with the 30,000 Canadians who are still out of their homes and the many hundreds who have lost everything in these fires. I thank the firefighters on land and in the air for their brave and dangerous work keeping all of us safe.

More than 400 fires are burning right now across the country from Vancouver Island to Nova Scotia. More than 3.6 million hectares have been torched so far this year, and it is only the first week of June. We have a long, hot fire season ahead of us.

Local and provincial first responders have been overwhelmed. It is clear that we need to re-evaluate the federal role in wildfire protection and response to develop a more proactive process, instead of the present reactive one, and we must do as much of this as possible as quickly as possible in the next few weeks, before summer truly arrives.

This process and support to affected parts of the country should be informed by the urgent debate of Parliament, so I therefore ask for an emergency debate tonight here in the House of Commons.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay for his intervention. The Speaker is prepared to grant an emergency debate concerning the wildfire situation across Canada. This debate will be held later today at 10 p.m., pursuant to the order made on November 15, 2022.

● (1900)

HOUSING

The Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform the House that I have received three notices for requests for an emergency debate concerning the same subject. I invite the hon. members for Regina—Qu'Appelle, Calgary Forest Lawn and Parry Sound—Muskoka to rise and make brief interventions.

The hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am rising today to also request an emergency debate for the very serious matter we see happening across Canada today, which is the housing crisis. It is one that the housing minister refuses to acknowledge as something we are going through today.

New IMF data was released. It shows that Canadian households face the greatest risk of mortgage defaults as households struggle to cope with increasing interest rates. These high interest rates were caused by high inflationary deficit spending by the government. It made the Governor of the Bank of Canada raise the rates, causing Canadians headaches and all sorts of hardships when it comes to the housing crisis.

The finance minister, in November, said she did not want to throw fuel onto the inflationary fire, but then, with the recent budget, threw 68 billion dollars' worth of fuel on that inflationary fire. That made the inflation problem worse and will possibly have the Bank of Canada raise its interest rates once again, which would cause even more hardships.

We know that nine out of 10 young people cannot imagine home ownership. Newcomers do not even dream of ever owning a home, as the cost of living is growing because of the inflationary deficit spending by the Liberal government.

I would also implore you, when considering this decision, to also consider that we are on the reading stage of the budget, so it only limits the scope. We want to expand it because of how serious the housing crisis is and how much worse it is going to get when people start defaulting on mortgages, according to RBC and this IMF report.

I am requesting an emergency debate on this very serious matter.
[Translation]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for his intervention. However, in the Chair's opinion the request does not meet the requirements of the Standing Orders.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-47, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

[English]

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC) moved:

Motion No. 281

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 283.

Motion No. 282

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 284.

Motion No. 283

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 285.

Motion No. 284

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 286.

Motion No. 285

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 287.

Motion No. 286

Government Orders

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 288.
Motion No. 287

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 289.
Motion No. 288

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 290.
Motion No. 289

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 291.
Motion No. 290

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 292.
Motion No. 291

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 293.
Motion No. 292

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 294.
Motion No. 293

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 295.
Motion No. 294

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 296.
Motion No. 295

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 297.
Motion No. 296

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 298.
Motion No. 297

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 299.
Motion No. 298

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 300.
Motion No. 299

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 301.
Motion No. 300

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 302.
Motion No. 301

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 303.
Motion No. 302

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 304.
Motion No. 303

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 305.
Motion No. 304

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 306.
Motion No. 305

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 307.
Motion No. 306

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 308.
Motion No. 307

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 309.
Motion No. 308

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 310.
Motion No. 309

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 311.
Motion No. 310

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 312.
Motion No. 311

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 313.
Motion No. 312

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 314.

Government Orders

Motion No. 313

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 315.

Motion No. 314

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 316.

Motion No. 315

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 317.

Motion No. 316

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 318.

Motion No. 317

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 319.

Motion No. 318

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 320.

Motion No. 319

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 321.

Motion No. 320

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 322.

Motion No. 321

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 323.

Motion No. 322

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 324.

Motion No. 323

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 325.

Motion No. 324

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 326.

Motion No. 325

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 327.

Motion No. 326

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 328.

Motion No. 327

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 329.

Motion No. 328

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 330.

Motion No. 329

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 331.

● (1910)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine is rising on a point of order.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Mr. Speaker, I believe the Table has received notice from all parties that they agree to dispense.

The Deputy Speaker: I suggest that we make sure the Table gets that information.

Just to clarify, once the agreement has been made among the parties, even though it is after 6:30 p.m., a motion to move forward on this would probably be in order. If somebody could move that motion, it would be beneficial.

Just to make sure that everything is in order, let us pause to make sure the text reflects the agreement that has been had among the parties this evening.

SITTING SUSPENDED

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 7:14 p.m.)

● (1915)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 7:18 p.m.)

The Deputy Speaker: We have a point of order from the hon. deputy government House leader.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we ask for unanimous consent that the remaining motions be deemed moved by the member for Calgary Forest Lawn and seconded by the member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry.

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

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

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC) moved:

Motion No. 330

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 332.

Motion No. 331

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 333.

Motion No. 332

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 334.

Motion No. 333

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 335.

Motion No. 334

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 336.

Motion No. 335

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 337.

Motion No. 336

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 338.

Motion No. 337

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 339.

Motion No. 338

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 340.

Motion No. 339

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 341.

Motion No. 340

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 342.

Motion No. 341

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 343.

Motion No. 342

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 344.

Motion No. 343

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 345.

Motion No. 344

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 346.

Motion No. 345

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 347.

Motion No. 346

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 348.

Motion No. 347

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 349.

Government Orders

Motion No. 896

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 673.

Motion No. 897

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 674.

Motion No. 898

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 675.

Motion No. 899

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 676.

Motion No. 900

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 677.

Motion No. 901

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 678.

Motion No. 902

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 679.

Motion No. 903

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 680.

Motion No. 904

That Bill C-47 be amended by deleting Clause 681.

He said: Mr. Speaker, as Tupac once said, “All I’m trying to do is survive and make good out of the dirty, nasty, unbelievable lifestyle that they gave me.” More Canadians I talk to today feel like that is exactly the position the current Liberal government has put them in: a dirty, nasty, unbelievable position because of its overspending.

We used to have something called a Canadian dream here in Canada. After eight years of the current Liberal-NDP government, that Canadian dream is dead for so many people. I will tell members why. It is because Canada is now seeing one in five Canadians skipping meals, and we are seeing 1.5 million Canadians going to food banks in a single month. Two in five Canadians are borrowing money from friends and family just to put food on the table, and nearly a third of Canadians are struggling just to get by.

When we talk about what the Canadian dream used to be and what it used to represent, now we see that the dream is gone for many newcomers and those living here who are just struggling to barely get by. These are not statistics of a country that is prospering or one that people can look forward to moving to, but that is the reality after eight years of the current government’s failed policies.

Members might ask why Canadians are feeling this way. As Thomas Sowell once said, “The real goal should be reduced government spending, rather than balanced budgets achieved by ever rising tax rates to cover ever rising spending.” Having a government that has added more debt on the backs of Canadians than all governments before it combined is what plunged Canadians into the worst cost of living crisis in history.

Inflation has ravaged our country and Canadians for a very long time. On top of that, we have a Liberal government that does not stop raising taxes. People are already being pile-drove by the cost of living crisis because of out-of-control spending, which made interest rates go up as well. Then the Liberals pile more taxes on Canadians. We see two payroll taxes; an excise escalator tax; carbon tax 1.0, which went up; and a second one that the Liberals are going to introduce to make gas, groceries and home heating even more expensive.

I will take members back to a few months ago, in November. Do they remember when the finance minister fooled us all? She said she had an epiphany. First, she finally admitted that deficits fuel inflation. That is what she said. She also said she was going to be careful. She said she did not want to throw more fuel on the fire of inflation.

Even in her fall economic statement, the minister fooled us once again. She showed in the fall economic statement that she would have a balanced budget by 2027. She said there would be no more deficits. She even had it down in writing for Canadians to see. It took until just six months after that for her to do a massive flip-flop and say she was just kidding and that not only is she not ever going to stop spending money, but her inflationary deficits will never end. She said she will never balance the budget. She turned on her own word and threw a \$60-billion jerry can of fuel on the inflationary fire that she started in the first place.

Member should remember that the finance minister is the one who said that deficits fuel inflation. Those were her words. It is something the Conservatives had been saying from day one and that the Liberals refused to acknowledge. It is not just us. The possible future Liberal leader and the finance minister’s possible seat-mate when the Liberals are on this side of the House, Mark Carney, said that inflation in Canada increasingly reflects what is happening in Canada.

● (1920)

If members do not want to believe him, we have a former Liberal finance minister, John Manley, who said, “[The Liberal Prime Minister’s] fiscal policy is making it harder...to contain inflation.” This is something that was also confirmed by the current Governor of the Bank of Canada, Tiff Macklem.

Where does all this wasteful spending lead, with the added-on \$60 billion? It is going to lead to each and every Canadian household having another \$4,200 of debt put on their backs. This is because the government, supported by its coalition partner, the NDP, just cannot help itself but to continue to tax Canadians further and further into bankruptcy. It is at the point now where we are seeing insolvencies going up more than ever.

More Canadians are visiting food banks than we have ever seen before. Why is this? It is because this trust fund Prime Minister does not understand the pain of Canadians. How could he understand it? He is the same guy who spent \$6,000 a night on a hotel room. How does he understand the pain of what he is putting Canadians through?

We see wasteful spending of \$22 billion on consultants. Those consultants are covering up for the incompetence of the government, especially its ministers. That is the ministers’ job. They are supposed to be figuring out how to fix the airports and immigration system that they have made a huge mess of, yet they are hiring more and more consultants to try to cover for their problems. What is that doing? That is adding more taxes on to Canadians and driving more people to the food banks.

Government Orders

While we are talking about food banks, we had some of them testify at committee recently. All we hear from the Liberal side is that everything is fine, that things are great here in Canada and that people have never had it so good. However, the CEO of the Daily Bread Food Bank said, “The underlying reasons for [higher food bank usage] are complex, but I can summarize them in one sentence: People do not have enough income to afford the rapidly rising cost of living.”

We have already established that the government brought out-of-control inflationary deficits that pile-drove and forced Canadians into this cost of living crisis. Then, the government piled on more taxes, such as carbon tax 1, which was a scam all along; it made gas, groceries and home heating more expensive. Now, on July 1, it is going to pile-drive another one, carbon tax 2.0, which is going to take even more out of Canadians' pockets. It is going to make gas, groceries and home heating even more expensive. This government is not “responsible” or “fiscally prudent”, although these are words that the finance minister sometimes likes to use.

This is a government dead set on bankrupting more and more Canadians and taking more and more from them. Canada is not the country it used to be, where a person could put in hard work and expect to get something back. Now, people are working harder than ever, yet they do not see a promise that they are ever going to be able to afford a home. Interest rates keep going up because of the government's out-of-control spending. Those interest rates might go up even further. We have a housing crisis in this country, because of the out-of-control spending by the government; this budget, again, is going to add another \$60 billion of fuel to that fire.

Conservatives continue to stand up for the betterment of Canadians. We are calling for a few simple things. When Conservatives take over, we are going to bring home powerful paycheques, lower prices and more affordable homes that Canadians can actually afford.

Our two simple requests for this out-of-touch Liberal-NDP government are to lower the deficit and axe the tax. Lowering the deficit would lower inflation, and with that, the interest rates would come down. Axing the scam of both the failed carbon taxes would let Canadians keep more in their pockets. Let us bring down the cost of gas, groceries and home heating; let us bring it home for Canadians and actually do something to help them out.

• (1925)

The Deputy Speaker: Quoting from Tupac was awesome. I thought that was great.

Questions and comments, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member talks almost exclusively in bumper sticker slogans that the Conservative Party recycles. Recycling slogans is the only environmental plan it has.

Why does he not mention anything about climate change, in terms of affordability, and its impact on food prices and impact on Canadians? However, I will not ask him that.

My question is this: Before standing up in this House and ignoring climate change, did he even go outside today to see the smoke in the air in the nation's capital from forest fires elsewhere, or is he just going to put his head in the sand and continue with the old ways of the Conservative Party?

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of smoke and a lot of hot air coming out of that member's mouth. The member fails to realize that all these events are taking place. How much has the Liberals' carbon tax actually helped? How many fires or climate events has it stopped from happening?

The Liberals do not even have an environmental plan. We looked for it everywhere. Can anyone say they found the Liberals' environmental plan? Mr. Speaker, have you seen it? I have not seen it yet, and I looked for it. I did not find it anywhere. What we found was a tax plan that made gas, groceries and home heating more expensive, and the Liberals doubled down. Their failed carbon tax scam 1.0 already made the cost of everything go up, and now they are going to pile-drive another one, with carbon tax scam 2.0.

They need to get serious, actually present an environmental plan and stop the hypocrisy.

• (1930)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on another note, I would like to talk a bit about the monarchy with my colleague. The monarchy is a subject that the Bloc Québécois is particularly fond of talking about.

As members know, the Liberals included the recognition of Charles III as Canada's sovereign in Bill C-47, which we find a bit far-fetched in such a bill.

However, the Bloc Québécois still wanted to give the Liberals the benefit of the doubt. Since it is only fitting, and generally proper procedure, we asked that Charles III be invited to appear before the Standing Committee on Finance so that we can assess his skills. That seems fundamental to me.

We asked Rideau Hall if it was possible to invite him. We were told to ask Buckingham Palace, which we did. Buckingham Palace told us that we had to send a request in writing on fine paper, no less. They are fancy at Buckingham Palace. Obviously, it was a lost cause. Charles III will not appear before the Standing Committee on Finance as we would have liked.

The Conservatives are proposing to remove clause 510, which proclaims Charles III as Canada's sovereign. I think that is worthwhile, and I would really like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

[*English*]

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Mr. Speaker, it is sad to see that while Canadians are facing the worst cost of living crisis in the history of Canada, the Bloc wants to talk about the monarchy.

Government Orders

Conservatives are going to continue talking about how we are going to bring better investment, better jobs and better Canadian paycheques to Canadians. Once the member for Carleton becomes the prime minister of this country, those who put in the work will be able to see the fruits of their labour once again.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to hone in on an aspect of the member's speech that I think is really important for Canadians to attempt to understand. I believe the member often presents a goodwill solutions to the many things that are affecting Canadians from coast to coast to coast, particularly on affordability. I commend him for offering, what I believe, is an attempt at a solution for the affordability crisis.

The reality is that there will be a place that the Conservatives have to cut from. They are talking about austerity. They are talking about reducing the budget. Where will they cut from? Will it be dental care, care for children or clean water for first nations?

What would he cut beyond slogans? That is the part I am really nervous about in terms of offering a response. Is this going to turn into a "cut the carbon tax triple, triple, triple" thing? I seriously want to know.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are heckling me right now because they do not want to actually answer the policy question.

Which area would they cut? Is it going to be dental care or child care?

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Mr. Speaker, it is simple. The member is from Alberta. We will cut what Albertans voted for. We will cut the carbon tax.

In 2019, Albertans overwhelmingly voted in the Conservative government. Its number one priority, and first bill, was to cut the carbon tax. Once again, last week, we saw Albertans overwhelmingly support and vote in a Conservative government that is against the Liberal-NDP failed carbon tax scam.

To the member for Alberta, we are going to stand with Albertans and axe the carbon tax, just as they asked for when they voted in the UCP government and gave it that mandate.

The Deputy Speaker: I was hoping there would be another Tupac quote.

Continuing debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I am the wrong person to look to for a Tupac quote. However, in the rest of my speech, I will try to educate, enlighten and entertain members of this chamber.

I asked about this in my question. It was troubling this morning when I got a warning on my phone. I think we all would have if we looked at the weather. It was an air quality advisory in Ottawa, which was related to forest fires elsewhere. It is shocking to me that members of the Conservative Party could go outside this building, see it with their own eyes, and then go to their ridings. They stand

from Alberta, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec. They see these forest fires; they see the impacts of climate change so directly. It is impacting lives. I know they are passionate about their constituents. They get up, talk and ask what the government is doing, but they do not talk about the impacts of climate change on their residents.

The Conservatives do not put two and two together, despite scientists across the country, Nobel laureates and every credible scientist saying that these things are connected. However, the Conservatives stick their heads in the sand, even though they all, every single one, ran on a price on pollution during the last election. They can see it. We can see it with our own eyes. The hon. members can see, with their own eyes, the impacts of that.

What will these forest fires and floods cost Canadians? What do droughts cost farmers? The members talk about the impacts on Canadians, and that is the right thing to be talking about. What are the long-term impacts? What are the impacts going to be on our kids? If it is tens of billions of dollars now, what is it going to be for our kids? My kids are about to turn seven and five. What is it going to be like in 20 years?

We are seeing the planet get warmer. The Conservative Party of Canada is going to throw its hands up in the air and say, "We've tried nothing, but we're all out of ideas." I do not know how they can look their kids and their grandkids in the eye.

There is a lot more work that we have to do. That is fair enough; there is not necessarily one way to get to a particular path, but the Conservatives are offering no solutions. We can see smoke in the sky outside. What do the Conservatives have? They have absolutely nothing but bumper sticker slogans. As I mentioned in an earlier comment, the only part of the Conservative environmental plan is recycling their slogans. That is all they have.

When it comes to actually working for Canadians, the Conservatives talk a good game. All these slogans sound great; they are going to do this or that, all these things straight off the bumper sticker. However, where have they been in the last seven and a half years? The Liberal government and other parliamentarians have worked hard to help lift Canadians out of poverty. There are 2.7 million fewer Canadians living in poverty, than there were in 2015, when the Conservatives were in power.

Where were they when the Canada child benefit was discussed? They voted against it. They were against increases to the guaranteed income supplement and increases to old age security. The Conservative leader is fervently against day care, which means thousands of dollars in the pockets of families who are having a difficult time. The Conservatives were against the Canada worker benefit and the rental benefit. Time after time, Conservatives talk a good game, but that is all they have.

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There is no policy plan, only cuts. We have seen this story before. They say, “Pull yourself up by your own bootstraps. The government will not be there for you.” There would not be anything that the Conservative party would do to help Canadians, except make it free to pollute.

● (1935)

The cornerstone of their policy is that those who pollute the most will get the biggest tax break. They will cut the benefits to Canadians, cut the green rebate to Canadians, the climate action incentive, and transfer that money to the biggest polluters in this country. That is unbelievably shocking.

There is no ambition. There is no fear for our children on that side of the House, and there is no desire to do anything better for our kids. There is no view in terms of what the long-term costs are going to be on this because, again, they will do nothing. Let the fires burn. Let the floods happen. The Conservative Party of Canada will do absolutely nothing on climate change. We have heard from economists, from the insurance industry and from national security experts, who have said the greatest threat to this country is the impacts of climate change. The Conservatives do not care. It is really that simple. If they cared, there would be some kind of plan. They talk about having technology. Where is this magic box that the Conservative leader has that is going to solve this crisis? There is no plan.

They talk a lot about food banks, again, rightfully so. There are a lot of Canadians who are having a difficult time, despite the supports.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: I wonder why.

Mr. Chris Bittle: The hon. member who is heckling me talked about food banks, but I am not hearing from my food bank that we should cut the price on pollution. That is not what they are talking about.

Conservatives are laughing. They think it is hilarious that there are 30,000 Canadians who have been evacuated from their homes. They do not care. They are laughing.

Mr. Damien Kurek: How shameful.

Mr. Chris Bittle: That is right. It is shameful, as the hon. member said.

● (1940)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I think now we are getting into cross-debate. I would ask members, if they have comments or questions, to wait until it is time for questions and comments, which will be soon, in two and a half minutes.

The hon. member has two and a half minutes, and I would ask him not to engage in cross-debate.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, I wonder if those members will go to food banks in their ridings and tell them that they will cut affordable day care. What would that do to parents, single parents especially? They will cut GIS perhaps, cut day care and cut the

CCB. There would not be a rental benefit. They would not have stood by Canadians during the pandemic.

Those seem to be the talking points from the Conservative Party. I do not think that is what they are going to hear or that they will gain much support from food banks across the country with a message of “Pull yourself up by your own bootstraps. It is the Conservative way.” Again, as droughts, fires and floods ravage agricultural areas of our country and those of our allies, what is the cost of that? They are silent on that, consistently silent.

The final thing I would like to discuss, and the one that is the most shocking of all they are opposed to, is dental care. Each one of us, every member of this chamber, has taxpayer-funded dental care for themselves, for their family, for their spouse. What are we hearing the Conservatives tell their constituents? They say, “You don't need that. You don't want that. We will cut it. That is the Conservative way.”

They can talk a great game about balancing the budget, but that is going to be the cornerstone of it. We do not hear the other side of what the Conservative Party is talking about: “We will balance the budget, but it will be on the backs of Canadians and, by the way, we'll give a tax break to the largest polluters in this country.”

If pollution is made free again, the one thing that I think we can all guarantee is that there will be a lot more pollution. There will be more fires. There will be more floods. There will be more drought. That is the one guarantee. It is very sad, again, that Conservatives can go outside, see the smoke in the air and say they do not care.

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Madam Speaker, it was interesting to listen to the Liberal member fearmongering about cuts, as many Liberal members do. If we take a look at actual history and facts, we will find that the last government to significantly cut transfers for health care, social services and other important programs was the one of finance minister Paul Martin's budgets of 1995-96 through 1997-98, where we went from \$18.4 billion in 1995-96 to \$14.7 billion in 1996-97 to \$12.5 billion in 1997-98 because of the absolutely disastrous economic policies of the last incompetent Trudeau government, a government that racked up deficits in 14 out of 15 years. We now see another incompetent Liberal government doing the same thing.

Does that not concern the hon. member in the least?

● (1945)

Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, the hon. member goes outside and sees the smoke in the air and talks about 1995. I think I was in grade 11. Let us get real. Let us get real about today. Let us get real about the future.

Government Orders

If he wants to talk about history, let us talk about history. Let us talk about Brian Mulroney, a Conservative prime minister who put a price on pollution. Guess what? It worked. It helped solve the acid rain problem that was endemic during the 1980s. It was a Conservative idea. If it worked then, why will Conservatives not at least embrace something?

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, we recently learned that the government has agreed to lend an additional \$3 billion to Trans Mountain. Meanwhile, we have learned that the government took \$2 billion from the employment insurance fund.

My colleague opposite talks about forest fires as though Bill C-47 is going to somehow contribute to Canada's fight against climate change. He says one thing, but his government does the opposite. How does he explain that?

[English]

Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, we said it at the time. It is about transitioning the economy. Oil is still going to be produced. Energy is still going to be relied on. I know that when the leader of the Bloc Québécois was minister in the provincial government, he was seeking to engage in oil exploration in Quebec.

Again, this is about transitioning. It is an existing pipeline that is going to be doubled to get the same amount of oil to different markets.

Let us talk about climate change while the Conservatives are doing nothing.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, one of the things that, of course, I am most proud of in this bill is the dental care and the expansion of dental care. Obviously, dental care is something that New Democrats have been fighting for, for a very long time. It is very good that the Liberals have come on board. This bill expands that to be for more than just children. It expands it to those under 18 and to seniors.

I am wondering if the hon. member could talk a little bit about what dental care will mean in his riding and perhaps comment on how on earth he thinks the Conservatives justify to their constituents why they think dental care is not reasonable for Conservative constituents.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, I have been advocating for dental care since before my election in 2015, as the chair of a community health centre in St. Catharines that established a volunteer dental clinic.

To see the look in people's eyes when they can smile is monumental. It is monumental in their lives. The Conservatives may say that they are not going to do it because it is right. Maybe it will appeal to them as an economic plan. One cannot get a job if one cannot smile at a job interview. To see someone be able to go into life without pain is significant.

Again, it is shameful that they would look away and not support that. They will have to tell their constituents why they want to take away dental care from them.

[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise this evening to speak to Bill C-47, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, introduced by the government.

The budget is a key exercise in our democracy. It is the time when the government decides how and where it will spend the hundreds of billions of dollars that it controls. The government does not pull all this money out of thin air. Each of these dollars comes directly out of the pockets of individuals from the four corners of Quebec and Canada who worked hard to earn that money. That is why the government has a duty to use that money responsibly and reasonably. Most of all, it has to spend so as to meet the needs and priorities of the public—because, again, it is our money.

The government can also use the budget to implement its vision for society, the vision it has for the future. We saw that in Quebec with the construction of hydroelectric dams, which continue to make the Quebec nation an ambitious, visionary and decidedly green nation. I will say, however, that if we want to find a vision of the future, then we need to look somewhere other than this Liberal budget.

If we take a close look at the budget, we see that the government's priority is more about saving its faltering marriage to the NDP than meeting the needs of Quebecers and Canadians. While the Prime Minister plays political games and uses the treasury as his personal piggy bank to stay in power, everybody else is tightening their belts and wondering how they will pay their mortgage.

We are talking about inflation, recession, the economic slowdown and skyrocketing interest rates, but the government has not seen fit to implement preventive measures to prepare the economy for the possibility of rough times ahead in the coming months and years. This government is completely out of touch with the economic situation and its day-to-day impact on the lives of real people. Since these ministers are chauffeured around and do not often take the time to look beyond Ottawa and the greater Toronto area, I will use the rest of my time to explain what is happening in areas such as mine, the Lower St. Lawrence, and how their inaction is making life difficult.

The first urgent issue is housing. It is not complicated. There is virtually nothing available on the market in my region. According to the most recent data from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, or CMHC, the vacancy rate in Rimouski is 0.4% this year compared to 0.2% last year. That is a slight improvement, but it is nothing to write home about. To give members an idea, a healthy real estate market usually has a vacancy rate of about 3%. We are nowhere near finding a balance between the current vacancy rate of 0.4% and the average of 3%.

Government Orders

That imbalance is having unprecedented consequences for my region. I held a housing summit in my riding in March to better understand and identify those consequences. Here are some of the things that the organizations and people on the ground shared with me. There is no longer any such thing as affordable housing. The housing units that are available are unaffordable or not fit to live in. Requests for emergency assistance have tripled since the beginning of the pandemic. Obviously, there are not enough resources to help all of those people and many are being left to fend for themselves. Emergency shelters, particularly in Rimouski and the surrounding areas, are full to overflowing. It is unprecedented. People were homeless in Rimouski in the middle of winter. Spending the night outside in the Lower St. Lawrence area in the middle of winter is far from pleasant.

I have heard some extremely disturbing stories. Students looking for housing are being approached by older men offering to put them up in exchange for services. That is completely unacceptable. Staff at addiction treatment centres have even told me that people cannot leave their facilities because there is nowhere go.

Given all the precariousness and the distress people are feeling, one might think the government would have made it a priority to tackle the housing crisis, but no. The Liberals have completely dropped the ball. There is nothing at all for housing in the latest budget—zero, *nada, niet*, not one penny.

● (1950)

The government members are patting themselves on the back and quoting data from the 2022 budget. It is unbelievable. How can this be happening? A crisis is going on, but no investment is being made to find solutions that could end it. The disconnect is staggering.

However, the demands of the Bloc Québécois and community organizations were fairly clear and specific. For instance, the government was asked to permanently renew the rapid housing initiative and to increase the rent supplement transfer.

The need to speed up the transfer of funds between governments was also discussed. With each day that the federal government holds on to funds instead of passing them on to Quebec to send where they are needed, construction costs keep rising and our students, families and seniors keep growing poorer. How much longer do we have to wait for action? Urgent action is needed now to resolve the housing crisis.

Another area where we hoped the government would deliver on expectations is employment insurance. This issue has been a topic of discussion for a long time. When the Liberal government came to power in 2015, it was one of their election promises. When it came back to power in 2019, it did not keep its promise then either. In 2021, it made the same promise again. We were told that consultations were being held to find out what was going on, but they know what is going on. They know the problems and they know the solutions. What is missing is the will to act, the action.

I have not forgotten the Liberal promise of 2015, and I can say that the rights groups advocating for the unemployed have not forgotten it either. The unemployed men and women who are waiting

for the government to deliver real reform have definitely not forgotten it.

Currently, six in 10 workers who pay into employment insurance are not eligible for it because the eligibility criteria no longer reflect the reality of the labour market in 2023. These are not people who hope and pray for an unemployment cheque, they are people who pay into the fund. It is not complicated: this program was set up many years ago and has not been updated. There has been no reform. Naturally, it no longer reflects reality. I hope that the government will take action on this for once and for all.

As mentioned, on reading budget 2023, we learn that the government is not planning for any reform before 2030. The Liberals promised reform in 2015. During the 2019 election, they said they would do it.

In 2021, they called an early election. We all remember what a good idea it was to change government and call an election in 2021. What is more, they did it in the middle of the pandemic, when they were telling people to wear their mask and maintain social distancing. Then the government and its Prime Minister, the member for Papineau, went out and took photos with babies. They acted like the pandemic was over because they wanted to win the election. They did not want to change things for people. They wanted to return with a majority government. It is not easy to be in a minority government.

Every day, this government shows us that it does not care one iota about democracy. We know that it entered into an alliance with the NDP, which has been doing its bidding for some time. This is not new. The NDP also serves the government by supporting its gag orders. There have already been a dozen gag orders since the government and the NDP, which calls itself the New Democratic Party, struck a deal.

Let us come back to the budget. My colleagues will understand that it is quite difficult to just go along with it. I hope that the people listening to us at home will realize what is happening in this democracy. It is now operating under multiple closure motions to allow the government or an opposition party to save face. That is what we are currently putting up with in a G7 country.

I will repeat that six out of 10 workers who pay into EI are unable to access it. In the Lower St. Lawrence area, back home, seasonal work is a large part of the economic activity and the lives of workers. A strong EI system would help build solid regions and ensure that people keep living in our regions and do not leave.

The EI reform is urgent. It is part of the support measures that are necessary for seasonal work, which is an economic driver in our regions. I am thinking mainly of tourism, agriculture and the fishery. We can discuss that.

● (1955)

All of these sectors rely on seasonal activities. It is not because people do not want to work in certain seasons. Potatoes cannot be planted in the middle of winter. Some government ministers do not seem to grasp how it works. People are still wondering about this in 2023.

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Another issue I absolutely must address has to do with seniors, specifically the inequity suffered by people aged 65 to 75 who are not getting an increase in their OAS benefits. The government is completely out to lunch on this. It is yet another broken election promise. I hope the government will do something once and for all.

• (2000)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened to my colleague very carefully, as always.

Over the weekend, I went door to door to hundreds of homes in Montreal. I spoke with Quebecers who mentioned that the NDP was able to bring in a dental care program that will help the people of Quebec. People in Montreal were thrilled that this program in being established.

The NDP forced the government to introduce legislation on pharmacare this year. There are so many holes in Quebec's pharmacare program. As we know, the major unions are calling for a public pharmacare program that covers everyone, just as the New Democrats are proposing.

I see then a bit of a gap between what the Bloc Québécois supports and what the NDP has proposed, which seems to really resonate in Montreal.

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Speaker, I listened attentively to my colleague's question and his comments. First of all, neither the NDP nor the federal government invented the dental care program. Of course Quebec's current dental care program is not perfect.

However, I will say one thing. It is not a secret. We can see in the government's current budget that there is no allocation for the so-called dental care program. There is nothing until 2023. I will make a wager on what will happen after that. It is possible that there will be an election in 2024, if the agreement with the NDP is not honoured. I guarantee that the Liberals will put that in their election campaign. They will ask people to elect them again with this promise. I do not believe it right now.

There is another very important thing I would point out to my colleague, and that is that the government's dental care program penalizes Quebec families. That is unfair. Quebec families will receive less money than other Canadian families, because we already have dental care programs with Quebec's current employment conditions. There is therefore nothing to boast about, quite the contrary. The House should be condemning the fact that the federal government's dental care program is creating a certain inequity between Quebec and the rest of Canada.

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague for his excellent speech.

One of the things he spoke to was employment insurance. I know that the topic is important to him. I would like to hear him speak about the environment as well.

Bill C-47 is very short on environmental proposals, to put it mildly. In fact, it lets the oil companies use taxpayer money that they do not really need to invest in solutions that do not really work.

I would like to hear my colleague's opinion on that subject.

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Speaker, what I am about to say is no secret, but it is important. The government purchased a pipeline. It is not for shipping grain; it is for shipping oil. The pipeline cost \$30 billion. It started off at \$7 billion, and then climbed to \$15 billion, \$22 billion, \$24 billion, \$28 billion and \$30 billion. I hope that the government realizes that it could fix an awful lot of problems with that money. It could build housing, help seniors and support families.

What my colleague from Terrebonne said is important. The government is not even trying to hide anymore. It bought a \$30-billion pipeline with our money. In the latest budget, it is also giving away \$21 billion in tax credits to oil and gas companies. I will not be shedding any tears here tonight for these companies over tax credits. They are not even subsidies now, just tax credits. That makes it even harder to track how much money will be disappearing into the pockets of which multi-million dollar corporation.

The government cannot be serious. It wants to transition to green energy, yet, today, the Minister of Labour is praising the government's action on seabed oil and gas development, saying, "Don't tell me a green energy future doesn't include oil and gas." I want to congratulate the Minister of Labour. This government is not going to make the net-zero energy transition happen, I guarantee it.

• (2005)

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before I resume debate, I am going to ask members to check the mikes around them and turn down the ones that are not being used. We are getting some feedback on interpretation; the mikes are picking something up. I would appreciate that, as it would save the pages a bit of time.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill C-47, the budget implementation act.

I will start off by condemning the incredibly childish behaviour of Conservative MPs over the course of the last few days. We have seen in the House unprecedented adolescent, juvenile behaviour. We certainly saw that last Friday. I raise that concern because Canadians need to know that what the Conservatives have been blocking are measures that are going to benefit their constituents. I find that surprising.

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What have the Conservatives been blocking over the course of the last few days? They have been throwing paper in the air. They have been trying to pretend that they are having technical problems. They have been putting forward every single dilatory motion they can think of. The member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay was able to finally put forward the emergency debate motion, after eight hours of Conservatives blocking it. They were blocking an emergency debate on wildfires at a time when Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia are consumed by fire. Firefighters are working hard, communities are threatened and there have been massive economic losses, and the Conservatives have spent the whole day blocking that motion from coming forward. I am glad they were finally overcome by the weight of more rational members of Parliament, and we will have that debate on wildfires tonight.

However, the fact is that the Conservatives are so disconnected from reality that they blocked an emergency debate that is so important for paying credit to the firefighters fighting these fires and paying credit to the communities and volunteers trying to keep people alive and safe. They blocked that for the course of the entire day, and I am unbelievably disappointed with these pyromaniac gatekeepers. Finally, the NDP persevered, as we always do ultimately, and we are now going to have this debate.

The Conservatives would justify this by saying they are blocking programs the NDP wants to bring in, and that is true. There are programs the NDP, on behalf of Canadians, wants to bring in, so let us talk about what the impact of them would be in Conservative ridings.

There is the dental care plan that the member for Burnaby South and the entire NDP caucus forced the government to bring in after decades of commitments from Liberal and Conservative governments that they always reneged on. The dental care plan means that people with disabilities, seniors and families with kids under the age of 18 will finally have access to dental care at the end of this year. That is what is in Bill C-47. This is what the Conservatives have been blocking for two days. It is access to dental care for thousands of their constituents. It is access to dental care for seniors in their ridings, 70-year-olds who have never had access to dental care because they could not afford to pay for it.

We know that dental care is expensive. However, the Conservative MPs stood resolutely against seniors finally having access to dental care after decades. They stood resolutely against people with disabilities. I find that particularly despicable, because we know that people with disabilities are the poorest of the poor. Half the people who go to food banks to make ends meet are people with disabilities. Half of the homeless in this country are people with disabilities.

I remember during the terrible years of the Harper regime how the Conservatives steamrolled over people with disabilities, steamrolled over seniors and forced the retirement age up so that people who had worked all their lives were forced to work longer. The disrespect shown by blocking dental care, to my mind, is inconceivable.

As members know, in the recent Alberta election, the NDP swept all of Edmonton, every single riding at the provincial level, and

took most of the ridings in Calgary. If I were a Conservative MP from Edmonton or Calgary, I would read the room and think, “What we are doing with the kind of mean-spirited approach we have, where we try to deny people services that can make a difference, is obviously something that people in Edmonton and Calgary have turned their backs on.”

• (2010)

If I was an Edmonton MP or a Calgary MP for the Conservative Party, I would think twice about doing what they have done over the last two days, which is deny basic dental care to those seniors, people with disabilities and all families that have youth 18 and under. It is not just that; the Conservatives also denied the grocery rebate. As for the average benefit to a Conservative MP's constituency, about 11,000 Canadians living in each of those ridings would benefit from that grocery rebate: \$500 extra to put food on the table at a time when people are struggling.

The member for Carleton, who is the head pyromaniac gatekeeper, is saying he does not want that money to go to those 11,000 people in his constituency, and I guess other Conservative MPs are saying the same thing, that in their constituencies, they do not want those 11,000 Canadians, who are struggling to make ends meet and who have lower incomes, to get the grocery rebate. Why would they be so mean-spirited? Why would they be so entitled to deny those constituents the benefits they have? I ask, because the Conservatives have access to a dental care plan as MPs, and they have access to a good salary as MPs, but they would deny that to, on average, 11,000 constituents in their ridings. To my mind, it is unbelievable.

Then, of course there is the other element that the NDP succeeded in forcing the government to do, which is on affordable housing. The urban, rural and northern indigenous housing strategy financing is so vitally important. Affordable housing is finally being built. Finally, we are getting to the point where we are starting to address the housing crisis in a meaningful way. The member for Carleton likes to talk a good game. He says, rightly, that the cost of housing has doubled under the Liberal government. What he neglects to say is that it also doubled under the terrible Harper regime, one of the most corrupt governments in our history and one of the most mean-spirited governments in our history. It was an unbelievably incompetent government. It could not manage finances. It could not fight its way out of a paper bag, and all of the other things—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is not time for comments or questions. I would just ask the hon. members to hold their thoughts and write them down, for when the time comes for questions and comments in about two and a half minutes. It seems that every time we get to two and a half minutes we start getting a little rambunctious, and I would just ask members to hold off, please.

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The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, the truth hurts. When Canadians speak truth to Conservatives, we know what the reaction is. Albertans in Edmonton and Calgary certainly spoke truth to Conservatives earlier last week, and I think we are seeing that reflected in the falling poll numbers as well for the Conservatives.

The Conservatives would stop affordable housing from being built. After we have seen decades of both the terrible Harper regime refusing to build affordable housing and the Liberal government refusing to build affordable housing, the NDP is forcing the government to actually do that, and the Conservative response is to block it. They do not want affordable housing for Canadians, as they might be able to have a roof over their heads and they might be able to back to school or work. A whole bunch of things could happen from that, and Conservatives somehow find that this is something they do not want to see.

The NDP forced investments in health care, and members will recall it is the terrible Harper regime, that dismal decade of 10 awful years that Canadians had to survive, that actually cut the health care funding in the first place, so the NDP is fixing what the Harper regime and Conservatives broke. What we have in the bill—

• (2015)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin is rising on a point of order.

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, as you know, and as the hon. member has been around long enough to know, it is against the rules of the House to mislead the House, and he just completely misinformed the House in regard to the Harper record.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind members that this is all due to interpretation—

Mr. Greg McLean: No it's not.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): This is part of debate. I just want to allow the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby to finish up his speech. I would ask members—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, the hon. member for Calgary Centre seems to be a bit rambunctious right now. I would ask him to hold his thought, and he can stand to ask a question in one minute and six seconds.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I actually would like to make a motion for unanimous consent so that I can take another half-hour to talk about the Harper government. I would be more than pleased to get into the details.

I move that I be accorded an extra half-hour to talk specifically about the Harper government.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am not going to allow unanimous consent at this point. Nobody can move a motion because of the way that we have structured the debate.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, that is too bad because I would love to spend the evening talking about how terrible, how awful, how mean-spirited the Harper government was and how badly it managed finances and of course the scandals that we lived through. The scandals were unprecedented.

I will close by saying this. People, including those in Conservative ridings, need dental care. They need access to affordable housing. They need to have the grocery rebate. They need the supports that are in this bill.

For goodness sake, Conservatives should get with the program, listen to their constituents and vote for this bill.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, rather than just being an MP, I am going to put my dental hat on here because that is what I was educated in. Although the hon. member has applauded how well the NDP has brought this forward, I am going to remind him that the Canadian Dental Association actually spoke out against this program initially. It was never even consulted at the beginning. Perhaps that is one of the first things. It actually asked for an expansion of the current programs by the provinces, things like Healthy Smiles that actually get to the children. The problem that we also know here is that with the cost of living, many of these cheques are cashed because of the unaffordability of food.

I would like to know if he actually believes that this program could be audited, and whether this money is going to the dental program or helping hard-hit families because of inflation.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I have a lot of respect for that member and appreciate her work in the House. I would kindly suggest that she has not actually read the bill that the Conservatives have been fighting against over the course of the last few days, because what she actually referred to was the dental payment from last year, not the dental program that takes effect at the end of this year which includes seniors, people with disabilities and youth. It is a completely different program. If she had read the bill, long as it is, she would be informed about that. I have enormous respect for the work she does, but I am going to correct inaccuracies and in this case what she said was in reference to last year, not this year.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby on his speech. I have the pleasure of working with him on the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, and we appreciate the collaboration we have. I think we do. I do, at least.

Having said that, I want to talk a little bit about the content of Bill C-47 and the budget in general.

Government Orders

We heard from many witnesses from the arts community and the cultural industry in recent months and years. They were unanimous in saying that the cultural industry needs to be supported during the post-pandemic recovery. We actually discussed this with the minister last week in committee.

I would like to hear my NDP colleague's opinion on the fact that this budget does not include the money that the cultural industry specifically asked for to survive the post-pandemic recovery. What is more, the little bit of money that is being spent is not being used the way the industry wanted.

I would like my colleague to talk about that.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I really appreciate my colleague from Drummond. I think that the vast majority of members of the House agree that we definitely need to invest more in the arts and culture sector. That is important for community economic stability.

It is also very important for us to have those stories that we can share among ourselves and that help us learn more about Quebec, British Columbia or Acadia. It is important in a country as big as ours. Canada is the world's greatest democracy, where there are two official languages and a multitude of other languages. There are also people from indigenous communities, and we must share those cultures.

In my opinion, we need to continue to work to increase those investments. The NDP will not stop advocating for the arts and culture sector.

● (2020)

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is always so enlightening for me to listen to this member speak. He wanted to speak a bit more. He asked for unanimous consent and, of course, that was not possible. However, I wanted the member to talk a bit more. We know that this bill does not go far enough with regard to indigenous housing. It does not go far enough with regard to the support for the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls national action plan. It is a start, but it has not gone far enough.

The member spoke about the Harper years. I was in the non-profit sector at the time and I know how horrendous those years were for those of us in the charitable sector. Perhaps the member could talk about the impacts of the Stephen Harper years on indigenous people in this country.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, the member for Edmonton Strathcona and her seatmate, the member for Edmonton Griesbach, are the two strongest members of Parliament from Alberta in this House; no question. They are incredibly strong.

The Harper government was disastrous for indigenous peoples. I can go into literally hours of description of how bad the Harper regime was. Thankfully, it is no longer there and we do not ever want it back.

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a privilege to rise to speak on behalf of the people of northern Saskatchewan. Debates such as this

on Bill C-47 are good opportunities for members of Parliament to bring their own unique backgrounds and perspectives to the House. As a former accountant and mayor, members can imagine that I have dealt with a few budgets and many numbers in my day. I want to spend the first few minutes tonight talking about a few of these numbers, some very big numbers.

In 2015, when the Liberals were first elected, Canada's national debt was \$612 billion. This budget projects Canada's debt to be \$1.22 trillion by next March, which is \$81,000 per Canadian household, and it will reach \$1.3 trillion by 2028. A simple fact is that the Prime Minister has accumulated more debt in eight years than all of Canada's previous prime ministers combined.

How did we get here? In 2015, the total expenditures of the government were \$280 billion. This budget again calls for billions of dollars in new spending. The Prime Minister simply cannot help himself. This past year, total expenditures were \$480 billion, and this budget projects to start at \$497 billion and rise to \$557 billion by 2027-28. That is an average of \$526 billion in each of the next five years. That is also \$246 billion per year or 88% greater than expenditures were in 2015.

If this is what the finance minister meant when she said, "we will review and reduce government spending, because that is the responsible thing to do", I would hate to see what the irresponsible thing looks like.

I have a couple more numbers. Canada will have accumulated over \$700 billion of new debt under the Prime Minister by 2028. As projected, the cost of interest on that debt will rise to over \$50 billion per year. That is more than a 100% increase over 2021 and 2022, and it would then become about 10% of the total expenditures of the government. If I had run my accounting practice for the little City of Meadow Lake the way the Liberal government has run Canada's finances, I would have been out of business and run out of office.

Let us consider some promises made in 2015. First, the Liberal Party said it would run small deficits and return Canada's finances back to balance in 2019. I hate to break it to the members opposite, but not only did the Prime Minister overspend this promise by about \$700 billion, but the budget was never balanced and there is no plan to ever balance it. It is no wonder that record numbers of Canadians no longer trust their government institutions.

Second, the finance minister talked a lot about the declining debt-to-GDP ratio. This was her fiscal anchor. She said, "This is a line we shall not cross. It will ensure that our finances remain sustainable." That sounds like another promise. I hate to once again break it to colleagues opposite, but the debt-to-GDP ratio has risen every year since the government was first elected in 2015 and is projected to rise again in the coming year. When the Prime Minister and finance minister make promises about debt and deficits, forgive me if I do not hold my breath.

Government Orders

Sometimes one must invest in things to be successful, so it is important to measure what one gets in return for choosing debt and increasing spending. Let us consider the state of Canada after eight years of out-of-control Liberal spending and inflationary deficits. Food price inflation is at a 40-year high. Nearly half of Canadians feel they are less than \$200 from insolvency. One in five Canadians is skipping meals to reduce the cost of food, and 1.5 million people used food banks in a single month. The average cost of housing, both to rent and purchase, has doubled since 2015. This is the record of the Liberal government and the measures it is proposing in budget 2023 will, in fact, make the situation worse for Canadians by pouring another \$67 billion of new deficit spending fuel on the flames of inflation.

I am very proud of coming from northern Saskatchewan. I believe it is an area that is a very good benchmark to measure how Canada's economy is performing. It is a region that has many important sectors of our economy: mining, forestry, agriculture, oil and gas, tourism, etc. It is also home to a unique cross-section of communities and people, communities and people that, frankly, should be thriving. Instead, everywhere I visit when I go home, people speak about how frustrated and desperate they are with the current economic situation.

● (2025)

Municipalities are struggling. The cost of much-needed infrastructure projects has ballooned over the last few years. Whether it be upgrading a sewer line, building a recreation complex or improving a street, community leaders are being tasked to do more with less. The result is that not only do they have to do the heavy lifting for their people, but the conditions under which they are operating keep getting worse due to the economic policies of the NDP-Liberal coalition.

These same policies are negatively impacting small businesses in northern Saskatchewan. This winter, I was talking to a business owner. He supplies people living in remote and rural communities with home heating fuel. He described to me the difficult position he was in due to the rising cost of this home heating fuel. His customers were either being forced to buy very small amounts, or they were pleading with him to extend credit until they could pay. They were having to choose between feeding their families or living without heat in the middle of a northern Saskatchewan winter, and he was having to choose between possibly losing money or seeing these families live without heat. That is the choice that this small business owner was facing because of the NDP-Liberal coalition nightmare.

Small business owners are also continually telling me how the carbon tax disproportionately affects rural and remote areas like northern Saskatchewan. This is becoming a very serious situation for them. Not only are they dealing with a labour shortage crisis, but due to the rising carbon tax they are forced to increase prices. Now the costly coalition is adding a second carbon tax that will ultimately add 61¢ per litre to the cost of fuel.

Everything, everywhere in northern Saskatchewan must be trucked. There is no other option. According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, this will cost the average household in Saskatchewan \$2,840 per year. Increasing taxes at a time when peo-

ple are struggling to get by is not a recipe for economic success. Is it any wonder that the people I talk to are fed up?

That anger can also be felt when I talk to farmers back home. The government members seem to forget that agriculture is the economic backbone of Canada. A stabilizing sector and one that provides the food we all rely on deserves better from its government. Let us imagine being the Minister of Agriculture in Canada and voting against Bill C-234, a bill that would give farmers carbon tax exemptions to produce the food we need. If the minister will not stand up at the cabinet table for farmers, who will?

Let us face it. When it comes to agriculture, these Liberals have become the living definition of biting the hand that feeds them. In a country that feeds the world, Canada is now a place where people cannot afford food. For many people in northern Saskatchewan who were already struggling with the increased cost of living, the skyrocketing price of food has become a crisis.

“This isn't working” are the words of a food bank chair from northern Saskatchewan, who adds, “Everything is increasing—gas, rent, food, heat.... I just don't know how people are supposed to manage.” The food bank's monthly food budget is \$5,000, and it now provides half the number of food hampers that it did just three years ago. The Liberals' mismanagement of the economy, assisted by their NDP enablers, has created conditions that directly harm the most vulnerable in our communities the most.

All of this is while the people from northern Saskatchewan and Canada have a Prime Minister who spends \$6,000 a night on a hotel in London, but would not admit to it for months and still takes no responsibility; a Prime Minister who vacations in Jamaica at a luxurious estate of Trudeau Foundation donors; a Prime Minister who spends \$8,000 a month on groceries; a Prime Minister who is embroiled in a foreign election interference scandal and uses Trudeau Foundation members and friends to investigate; a Prime Minister who named an interim Ethics Commissioner who is the sister-in-law to a cabinet minister, who is also a long-time family friend, to replace the former commissioner who grew so frustrated by the continued Liberal ethical lapses that he finally walked away. This is not leadership by any measure at any time in our history.

Budget 2023 is not an economic document. It is the political document of a government led by a Prime Minister who has chosen power over principle.

Government Orders

• (2030)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am curious because we are debating Bill C-47 tonight, which is not the budget but the budget implementation act. In terms of reading that piece of legislation, I can understand that speeches can wander off topic, but I did not hear anything of the topic in that speech. I am wondering what part of his speech the hon. member would refer me to in terms of the budget implementation act we are debating tonight.

Mr. Gary Vidal: Madam Speaker, Conservatives will talk about improving the lives of people. We will talk about the war on work from increasing taxes. We will talk about stopping the rising cost of living, the rising costs of food, fuel and housing. We will talk about making people more accountable to the people who elected them so that we can improve the lives of people all across this country.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, I know my hon. colleague does a lot of good work on the indigenous and northern affairs committee, which is something that connects both of us, him as a representative for Saskatchewan and me as a representative for Alberta who formerly represented many indigenous people.

This budget speaks directly to some of the aspects that are needed for our first nations communities to continue to get out of the crises they are in. For example, the red dress alert is something that is most critical to constituents in my community, who are faced with some of the most tragic results of the inquiry into the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls and two-spirit people.

Why would the member oppose such an important endeavour, which is called for by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and what does he have to say to the thousands of women who need the support?

Mr. Gary Vidal: Madam Speaker, I agree with my hon. colleague. We have done some work on a number of different committees together and much of it around our first nations and other indigenous populations.

I would say this to the member. We sat at committee together the other day when we talked about the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report on the ability of the departments of CIRNAC and ISC to meet the goals and the targets they set for themselves, including the targets for things that he referenced. I would suggest that one of the things we need to do, as a House of Commons, is to find a way to create accountability to ensure that the bureaucrats in the departments, who are out there serving people, set good targets and are able to meet the targets they set for themselves so that we do not see huge investments in departments across government without the required outcomes to improve the lives of people.

• (2035)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member to not refer to indigenous people as “our” first nations. I know indigenous people do not appreciate that, as they do not belong to anybody. I just want to raise that.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Drummond.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, like the Conservatives, the Bloc Québécois will be voting against Bill C-47, but for different reasons.

I hear my Conservative colleagues talk a lot about the carbon tax. They keep coming back to the same points. We in the Bloc Québécois are a bit like that. We keep coming back to the same points, specifically the fact that there is nothing for seniors, nothing for housing, nothing for EI reform.

I would like my colleague to comment on that last point. All stakeholders have been calling for this for years, and it is considered an urgent matter. That is how urgent it is, and yet there is nothing in this budget.

I think this is long overdue, and it actually looked like it was finally going to happen. Could my colleague share his thoughts?

[*English*]

Mr. Gary Vidal: Madam Speaker, I would respond to my colleague's question by saying there are many things that we find missing in this budget and that are not included, one of them being the ability to control the inflationary spending and the huge deficits. Just six months ago, the finance minister talked about having to end the inflationary deficits because she acknowledged that they were fuelling the flames of inflation.

There are a lot of things missing in this budget. We have made it very clear that there are some requirements that are missing for us to support the budget. They would include a move toward a balanced budget and something to control the inflationary spending and the increasing cost of living. Those are the things that are missing in this budget that we feel are very important.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have listened to a number of speeches on this year's budget and on Bill C-47, the budget implementation act, at all stages of debate.

I have been inspired by some of these speeches. I really enjoyed the one delivered by the hon. member for Abbotsford. He spoke about the lines the Minister of Finance said last year she would not cross. It was about the increase in a ratio called the debt-to-GDP, or gross domestic product.

I agree with him completely. It seems as though the government, from so many of its ministries, tells Canadians what to expect from them and then ignores those seemingly brave words. It spoke of short-term deficits of \$10 billion to bring us back to balance by 2019. I remember that one quite well. Then it spoke of a carbon tax that would never rise above \$50 per tonne. That was in the 2019 election platform, not so long ago.

I love when the Liberals say, “We have got Canadians' backs.” What does that even mean? They say, “We are laser focused on solving this problem.” Sure. The one I like best is, “We are not worried about inflation. We are worried about deflation.” I think they would like to erase those words from the record at this point.

Government Orders

Talk is cheap in today's politics, until Canadians actually see the consequences of breaking the real pillars that hold up our country's financial well-being. There will be reduced opportunities in an underperforming, non-resilient economy for generations.

Social programs such as health, education and welfare will be compromised because bankers will get paid first and the amount of priority spending is increasing. This means the amount of money we have to spend as Canadians taxpayers paying the interest on our debt is a rising rate and a rising number. It is escalating quickly.

Deficits do not solve themselves. They take planning and resolve. The consequences of not solving them are upon us with rising inflation, rising taxation and rising income inequality. There are rising labour tensions, as we saw with the recent strike at the Public Service Alliance of Canada. Canadians are just trying to have their wages and salaries keep up with the rising cost of living that the government's negligence has caused.

Inflated dollars buy less. They buy less food, less shelter and fewer social services. We are all poorer by degrees. The government just hopes Canadians do not notice it too much. Canadians are noticing, and they are wondering how a modern country is throwing away its future and has forgotten the lessons from the last time this scenario unfolded just four decades ago. Politicians change, but institutional memory, the decision-making, should learn from the lessons of history, especially recent history.

I would say Canada's debt-to-GDP is a somewhat useless ratio, as it only compares how bad our ability to provide balance for tomorrow's taxpayers is with that of other spendy governments in the world. The debt-to-GDP is increasing, and there is no benefit to having a high debt-to-GDP. There is only a cost, and it is a rapidly rising cost.

As so many have indicated, that rising cost has rising consequences. The government presents in its own set of data that its sacred ratio will peak next year, this time at 43.5%. Let me caution colleagues on this opportunistic representation of data and remind everyone how last year, the Minister of Finance said that this ratio had peaked and would not increase further. Those are words and promises without meaning or real intent. I think we know the answer to that choice.

Let us look at what is called a national accounts basis, as the rest of the world looks at these metrics. That is that there is only one gross domestic product and there are a number of government debts in Canada. If we add in each of the provinces, on top of the federal government's debt, we get a ratio that is higher than 95% on the ratio.

We also have to subtract out the funds that do not belong to the government that it likes to include in its calculation. That is the amount it subtracts from workers who have to set aside money for programs, such as the Canada pension plan and the Quebec pension plan. I should point out that that is one of the costs to workers that is increasing substantially this year.

● (2040)

Canadians need to tell the government that these funds do not belong to the government. They belong to the people who have

earned those pensions. The government should get them out of the calculations, trying to make its numbers more justifiable. These are not the Government of Canada's assets. They are being held in trust for Canadians at arm's-length organizations. The government has no recourse to these funds, or does it?

Does the government want to explain how it might have recourse to these funds, which Canadians think are sequestered for their retirement? I ask this question because the government went out of its way to freeze Canadians' bank accounts last year, and freezing earned benefits would pale in comparison to freezing a basic bank account, so someone could buy food and pay for their shelter in Canada.

In any event, for the financially literate, let us stop painting a rosier picture of reality. The government does not get to pick and choose which numbers it uses. Sustainable finance theories aside, and these are mock theories, the government does not get to pick and choose the numbers that affect people's lives. It should just be presented factually.

The irony is that the Liberal government presents a scenario in which provincial budget balances have collectively turned positive in 2022, and thus contributed to Canada's overall turnaround. Let us be clear. That is based on the surplus in one province, Alberta, and those revenues are predicated on world resource pricing of, yes, oil and gas, which the government scorns daily in the House.

As is said, comparing badly run jurisdictions in the world, Europe is a collection of poorly managed economies with no resource wealth, whereas Canada is a very poorly managed country with a backstop of significant resource wealth. It is very clear the country needs better management. We are in line for the job, and we are just waiting for the shareholders to fire this underperforming team.

I went through much of the budget presentation, and I noted a number of fictions that the government actually prints on government paper.

How is this? "The federal government's fiscal anchor—reducing the federal debt-to-GDP ratio over the medium term—remains unchanged and is being met." That is wrong. There is also this: "Even with higher borrowing costs, public debt charges as a share of the economy are projected to remain at historically low levels". That is wrong, again.

The \$44 billion in interest payments is up from \$24 billion just two years ago, and a larger portion of the GDP than it had been in over 15 years. The government says these metrics are going in the right direction and hope that Canadians are not paying attention.

However, they are emulating themselves in the House of Commons by now putting nonsense on paper. Let us just keep spending and everything will balance itself.

How about this one? It says:

Government Orders

Budget 2023 proposes substantial measures as the next steps in the government's plan to "crowd-in" new private investment by leveraging public investment and government policy. The goal of this approach is not to substitute government for the private sector, nor supplant market-based decision making. It is to leverage the tools of government to mobilize the private sector.

No, it is not. That is fantasy. It is a false narrative based on giving taxpayer money to connected friends of the Liberal government.

We are giving foreign companies subsidies amounting to double the amount they are investing in this country to put Canadian taxpayer dollars in the pockets of foreign investors. That is how the Liberal government thinks it makes friends.

Who is laughing all the way to the bank? It is not Canadian taxpayers. It is not the \$200 billion in project financing that was in line in Canada before the government created absolute market uncertainty.

What is not in this budget implementation bill? Anything to do with climate financing, just like last year. The budget speech indicated moving forward on climate initiatives, yet these exist nowhere in Bill C-47.

What is in this bill? A whole bunch of items that have nothing to do with the budget, including CEPA changes and jurisdictional oversteps. It is just tax, spend and divide. That is not the way to manage Canada's finances.

• (2045)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague, who was also a member of the Standing Committee on Finance. I remember when we were debating Bill C-2.

I would like to have a bit of clarity on something. Clause 510 officially recognizes Charles III as King of Canada. One of the Conservative Party's motions calls for this clause to be deleted.

Has the Conservative Party been seized with a sudden fit of good faith and common sense and become anti-monarchist?

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I am sorry, but I am not sure what clause my colleague is referring to. If my colleague could mention the words that go with the clause during her next question, that might benefit the House of Commons.

[*English*]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, it felt like there was some dishonesty in the member's speech. He started out speaking about the dishonesty of the Liberal government, but then he spoke about how this was almost an omnibus bill at the end, as if the Harper government was not renowned for its omnibus bills. He spoke about how we should have learned from history, but in World War II, one of the things that we saw was the massive investment in our communities and in our infrastructure, so I want to ask him about what he would cut.

However, what actually caught my ear the most was when he was talking about pensions, about Canadian pensions. I am sure he knows where I am going with this. We just finished an election in Alberta, and the United Conservative Party, the UCP, in Alberta,

was running on the idea of taking Albertans out of the Canadian pension plan and using that money for its own means.

Since the member does not agree with the Canadian pension plan being used by the government, would he say that what Danielle Smith is proposing in Alberta would be equally wrong?

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, that is a completely dishonest question. This is something that has to be very clearly said in the House of Commons.

The member began her question by saying there was some dishonesty in my speech. The only thing that was dishonest in my speech was when I was referring to what is in the budget. I do not think I uttered a dishonest word in that speech.

There was nothing about pension plans in that last election where the United Conservative Party of Alberta won a majority government in Alberta, yet the NDP in both Alberta and the House seem to take that as if it were a part of it. There was a bunch of disinformation coming. The disinformation continues in this House as it did in the provincial election. It seems to be repetitive.

Ms. Heather McPherson: The misinformation came from the premier.

• (2050)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member that she had an opportunity to ask a question. If she has a subsequent question, she should wait until I call for questions and comments.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands has the floor.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I have put this question to other members debating tonight. Over the course of any discussion of Bill C-47 in this place, I have heard very few members actually speak to Bill C-47, which is not the budget. The budget carried already in this place. We are now debating a budget implementation act, which changes many pieces of legislation. It is an omnibus bill, but it is not an illegitimate omnibus bill. It follows through on changes.

I actually voted against the Liberal budget, but I will vote for the budget implementation bill because it contains many, many useful measures, none of which relate to the topics that my hon. friend discussed. Universally, it seems, in this place, we assume that the legislation, Bill C-47, is the budget.

I just ask my hon. colleague if he has any comments as to why that is, since that is not what we are debating tonight.

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, that is an excellent question and the member is exactly right. There is everything anyone could choose, part of which is the budget and part of which is in this bill for the budget implementation act.

I had here in my notes 10 different issues on the budget implementation act, which I could have spoken about today. Getting to them, of course, requires some preamble. I hope the member appreciates all the issues about the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, which I did refer to in my speech. It is also in the budget implementation act. We are changing words in the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, which we just recently put through at our own committee, and the member attended.

There is a bunch in here that does not belong. Frankly, it is an omnibus bill and should be presented when we are amending those acts in Parliament. We just did that with something where the government clearly took an overstep into jurisdictions that it does not belong in.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise and speak this evening—although I must say the hour is late, almost 9 p.m.—to join the debate on Bill C-47.

Before I start, I would like to take a few minutes to voice my heartfelt support for residents of the north shore and Abitibi who have been fighting severe forest fires for several days now. This is a disastrous situation.

I know that the member for Manicouagan and the member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou are on site. They are there for their constituents and represent them well. They have been visiting emergency shelters and showing their solidarity by being actively involved with their constituents and the authorities. The teamwork has been outstanding. Our hearts go out to the people of the north shore and Abitibi.

Tonight, my colleague from Abitibi-Témiscamingue will rise to speak during the emergency debate on forest fires. He will then travel back home to be with his constituents as well, so he can offer them his full support and be there for them in these difficult times.

Of course, I also offer my condolences to the family grieving the loss of loved ones who drowned during a fishing accident in Port-neuf-sur-Mer. This is yet another tragedy for north shore residents. My heart goes out to the family, the children's parents and those who perished.

Before talking specifically about Bill C-47, I would like to say how impressive the House's work record is. A small headline in the newspapers caught my eye last week. It said that the opposition was toxic and that nothing was getting done in the House. I found that amusing, because I was thinking that we have been working very hard and many government bills have been passed. I think it is worth listing them very quickly to demonstrate that, when it comes right down to it, if parliamentarians work together and respect all the legislative stages, they succeed in getting important bills passed.

I am only going to mention the government's bills. Since the 44th Parliament began, the two Houses have passed bills C-2, C-3, C-4, C-5, C-6, C-8 and C-10, as well as Bill C-11, the online streaming bill. My colleague from Drummond's work on this bill earned the government's praise. We worked hard to pass this bill, which is so important to Quebec and to our broadcasting artists and technicians.

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We also passed bills C-12, C-14, C-15, C-16, C-19, C-24, C-25, C-28, C-30, C-31, C-32, C-36 and C-39, which is the important act on medical assistance in dying, and bills C-43, C-44 and C-46.

We are currently awaiting royal assent for Bill C-9. Bill C-22 will soon return to the House as well. This is an important bill on the disability benefit.

We are also examining Bill C-13, currently in the Senate and soon expected to return to the House. Bill C-18, on which my colleague from Drummond worked exceedingly hard, is also in the Senate. Lastly, I would mention bills C-21, C-29 and C-45.

I do not know whether my colleagues agree with me, but I think that Parliament has been busy and that the government has gotten many of its bills passed by the House of Commons. Before the Liberals say that the opposition is toxic, they should remember that many of those bills were passed by the majority of members in the House.

I wanted to point that out because I was rather insulted to be told that my behaviour, as a member of the opposition, was toxic and was preventing the work of the House from moving forward. In my opinion, that is completely false. We have the government's record when it comes to getting its bills passed. The government is doing quite well in that regard.

We have now come to Bill C-47. We began this huge debate on the budget implementation bill this morning and will continue to debate it until Wednesday. It is a very large, very long bill that sets out a lot of budgetary measures that will be implemented after the bill is passed.

● (2055)

I have no doubt that, by the end of the sitting on June 23, the House will pass Bill C-47 in time for the summer break.

What could this bill have included that is not in there? For three years, the Bloc Québécois and several other members in the House have been saying that there is nothing for seniors. I was saying earlier to my assistant that, in my riding of Salaberry—Suroît, we speak at every meeting about the decline in seniors' purchasing power. I am constantly being approached by seniors who tell me—

Mr. Martin Champoux: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I am sitting next to my colleague, who is giving her speech, and I am hearing sounds. I am not sure where they are coming from. It sounds like someone is watching a video or a headset on a desk has been left on at full volume.

I think it would be appropriate to ask colleagues to lower the volume on their devices if they are watching something other than the speeches being given in the House. Everyone deserves at least that much respect.

Government Orders

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I gave a directive to that effect a little earlier, and I know that the pages walked around to ensure that the volume on the headsets on desks not currently being used was lowered.

We have run into this problem a number of times, and we are trying to figure out why it happens at certain times and not at others. We will do our best to ensure that this does not happen again. I would ask the people in their seats to check to see whether the headsets from the neighbouring seats are turned off.

The hon. member for Salaberry—Suroît.

• (2100)

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, it is true. When I talk, I can hear an echo. It is quite odd, but I will try to continue my speech anyway.

I was saying that it is shameful that there is nothing in the bill to financially support seniors, to increase, maintain or develop their purchasing power.

Madam Speaker, I am very sorry, but I can hear my voice echoing, as though there were two of me—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will ask the pages to go and check. It might be coming from the galleries.

The hon. member can continue. We will try to resolve the problem as quickly as possible.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, at my advanced age, it is more difficult to concentrate when there is background noise that seems to be coming from the great beyond.

What I was saying is that, basically, what is missing from this budget is real support for seniors. As my Bloc Québécois colleagues have said many times, there are two classes of seniors.

In Quebec and Canada, there are seniors between the ages of 65 and 74 and those aged 75 and up. Seniors aged 75 and up received an increase in their old age security, whereas those between the ages of 65 and 74 got nothing. Quite frankly, I am not sure whether my colleagues are aware that a person whose sole income is the old age security pension and the guaranteed income supplement does not even get enough money a month to pay for decent housing, cover all the rent-related costs and still manage to have a decent and reasonable life. It is rather shameful that a G7 country is unable to take better care of those who built Quebec and contributed to its development. We must give them what they need to live and die in a dignified way.

Roughly 22% of the people in Salaberry—Suroît are seniors 65 and over. Earlier, before the technical problems, I was saying that I attend all the events in my riding, and seniors talk to me and tell me about their problems. They cannot grasp the government's lack of understanding and the fact it does not give them more support in meeting their monthly obligations. If a senior needs home care or to buy services, go to a private seniors residence and pay for services to support their loss of autonomy, quite honestly, that person has to ask for help from the Quebec government, from their province, because what they receive in old age security benefits is not enough to meet their needs.

In this budget there is a serious lack of consideration and esteem for our seniors, those who built the society we have today.

There is another important thing missing. I am sure that people are affected by this. There is nothing about employment insurance reform. The member for Thérèse-De Blainville has often said that it is high time that old legislation were modernized. The minister has made some promises over the years.

Recently, we believed we could start working on the reform because the minister went to the trouble of holding consultations. Unfortunately, the Bloc Québécois and our partners who support workers were utterly disappointed. There is no EI reform and no major change to the Employment Insurance Act to face the new realities of the labour market and secure better coverage.

In closing, I know that my time is up. Madam Speaker, I hope you gave me the time I lost because of the audio issues during my speech. I imagine you did.

I will conclude by saying that what is important to the Bloc Québécois is to vote for a budget that is really useful and serves Quebec's interests. At present, that is not what we have before us. Therefore, the Bloc Québécois will vote against the budget and, consequently, against Bill C-47.

• (2105)

[*English*]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I really want to thank the member for pointing out that the House is working hard for constituents, that work is being done and that bills are being passed in the House. I really thank her for pointing that out, because we, I would not necessarily say all of us but many of us, are working for our constituents.

I want to talk a little bit about seniors and the dental program for seniors. I have a lot of seniors in my riding who have called in and are anxiously awaiting the addition of dental care for them. I want to hear from the member whether this is something she also is hearing from seniors in her riding.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, I will give a very honest answer. Strangely enough, no one talks to me about dental care in my riding.

As many people know, children in Quebec have some coverage. I know the Quebec government has extended coverage to include some people who need surgery but cannot have it because they need dental care before they have their surgery, so it has extended its coverage. The Quebec government made that decision without waiting for Ottawa to decide what it was going to do.

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Quite honestly, people are not talking to me about that. Seniors want to talk about the loss of their purchasing power, about having to make difficult choices between groceries, care, rent and leisure activities. They tell me they are feeling so squeezed financially that they have no room to manoeuvre after working their entire lives.

Many seniors who are now 65 or 70 years old do not have a pension plan, even though they worked hard. I am thinking of people who worked as restaurant waitresses, or people who worked hard physically, in factories, for example, and did not have access to a collective agreement that guaranteed a pension plan.

Today these people are worried and do not understand why the government did not think of them when drafting Bill C-47.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to rise and ask a question of my colleague from Salaberry—Suroît.

In her speech, she once again demonstrated her empathy and warmth for her colleagues by highlighting the work of our colleagues from Manicouagan and Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou. She also highlighted the work of our colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue, who will be leaving in the middle of the night tonight to drive long hours to his riding so he can support his constituents. That is quite admirable, and I congratulate him for that.

A few seconds ago, in response to our NDP colleague's question, my colleague talked about the lack of measures to help seniors financially. The OAS has not been increased for seniors aged 65 to 74. This is an injustice that the Bloc Québécois has been denouncing for a long time.

This class of seniors is not getting that assistance. These people are being deprived of this increase, but we believe they are entitled to it. What is more, when they have to go back to work so they can make ends meet and fight the rampant inflation we are seeing today, they are penalized, because their pension income is cut.

The Bloc Québécois is really troubled by all this injustice. My colleague mentioned it briefly. I also wanted to ask her whether her constituents are approaching her about this. Mine are. Are people talking to her about the housing crisis and the fact that the government has done nothing in this budget to respond to the urgent housing crisis in Quebec?

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, I would say to my colleague that seniors talk to me about housing, but they mostly talk to me about having the opportunity to work without being taxed, without changing four quarters for a dollar.

The budget could have included measures to make seniors' work more valuable, to prevent them from losing their guaranteed income supplement or prevent them from paying too much in tax. Indeed, seniors perhaps would have wanted to work a bit to stay socially active and improve their living conditions, but there are no tax measures in Bill C-47 to encourage seniors to go back to work.

[*English*]

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Madam Speaker, it has been an interesting debate tonight. There were a

couple of things that I heard from the Liberals and the NDP, one of which I expected to hear a lot about and one which I did not.

What I did not expect was a couple of NDP members doing victory laps over the Alberta election results time and time again. As I watched the election results, I was struck by the fact that a Conservative government, having gone through a pandemic and a leadership change, unsurprisingly lost a couple of percentage points and formed a strong majority government.

The NDP may want to celebrate the fact that it gained about nine percentage points at the expense of the Alberta party, but hopefully all of us can hope for the very best for the Danielle Smith government in Alberta, because that would be really good for Albertans across the board. I, for one, congratulate that government and hope that it succeeds on behalf of all Albertans over the next four years of its very strong mandate.

What I expected to hear and have heard a lot of today, over and over again, is Liberal fearmongering about cuts that some potential Conservative government might threaten or initiate or whatever the case might be. It caused me to look back at history. It is important to look at where there have been cuts, because maybe we can learn from situations in the past when we have seen actual cuts. I had to go back a long way to find real cuts to health spending, social services spending, education spending and the transfers that fund those things.

I went back to 1993, 1994 and 1995, when we saw cuts at the very start of a newly elected Liberal government, but then it was astonishing to see the cut that occurred in 1995-96. In the 1995-96 Liberal budget, \$18.4 billion was spent on health care, social services and education, and then in 1996-97, the very next year, we went from \$18.4 billion to \$14.7 billion, a reduction of almost \$4 billion in important transfers for health, social services, education and those kinds of things. The next year, 1997-98, we went from \$14.7 billion to \$12.5 billion in those transfers.

I mention those figures because, as a result of the spending during the reign of a fiscally incompetent Trudeau government, a government that ran 14 deficits in 15 years while it was in power, we saw a crisis in energy, a crisis in housing and a crisis in inflation. I do not know if that sounds familiar to anybody around here. There were 14 deficits in 15 years in the 1970s and 1980s, and that led to these devastating cuts in 1996-97 and 1997-98, going from \$18.4 billion for health, social services and education to \$12.5 billion two years later. That was a Liberal government dealing with the devastating effects a generation after another Liberal government, a Trudeau government, had absolutely zero idea of what to do to run an economy.

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I fear that we are in the same boat now. We have heard Liberal speaker after Liberal speaker get up and ask how Conservatives can vote against this thing, and they will cherry-pick one thing, or be against this other thing. All of the things they talk about sound great, but I hearken back to the debate on May 1 in the House of Commons, and one comment, though there were many comments like this, struck me. The comment was in response to a question during question period from a Conservative member of Parliament. The Liberal finance minister, talking about the grocery rebate, said, “The grocery rebate is going to deliver support to 11 million low-income Canadians who need it.” How have we come to a place in 2023 when the finance minister is bragging about the fact that we have 11 million low-income Canadians who need support to buy groceries? How are we at that place in 2023?

● (2110)

We look at the government's own budget documents and we take a look at the numbers in these documents and we think about those important transfers we are talking about and other programs. The Canada health transfer is set to be, in 2023-24, \$49.4 billion. Do members know that the projected cost to service the debt will be in the same year? It is \$43.9 billion, so because of the fiscal incompetence, and there is no other way to say it, of the government that has been in power for eight years, we are going to spend as much in interest as we are going to spend on health care in this country as a federal government. There is no other way to say it: That is absolute incompetence.

When we take a look at the Liberal budget, one of the things that strike me is that they cut their deal with the NDP, and we hear the NDP talk about the different things that they were able to negotiate into this Liberal budget, but I will tell members one thing that was negotiated out of the Liberal budget.

This is the state of where we are. We in this place oftentimes can agree that there are certain things that need our attention. We might have different ideas on how we address those things, but we can agree there are certain things that require attention. One thing that we all agreed on during the last election campaign was the fact that there is a mental health crisis in this country. We all had different platform ideas that we put forward. We ran an election. Canadians looked at those promises we made, because we make promises in election campaigns, and I would think Canadians would expect us to keep those promises. Admittedly, we made promises that were different from those of the Liberals and the NDP on mental health, but we all had substantial promises in there.

The Liberals promised, on page 75 of their election platform, very clearly in a black-and-white five-year costed layout of their election platform, a \$4.5-billion investment in mental health called the “Canada Mental Health Transfer”. That was something the Liberals promised. Every Liberal in this House went to doors during the election campaign and promised things to Canadians, many of whom would have been struggling with their mental health, especially as we were still in the midst of a pandemic. We were moving hopefully toward the end of it, but at that point in time people were obviously very significantly affected.

Canadians struggling with their mental health had a Liberal member of Parliament or a Liberal candidate go to their door and

promise they were going to spend \$4.5 billion on a Canada mental health transfer.

What happened next? Immediately the Liberals signed their deal with the NDP. No NDP member has actually yet taken credit for negotiating this out of their agreement, but clearly it must have been something that the NDP said. They must have said that they wanted to put NDP priorities on the agenda instead of the Canada mental health transfer. No one has talked about why that was negotiated out, but it is very clear that the Liberals have decided that this promise they made is no longer important and that there are other priorities, or, if it is still important to them, that they have come to a point where the fiscal situation is so bad that it was in their cabinet meetings.

● (2115)

I do not know if the leader of the NDP is in the Liberal cabinet meetings or if the House leader of the NDP is, but the Liberals had to go into these cabinet meetings. They had to have conversations and say that things are really tough here and that they had decided to fund some program, one of the many programs they are listing, but they were no longer going to be able to afford this thing they promised on page 75 in their election platform.

I do not know what those conversations looked like; all I know from taking a look at the budget we are debating tonight and from taking a look at the numbers we are talking about tonight is that we are going to be in a situation where Liberal governments and this coalition, however long it lasts, are going to be having conversations like that, because they have come to a point where life is just not only unaffordable for Canadians but unaffordable for the government.

It becomes unsustainable at some point. It is just like when we were dealing with the results of Trudeau Liberal incompetence in the mid-nineties because the Trudeau government of the seventies and eighties had run up all of those deficits over all of those years. I fear we are going to be in the same situation moving forward. During questions and comments, I hope some Liberal will rise up and explain that maybe my concerns are somehow misplaced. Hopefully there will be some explanation and some understanding tonight of the situation we are in.

● (2120)

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what is important about what was outlined by the member opposite in his statement is that concerns about mental health are equally shared across all parties. However, what was not mentioned in the comments referenced by the member opposite is that part of what this budget includes is a formalization of an agreement that includes \$190 billion in funding for health care and—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): One moment please. The hon. member's phone is right by the microphone and is causing problems for interpretation. I want to remind members to make sure their phones are not near the microphones or sitting on their desk vibrating while they are trying to make a speech.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

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Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, what I was saying is that the funding agreement with respect to health care is about \$190 billion over the next 10 years. It is approximately \$46 billion of new funding. One of the aspects of that funding includes certain conditional priorities, and one of those priorities is exactly what the member was referencing: access to timely, equitable and quality mental health, substance use and addiction services. I would just point that out, to flesh out the record in terms of the context of this debate.

The member's party is steadfastly committed to voting against this budget. This budget includes \$158.4 million over three years to support the implementation and operation of a 988 number that would be a suicide hotline in this country, which would serve the mental health needs of Canadians. Does the member seek to revise his voting position in that regard?

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, I can assure the member that, if he carves out that particular element and removes the \$60 billion in new spending; if he removes the more than \$40 billion in deficit spending, which this country cannot afford right now and which is driving up the cost of everything, and we see the devastating results of that; and if the member wants to go back and say that he thinks they should carve out the 988 suicide prevention hotline, I would be very happy to support it.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have to say I would be hesitant to accept that the Conservative Party would support that carve-out, only because of the shenanigans that the Conservatives have gotten up to in the last two days, during which they have not let anything be passed. They have not even let us have a debate on wildfires, which is so urgently needed.

However, I want to agree with my colleague on one thing in his speech. I will give Stephen Harper credit for one thing when he was the prime minister of this country: He did tell us who he was, when he was going to cut things and how he was going to decimate the charitable sector, the foreign aid and all of those things. He made it very clear he was going to do those things, and then he did them. However, the current Conservative opposition party refuses to tell us what the Conservatives would cut. The member refuses to tell us which things in this budget he would cut. Is it dental care? Is it housing? Is it health care? Is it a futures economy? Which one of those things would the member cut?

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, let me say first that, soon enough, the member will be able to refer to us as the Conservative government and she will not be spreading misinformation.

I have heard the New Democrats talk about the Harper era during the whole debate tonight, and here are a couple of things from the Harper era. The member was wrong on most of her facts, but the reality is that, during the Harper era, there were a few things we did promise and deliver. We promised regular increases. In fact, almost every single year, we increased spending on the Canada health transfer by six per cent. Members would not know that by listening to Liberal talking points.

Something that clearly differentiates the current Liberal government's approach from ours is that when we dealt with a global economic meltdown, a part of that, every step of the way, was a road

map to get back to a balanced budget, which we delivered in 2015. We have not seen one since.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will quickly ask my colleague my question.

While the government is currently lending Trans Mountain \$3 billion, which aligns with the Conservative Party's loyalties to fossil fuels, the Conservative Party has been droning on ad nauseam for months about the need for fiscal restraint.

How does it manage to reconcile the two?

● (2125)

[*English*]

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, the hon. member and I probably have very different positions on oil and gas and on pipelines. However, one thing we agree on is that there was no need for the federal government to own the Trans Mountain pipeline. In our view, of course, the private sector should have been able to build that pipeline. Quite frankly, it is ridiculous not only that the government got itself into the situation where it had to buy a pipeline but also that the pipeline has gone tens of billions of dollars over budget, which is an absolute travesty.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, of course, it always a delight to stand in this place representing the incredible constituents of Edmonton Strathcona.

This is the first day I have been in the House since the Alberta election, and I did want to send my congratulations to Rachel Notley. Of course, it was not the outcome we wanted, but I think it is important for all of us in this place to recognize the significant wins in Alberta. In Alberta, we elected the very first Black woman as an MLA. We elected the very first indigenous woman as an MLA. We elected members in Sherwood Park. We elected members in every seat in Edmonton and in so many more seats in Calgary. Almost every urban seat in Alberta went to the NDP, including seats that had been held by ministers and that flipped over to the NDP. It is something I think Rachel Notley, and all Albertans, should be extremely proud of.

There are things on which we have more work to do. I am not very proud of the fact that Albertans elected a member who compared trans children to feces. I am not very proud that a Conservative with those views was elected. It is appalling and disgusting during Pride month. However, there is work to do, and we will continue to do that work. However, this is not actually why I am here tonight, but I did want to raise that, because, frankly, some of those things are indicative of the changing political landscape in Alberta and the belief of Albertans in the importance of taking care of each other, and I think that is very important.

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What we are actually here to talk about is the budget implementation act, and I want to talk a little bit about why this is so important and why I am supporting it. This is not a perfect piece of legislation. This is not a perfect budget. This is not the budget I would have written. However, I am so proud to be part of the New Democratic Party, which pushed for some of the things that are in this budget, and I am going to outline a few of those things.

In Edmonton Strathcona and across the country, families are struggling with the cost of life, with affordability. We cannot go into grocery stores and communities and talk to people on their doorsteps without them telling us about how difficult this is, how challenging it is for them, how difficult it is to buy food, to pay their rent, to find housing, to be able to pay for their lives and to be able to thrive in their communities.

As a parliamentarian, my primary job is actually to make life better for Canadians and my constituents and to find ways to support them. I cannot tell members how proud I am that dental care is something that Canadians are going to have access to when the bill is passed, and not just for children, but for everyone under 18, people living with disabilities and seniors. Oh my goodness, seniors in this country will have access to dental care, which is something that should have been in place decades ago. However, I am just so proud that I get to be part of the New Democratic Party, which pushed for this happen in 2023.

We have talked about the GST rebate in the House, which is that added help that so many families need. I will agree with other members who have raised this; I would like us to live in a country where that is not necessary, but right now, the reality is that there are Canadians who need that extra help, who need that extra piece to get them through. If we can provide that support to Canadians at this moment, when affordability is so challenging, why would we not do that?

On urban, rural and northern indigenous housing, I learned so much from my colleague from Iqaluit, the member for Nunavut. She is such a champion in the House, and she is a person who speaks so strongly for her constituents. She has made it very clear that there is not enough money for the need in northern indigenous communities. However, I will say that this budget implementation act is important, and it is important that New Democrats recognize it and recognize that our job is going to be to continue to push the government to do more, continue to push the government to make sure that rural, urban and northern indigenous communities have the funding they need for adequate housing. We would not accept less in any other communities, and we should not accept it in indigenous communities.

• (2130)

I am proud of what we have done for students. Do members know what I am really proud of? I am proud that there is legislation that will prevent scabs from being used by corporations. That is important. That is important for workers, so that workers know that they can actually work, that they can actually negotiate, that they can go to the negotiation table with their employers and get a fair deal. That is vital to workers. It is in the bill, and I am so proud of the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for his work on making sure this happened.

Of course, there are many things in this bill, but the other thing I am extremely proud of is the investment in a future-facing economy. The member for Timmins—James Bay has done so much work, but, more importantly, workers in Alberta have done so much work. Workers in Alberta have been calling for this investment in them. I have said this many times in this place. I come from a line of oil and gas workers. My dad was a trucker and my dad worked in the oil fields. He worked in Alaska and in Alberta. My brothers work in the oil and gas sector. My husband works in the oil and gas sector. I recognize what that sector has done for Canada. I also speak to people in my constituency. They want assurances that there is a future for them, for their children and for their families, and that there are going to be jobs for them, that there is going to be a place for them in a futures economy. If we do not have investment in Alberta, that is not going to happen. I am thrilled that this is here. I am thrilled that this is being led by Alberta workers.

I will finish today by saying how ashamed I am of some other members of the House from Alberta, how ashamed I am that some of the members have done everything they can to stop the processes of this Parliament going forward. The leader of the official opposition has benefited from a publicly funded health and dental care plan for over 20 years. Every one of us in the House benefits from dental care and a health care plan, but the Leader of the Opposition started today by proclaiming that he will use every procedural trick in the book to stop hard-working families from accessing desperately needed dental care. That is shameful, when seniors, people living with disabilities and children, his children, have access to dental care, and when he has access to dental care. The 25 New Democrats in this place have done more for Canadians in this Parliament than the 115 Conservatives have. I would ask them to tell me one thing they have delivered for Canadians, one thing they have been able to deliver. All they do is come here and obstruct.

I, for one, want to work to make this country better for Canadians. I want to make sure this world is better for everyone, so when I come to this place, I look around this room and think of who I can work with. How can I get things done? What can I do to make sure that life is better for my constituents? That is my job. That is why I come here. Every member of this 25-member caucus does that. That is why Canadians are getting dental care. That is why Canadians are getting housing support. That is why Canadians are getting the grocery rebate. It is not because the Conservatives are throwing shenanigans all over the place; it is not because they are making a mockery of Parliament. We are allowing things to get done, and I am so proud of that.

We talked about Harper a lot tonight, and I will say again that he did tell people when he was going to cut things. He did tell us when he was going to destroy our social safety net. The current opposition refuses to tell us when it is going to do that.

I will say it again: This bill is not perfect. There are things I would like to change in this bill, but there are more than enough things in this bill that are going to help Canadians, help with the affordability crisis and help people who are struggling in our country right now.

I will come into this place every single day ready to work and to do more and more to get the help for Canadians, and I certainly hope the Conservatives stop their shenanigans and get on board.

• (2135)

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member opposite started her speech by acknowledging what just transpired with the provincial election in Alberta. I want to turn to that for a moment. She acknowledged some landmarks being achieved in terms of the first female, Black member of the provincial legislature in Alberta, which I believe is something she mentioned. That is worth applauding.

I wanted to draw her attention to aspects of the budget. She outlined a lot of what is in the budget. There is a lot in there. Specifically, there are references to funding and supports to deal with some of the challenging divisions that we continue to see in Canadian society. The budget includes \$25 million for supporting Black Canadian communities initiative, which is about empowering Black organizations. Another \$25 million will go to supporting the anti-racism strategy and dealing with some of the pernicious issues that relate to anti-indigenous racism, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

In the wake of the almost two-year anniversary of the Afzaal family being killed in London, Ontario, could she comment on the equity initiatives in the budget and her position on them?

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, anything that we can do to help with some of those equity initiatives is very important. I have a bit of a concern. For example, one of the things brought forward in this budget is the recognition of the need for a national plan for murdered and missing indigenous women and girls.

I would also say that the government has promised money since 2019 and has not followed through with spending. That is my biggest concern with the Liberal government. It has the ability to say the right things, but it does not do the hard work. It does not do the work necessary to implement things, to spend the money and to get the programs out to the people who need them the most. I feel that the role of the New Democratic Party is to hold the government's feet to the fire.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I welcome my colleague back to the House after the time she spent in Alberta during the provincial election.

Let me ask her something. She has thrown a whole bunch of shame around the House. At the same time, the government has presented a budget that is plunging Canada further into debt, inflation and uncertainty as far as what Canadians can expect their hard-earned dollars to buy going forward and how much they are going to pay in taxes. We also have to balance the fact that we are going to have to impose further taxes on the next generation.

How does she balance the shame against the shame she is foisting upon the next generation?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Before I give the floor back to the hon. member for Edmonton Strath-

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cona, I will just remind the hon. member that we do not mention if people are or are not in the House, directly or indirectly.

The hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, to be clear, I was only throwing shame at one party in the House of Commons. I was not passing it around equally.

I have children; I have teenagers. One of the things I want desperately is for them to want to stay in Alberta. I want them to want to raise their families in Alberta. I want Alberta to have a strong economy, a strong health care system, a strong education system and a strong system that makes our communities thrive.

Frankly, I think this budget does so much more to help people with affordability issues. It does so much more to help Canadians than the Conservatives asking the Speaker to read 900 amendments into the record today.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague on her speech. Anyone can see how passionate she is and how much she cares about her constituents.

I was also glad to hear her say that, even though the election in Alberta did not necessarily go the way she would have liked, she still respects the democracy that was expressed in Alberta. They elected a premier who, while not her choice, was nonetheless democratically elected by Albertans. That is good, because the Bloc Québécois believes that it is important to respect democracy, as well as the authority and jurisdiction of the Quebec National Assembly and the legislative assemblies of the other provinces. Alberta's democracy has spoken.

I would like to ask my colleague a question. Governments express their priorities through the budget choices they make. I am having trouble understanding something, and I hope she can explain it to me. How can she support a budget that contains no measures to support seniors, no increase in the OAS benefits for seniors aged 65 and over?

The government is creating two classes of seniors. By supporting the budget, my colleague is endorsing the idea that seniors under 75 do not need assistance.

• (2140)

[*English*]

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, my colleague's question is a good one. I would go back to what I said in my speech. This is not a perfect piece of legislation, and it is not what the New Democratic Party would have brought forward.

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However, when I look at seniors in my riding, I know how much it is going to help them to have dental care be part of our reality in Canada. I know how much it is going to help seniors to have investments in housing. Those things are going to help seniors in my riding deeply. It is impossible for me to turn my back on those seniors at this time.

Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak to yet another inflationary, irresponsible Liberal budget that claims to rein in inflation, yet actually does the complete opposite.

The Liberals even claim that it is a made-in-Canada plan, while they continue their attack on workers' paycheques. Thanks to their irresponsible spending, Canadians from coast to coast to coast have found themselves bringing home less and less. People are lining up at food banks to put food on the table. Young people have given up hope of ever owning a home. Even the Parliamentary Budget Officer has flagged several issues in the budget, ranging from a meagre economic outlook in the coming years to lack of fiscal transparency and an incoming recession. The Liberal government has had eight long years to step up for Canadians, but, despite managing to spend more than all past prime ministers combined, its chronic fiscal mismanagement and reckless policies have left Canadians struggling.

Canadians continue to watch prices soar, from food to fuel, home heating and even housing prices. Making ends meet through the cost of living crisis has become impossible. Despite all this, the government continues to hike the carbon tax and the excise tax on alcohol, against the interests of hard-working Canadians. Enough is enough.

The Liberal government has had eight years to step up for Canadians, but it is now time for it to step down and for common-sense Conservative solutions to be enacted to truly help Canadians across the country. As Conservatives, we set these three conditions for our support of budget 2023: It must bring home powerful paycheques, with lower taxes, so hard work pays off again. It must bring home lower prices by eliminating the inflationary carbon tax and deficits. Finally, it must bring homes that young people can afford by removing gatekeepers and speeding up the construction and affordability of housing.

The Liberals have rolled out over \$43 billion of inflationary spending and senseless tax grabs that would burden Canadians from coast to coast. After eight years of the Liberal government, we all see how its solutions simply do not work. Conservatives have the right solutions that do work, so paycheques will work for the Canadians who do the work.

I am proud to say that Conservatives will not support this budget, and here is why: The Liberals' budget 2023 continues the Liberals' war on work, dedicated workers and workers' paycheques. Instead of listening to struggling Canadians suffering under the worst affordability crisis they have ever seen, the Liberals continue with their reckless, inflationary spending, while increasing taxes. This means that workers are punished for working hard and take home even less of their paycheques.

The government's inflationary spending has caused the cost of groceries to skyrocket, leaving one in five Canadians skipping meals or relying on food banks. The misleading grocery rebate

would only give \$234 for a single adult to cover the rising cost of living, which the Liberal government's reckless spending caused. Canada's food price report 2023 predicts that a family of four will spend up to \$1,065 more on food this year, which is drastically higher than the \$467 grocery rebate that they will receive.

On April 1, the Liberal government hiked the senseless carbon tax, costing the average family between \$402 and \$847 in 2023, even after the rebates. The government also continues to raise taxes on still-recovering restaurants and breweries by increasing the excise tax on alcohol by 2%. The temporary cap in the hikes of the alcohol excise tax is only valid for a year, and it is not enough.

• (2145)

The Liberal policies of hiking taxes and clawing back money that should remain in the pockets of Canadians in the first place must end. Conservatives will prioritize fixing what the Liberals broke by ensuring powerful paycheques and opportunities for the people who do the work. The down payment that is necessary nowadays for an average home has doubled after eight years of the Liberal government. We believe in bringing homes young people can afford so that they do not continue to live in their parents' basements because they have given up on their dreams of home ownership.

Back when the Liberals first took office, the average rent in Canada for a one-bedroom apartment was \$973. After eight years of the current government, the price has skyrocketed to \$1,760. The average mortgage and rent payments have also nearly doubled since the Liberals took office, increasing to \$3,100 from what was once \$1,400.

Before the Liberals took office, Canadians only needed 39% of the average paycheque to make monthly payments on the average house. After eight long years of Liberal recklessness, this number has risen to 62%, leaving Canadians with way less of their paycheques to spend on other necessities.

The Liberal government has not outlined any plans to get rid of the gatekeepers and get more affordable housing built. Its inflationary spending and misguided policies have left people giving up on home ownership. Conservatives believe in building a country with homes people can actually afford by getting rid of the gatekeepers, freeing up land, speeding up building permits and getting shovels in the ground to get affordable housing built. While the Liberal government continues to overspend and overtax, we will continue to prioritize the interests of hard-working Canadians by getting affordable housing built fast.

Government Orders

Eight long years of the Liberal government has brought nothing but reckless inflationary spending, senseless tax hikes and irresponsible policies, leading to the worst affordability crisis Canadians have ever seen. Canadians from coast to coast to coast have found themselves bringing home less. People are lining up at food banks to put food on the table. Young people have given up the hope of ever owning a home. Even the Parliamentary Budget Officer has flagged several issues in the budget, ranging from the meagre economic outlook in the coming years to a lack of fiscal transparency and an incoming recession. That is the effect of the Liberal government, which has had eight long years to step up for Canadians. Now is the time for it to step down and adopt our common-sense Conservative solutions to make Canada work for the people who have done the work.

We will continue to demand the following: offering powerful paycheques, with lower taxes, so hard work pays off again; lowering prices by eliminating the inflationary carbon tax and deficits; and building homes that young people can afford by removing gatekeepers and speeding up the construction of affordable housing.

Because our pragmatic demands were not met, we will not be supporting this inflationary Liberal budget.

• (2150)

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to point out a few factual clarifications of things that have been said by a number of Conservative members.

Canada currently has the lowest deficit in the G7. Canada has the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. Canada still maintains its AAA credit rating. These things are factual.

What is also factual is that the member is from Alberta, which is going through a very difficult time right now. I feel for the people whom he represents in terms of the wildfires we are seeing. Those severe and acute weather events are related to climate action.

I would put to the member that now is not the time to make polluting free. Does he agree?

Mr. Gerald Soroka: Madam Speaker, through you to the member, we are not saying that we have an issue with the climate crisis; we are saying we have an issue with the Liberals' tax plan, which has nothing to do with protecting the environment. They are collecting more money, which is leaving Canadians a lot less, yet they are meeting zero emissions targets. How is their tax plan, and so-called environmental plan, helping the environment? It is not.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member for Yellowhead mentioned gatekeepers, as a lot of Conservatives do. When I heard the Conservative leader give a speech on the budget last year, he gave a 20-minute speech entirely on gatekeepers and did not mention a single federal gatekeeper in his whole speech.

The member for Yellowhead mentioned gatekeepers around providing housing. I am wondering if he could point out where the federal gatekeepers are in that program.

Mr. Gerald Soroka: Madam Speaker, I have to admit that it is not necessarily just a federal issue. When we talk about gatekeepers, it does not matter which level of government it is.

For the most part, when it comes to zoning and restructuring building plans, it usually falls under municipal government acts that, because of the policies they have sometimes created, need to be amended and addressed because we are not building the homes that need to be built. The money seems to be put in the budget, yet the homes are not getting built. Why is that? It is because the policies and programs offered by municipalities a lot of times do not warrant the quick and speedy building of homes.

That is the big problem when I talk about gatekeepers. We need to address that to get homes that Canadians can live in built.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to follow up with the question I asked another Conservative colleague about reconciling the fiscal restraint he mentioned with the fact that the government has invested an additional \$3 billion in Trans Mountain, bringing its total investment to \$30 billion. His colleague said that there was absolutely no need for the government to buy Trans Mountain.

I would be interested to hear what my colleague has to say about that, because had the government not done it, Trans Mountain would no longer exist. The logic seems to be flawed.

[*English*]

Mr. Gerald Soroka: Madam Speaker, there is absolutely no reason for the government to buy a pipeline. The only reason it did so was because of its own policies, which created the issue. If this pipeline had been built by the contractor and the company, we would not have seen a \$30-billion increase to the project. That is an outstanding amount, which is ridiculous, and no private industry would have ever built this pipeline for that kind of money.

This is, once again, the government's ineptness in getting projects done in Canada. First, they are hugely overrun and probably would have been built by now, but Liberal policies, such as Bill C-69, have stopped pipelines from being built in Canada, and they are intentionally causing the high costs to make sure Canadians think it is ridiculous and a pipeline will never get built again. They are right. If the government owned the pipeline, we will never own it. That is why it should go back to the private sector, where it belongs. The government should never have been involved in the private sector for pipelines.

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• (2155)

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, there were promises in the 2015 election campaign from the Liberals of a small deficit for one year and then a return to balanced budgets, but what has been delivered is something totally different. We have seen eight years of inflationary spending, and now the government is signalling that it will never return to a balanced budget and will continue its out-of-control spending as long as it can. Hopefully, we can end that soon.

If that were not bad enough, to go along with these massive deficits, we are seeing increasing interest rates in an attempt to rein in the skyrocketing inflation the deficits have caused. Compile all of this, and it spells bad news for Canadians. Canada's debt is projected to reach \$1.22 trillion in fiscal year 2023-24. That is nearly \$81,000 of debt per household.

One of the results of this inflationary spending is to cause inflation to go up to the highest rates we have seen in 40 years. The previous high was under a former Liberal government with an out-of-control spending problem. The high inflation rate is resulting in the Bank of Canada raising interest rates to try to rein in inflation, rates that the Liberal government was warned about, but it failed to take the warning. Therefore, now, as a result, we have record high national debt combined with jacked-up interest rates that will see Canada's debt service costs projected to reach \$43.9 billion for fiscal year 2023-24.

Can members imagine the good \$43.9 billion could do if it were not required to pay just for the debt? That is not to pay off the debt. That is just to pay the annual debt service cost. None of that estimated \$43.9 billion would be going to reduce the deficit or the cost in future years. It is only to pay that annual debt service fee. That is \$43.9 billion that could have gone to health care, to the nurses, doctors and hospitals where health care workers have been stretched to and beyond their limit. That is \$43.9 billion that could have been going to infrastructure projects to improve water and wastewater projects in our communities, indigenous communities and municipalities. That is \$43.9 billion that could have gone to transportation projects to help people get to work on time, or \$43.9 billion to get homes built. However this \$43.9 billion is only going to pay the debt service costs.

I used to ask people at home if they could envision what \$20 billion looked like because I myself had trouble envisioning what that looks like. I would get blank stares or heads shaking back, and so I would ask them if they can imagine what five \$100 bills would look like in their hand. They would say, "Yes, I can picture five \$100 bills." I said that is what \$20 billion is to every living Canadian, every infant, every youth, every adult, every senior and every veteran. It is five \$100 bills in debt. That was what the \$20-billion deficits were causing. Now we are seeing \$40-billion deficits.

EMERGENCY DEBATE

• (2200)

[English]

WILDFIRES IN CANADA

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It being 10 p.m., pursuant to an order made on Tuesday, November 15, 2022, the House will now proceed to the consideration of a motion to adjourn the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter requiring urgent consideration, namely the wildfire situation across Canada.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP) moved:

That this House do now adjourn.

He said: Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Edmonton Griesbach.

I would like to thank the Speaker for granting my request for an emergency debate on the urgent and escalating wildfire situation across Canada.

I want to say first that our hearts are with the 120,000 Canadians who have been forced to flee their homes this year, 30,000 of whom are still out of their homes, and even more so with the many hundreds who have lost everything in these wildfires. I thank the firefighters on land and in the air for their brave and dangerous work in keeping all of us safe.

More than 400 fires are burning right now across the country from Vancouver Island to Nova Scotia. More than 3.6 million hectares of forest have been torched. Today, for the first time in my eight years as an MP, I woke to smoky skies in Ottawa, a sight I know only too well from my home in British Columbia, but it was a first for me here, and it is only the first week of June. We have a long and hot fire season ahead of us.

Local and provincial first responders have already been overwhelmed in Alberta, Nova Scotia and Quebec. It is clear that we need to re-evaluate the federal role in wildfire protection and response to develop a more proactive process instead of the present reactive one. We must do much of this as quickly as possible in the next few weeks before summer truly arrives. This process and support to affected parts of the country should be informed by the urgent debate of Parliament, and that is why we are here late at night debating this critically important topic.

This has been a wildfire season like no other. The area burned so far is 10 times the annual average. How many times have we heard that over the last decade? How many summers have been described as the "worst ever" for forest fires?

I was listening to Dr. Mike Flannigan, a wildfire expert from Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops on the radio a couple of days ago, and he made some important comments that I will be repeating here tonight. One of the most important was his comment that this weather, these fire seasons, are not the new normal. He said that we are in a downward spiral when it comes to climate change and wildfire behaviour, and that our fight against climate change is a fight to keep things from getting worse and worse.

A paper published in the journal of Environmental Research Letters last month found that about 40% of the wildfires we are experiencing every year in North America can be directly attributed to the fossil fuel industry and its impact on climate change. However, while we are fighting climate change to keep things from getting worse, we must adapt to the changes that are already upon us because these changes are essentially permanent, since carbon dioxide takes centuries to leave the atmosphere, and those changes include more frequent and more intense wildfires.

An essential part of that adaptation will be an increased role for the federal government to play in wildfire management. First, we need to train and maintain crews of firefighters who will help us attack fires rapidly before they explode out of control. Second, we need to maintain a national stockpile of equipment that can be quickly sent to affected provinces so that we are not wasting valuable days while a fire or a cluster of fires gets out of hand. This could also include a squadron of water bombers that could be deployed quickly wherever they are needed. Third, we need better coordination of both resources and manpower. Finally, we need to work between fire seasons to reshape the forest surrounding our communities so that interface fires will not have the same destructive effects that they have today. I would like to cover all of these points in more detail, starting with firefighters.

Firefighters on the ground are the heart and soul of wildfire fighting in Canada. Wildfires are fought by both professional and volunteer crews based in small communities across the country. When I go to fire lines in my riding, I see crews from all over British Columbia. I want to thank those 90,000 volunteer firefighters from across Canada for that work, which goes completely unpaid. I want to put in a plug here for Bill C-310 from my NDP colleague for Courtenay—Alberni, which would provide more tax relief for volunteer firefighters.

Increasingly, international crews are coming to help us as we have helped other countries in the past. When I was in Chile for a parliamentary visit in March, there were Canadian personnel and equipment fighting fires there during the worst fire season that it ever had.

• (2205)

We need to consider the idea of creating a national firefighting service. Michael Flannigan has suggested that 20 crews of 20 firefighters each would be a great help in getting onto fires quickly. That rapid initial attack is the key to fighting wildfires. Once a fire gets beyond a few hectares in hot, dry windy weather, it very quickly becomes an unmanageable monster that can only be tamed by a change in weather or a change in the season.

Once tamed, they are actually put out by boots on the ground, with teams of firefighters doing the hard, dirty, hot work. A quick

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response with water bombers, skimmers filling from nearby lakes and helicopters bucketing water from ponds and temporary reservoirs can knock down small fires quickly. I have seen it happen from my back deck at home, since I live only a couple of kilometres from one of the main air bases for firefighting in British Columbia.

Too often, I have had bombers and helicopters fly low overhead as they fight fires in the forests and grasslands around my home in Penticton.

Prompt bombing with retardant dropped by larger planes, and the latest ones to arrive in Penticton are part of a new fleet of Dash 8-400s, can help set boundary containment for big fires but, again, that on-the-ground work is essential to really putting the fires out. We need quicker access to essential firefighting equipment that is available to regions in need. We saw that need last week in Nova Scotia, when local and provincial resources were overtaxed very quickly with wildfires on the outskirts of Halifax.

The federal government provided material but it took a couple of days to find that material and get it to the firefighters.

I would like to turn now to how we coordinate our efforts nationally and how we must be anticipating where fires will break out rather than reacting after a wave of thunderstorm cells paint the countryside with fires set in tinder-dry forests. Our weather forecasting is accurate enough to tell us with near certainty the general temperature and, to a lesser extent, the weekly precipitation trends across Canada.

This year, we knew the fire season would be extraordinary, after record-setting temperatures in almost all parts of the country. We should develop programs that develop the teams of firefighters and equipment they need and then use careful but prompt planning decisions to put all of that in place in at-risk parts of the country before firestorms break out.

We have to properly fund FireSmart programs to thin the forests that interface with our communities and even the trees and shrubs around our own homes, to reduce the chance of homes and infrastructure being lost to wildfire.

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The community of Logan Lake, British Columbia literally saved itself in 2021 with a concerted program of forest thinning, FireSmarting backyards and even rooftop sprinkler systems. It can be done. Logan Lake worked at it for over 20 years but on the big scale needed it will take a lot of effort and, quite frankly, a lot of money. The federal government can and should play a big role there.

Things have changed dramatically in the forest fire situation in the last 50 years. When I was going to school in the 1960s in the Okanagan Valley, there were only two serious wildfires in a dozen years. Now we have several every year. This year, we have seen that pattern spread across the country, with huge destructive fires in the maritime forests of Nova Scotia and fires in the rainforests of Vancouver Island.

Wildfires are changing and wildfires are changing our lives. We must change, as well, in our response to these growing threats. The provinces have been doing admirable work in fire-prone parts of the country but it is clear from our experience so far this spring that no part of the country is immune from wildfire. The federal government must step up to provide necessary leadership for the future.

• (2210)

Mr. Bryan May (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to reiterate what he said about firefighters and the amazing work that they are doing and thank them for that work.

I would also like to take the opportunity, while I am standing, to thank the women and men of the Canadian Armed Forces, who are on the ground in every province that is experiencing these horrible fires right now.

He talked a bit about the work that the provinces are doing. I want to just make sure that the House knows that 60% of the missions that we have right now in defence are aid to civil authority. That has been the case for the last couple of years.

I would suggest that we are stepping up, that we are supporting where these climate emergencies are happening, whether it be fires, floods or hurricanes and hurricane Fiona.

Does the member believe that the provinces are pulling their weight and are doing their fair share to prepare for these inevitable climate events?

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, I think the provinces are certainly pulling their own weight.

Some provinces, like British Columbia, have been facing this for longer and more intensely than others, and have put more resources into it. For provinces like Nova Scotia, this is a new thing, so they are in a different place. The provinces have really been stepping up, but one difference between the provinces and the federal government is that they have less of an ability to invest large sums of money into projects and issues like this. The federal government is in a place where we could really help in a national sense.

The hon. member mentioned the Armed Forces stepping in. It would be a good idea to have a special force that would be there to fight fires and deal with other emergencies, a force that is specially trained exactly for that.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I first want to reiterate all my best wishes in solidarity with every community that has been affected in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada because of the current crisis. I understand that this is an important topic. It is actually urgent.

When the NDP requested this emergency debate this evening, the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie said that the federal government should do more and do better, including with respect to planning, training and accessibility to equipment.

I am not sure whether my colleague could inform me about the situation in his home province, because in Quebec, as far as I know, the federal government's response has been swift. I am not saying that the government is perfect, but when Minister Bonnardel in Quebec City asked for help from the Canadian Armed Forces, it took only a few hours for the Minister of Emergency Preparedness to accept the request and send boots on the ground. All in all, crisis management seems to be going well so far.

That may not be the case in the rest of Canada. I would like my colleague to say a few words about that.

[English]

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, provinces are doing well. British Columbia has been facing large forest fire seasons, and since 2015 there has been a relentless series of bad forest fire seasons.

In British Columbia we have developed programs, techniques and processes that gradually get better. There are always things to learn about how to deal with people who have been forced out of their homes. That part of the process has been very disrupting to families, to people. We have learned a lot in British Columbia about that process. We are learning a lot about communication between different teams in the field. There are always things we can learn from each other—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have time for one more question.

The hon. member for Kitchener Centre.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I will start by thanking the member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay for his part in making sure that this debate on these climate-fuelled wildfires came to the floor of the House.

As a biologist, I want to ask the member about peatlands specifically. These are bogs, fens and swamps. I ask about them, because this is one of the feedback loops we need to be mindful of in this climate crisis. Peatlands are only 3% of the world's mass, but they have one-third of the stored carbon.

Could the member talk about the impacts of drained peatlands and wildfires, and how wildfires in peatlands could exacerbate exponentially the climate crisis that we are in?

• (2215)

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, I could talk about this for a long time, but I have 30 seconds. I want to thank the member for Kitchener Centre for that.

Peatlands are extraordinarily important in storing carbon. Also, when they start burning, it is very difficult to put those fires out. They can release huge amounts of carbon dioxide over months as they burn. It is essential that we get at those fires, especially in the boreal forest, very quickly.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, through you to many of my fellow Albertans, what has been happening in the month of May and what continues to happen across our province is truly devastating. The wildfires, the smoke, the devastation and the loss will be with those families for a long time. I know we will never be able to truly rebuild to the point at which they remember where they have those cultural heirlooms, where they have the things that they raised their children with, where they have the mementos from each of those monuments in their life that they can cherish and keep with them, which are now reduced to ash.

We are with those families. We will do everything in our power to make sure they can rebuild. That is why New Democrats and I are steadfast in our support of indigenous communities that have been hit the hardest by these fires.

I want to extend my personal thanks as well to the many men, women, non-binary and diverse folks who serve in our firefighting teams right across the country, but particularly in Alberta right now, who are risking their lives so that community members can save what they can. They are risking their lives to make sure that children may have a place to go back to. They are risking their lives to make sure that communities stay intact. They are certainly unsung heroes, heroes who go home day after day, covered in ash, who may not hear the thanks and gratitude from families like my own and families I visit.

In 2003, my family endured a wildfire in the northeast part of the province of Alberta. At that time I was just a child, living with my family. In just a short time, a 30-minute wind was able to bring in a fire so large that no crew could even get to it. It brought down forests; it brought down power lines; it stopped roads, and it stopped services. We were stranded. I was alone and I was scared. Me, my mum, my dad and my sister were alone, cut off from all roads, with fallen trees on either side of us. We thought surely this would be it. My dad and my mum prayed.

My dad did what he could. His father had built a barn, and he looked after that barn. Inside that barn were saddles, handmade and passed on from generation to generation, from horse whisperers in my family to some of the best rodeo clowns our province had to offer. That history was reduced, burned to ash while my father was reduced to tears.

I remember being evacuated in the arms of a firefighter. He took me in his hands, and without question I could feel his compassion and his need to save us. He put me in a car, put an oxygen mask on my mouth and told me to close my eyes. He told me to sing a song. "Three times," he said, "and you'll be okay."

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Two songs in, I realized finally we were escaping the smoke. Although I had left my family behind, I knew that my mother and my father were going to be okay because people like him were with them, like the firefighters who are with our communities right now. For them, I want to thank the firefighters.

The reality is that it is ongoing and it is still happening today. Whether it is wildfires on the east coast or right across the Prairies, we are seeing the devastation of families like my own who have to go through this. I know that pain of not being able to get back what we once had, but I also know the joy of being able to return home with all of our lives, with the things we cherished most of all, which was each other.

When I went and journeyed just weeks ago to the East Prairie Métis Settlement, a community of which over 80% was reduced to ash, people greeted me with smiles. They greeted me with the kind of generosity and the kind of love that only a community that has withstood the worst could have. East Prairie Métis Settlement is a community of resilient, hard-working, remarkable individuals. When they received that call to evacuate early one morning in early May, they sprang into action. Just four hours is what it took for the entire community to evacuate, in a community that had only one entrance and one exit. That was because of the coordination of the community, not because of any extra help they got. It was because the community knew that this was not a matter of if; it was a matter of when.

• (2220)

The forests in northern Alberta have been sick. On top of that, people have had to suffer gruelling and dangerous temperatures. We used to have a saying, and I am sure many members are familiar with it: April showers bring May flowers. However, there have been no showers; this has resulted in one of the most devastating fires in the history of our province.

When I met with the council of the East Prairie Métis Settlement, its members pleaded with me. They said that in the heat of an Alberta election, they did not receive any support. They looked to the federal government, and they were stonewalled with jurisdiction. They sought support from local municipalities, but they had no resources left to offer.

This community had nothing left, but its members gave it their all. Although they lost over 14 homes, and 80% of the community burned, they saved 20%. That is an immense feat for a group of volunteers, a group of experts who hold within them the traditional knowledge necessary to continue to keep our communities safe.

They are called "wildland firefighters", and it took only 14 of them to save the remainder of the community. This is the same group of firefighters we sent to Quebec, Ontario and right across the globe. Their skills, their understanding of forests and the traditional knowledge they carry are needed now more than ever.

I spoke to East Prairie survivors. I was there the day the evacuation order was lifted, and they took me into their community. What I witnessed was truly devastating.

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I went with families, and it was an amazing moment for some of them. They saw their houses standing. They even saw their dogs, covered in ash but still protecting their land. They were holding their ground as if it were their last stand. They did it as they waited for their humans to come home. That is the kind of love that animals have a power to demonstrate and one that humans often hold back on. It is one I hope we never relent.

I spoke to some of those who lost their homes. A survivor, the oldest elder in the community, came up to me and said that once she got on that bus to go home, it felt like she was going back home as she did the day she left the residential school. She said the fear she had in her heart, and of not knowing what she was going back to, triggered her, and she wept. She found that although there was nothing left of her home, there was so much left of her community. She provided her strength, leadership and kindness to the children, mothers and those who were truly in pain. She offered them smiles, condolences and love, even though she had lost so much. I am truly inspired by that.

That is a story I wanted to share with all my colleagues, because people like this exist in their communities, too. They are worth protecting and investing in; we need to ensure that this climate catastrophe does not continue to wreck their lives.

I know they exist. They had only one ask. They said that as many families as returned home, there was the same number that could not return, because they did not have anywhere to go. They said that \$900,000 is all it is going to take to ensure that all of those who lost their homes have temporary housing until they can rebuild.

We need courage, and we must demonstrate the kind of love we have for Canadians in our hearts. This must materialize as the programs and supports that people who are in need right now need the most. I beg this chamber and my colleagues to truly use the compassion they often speak so much about and turn it into action. The people of East Prairie, Paddle Prairie and Peavine deserve that. The people right across this country who are affected by the wildfires deserve that.

Those wildfires continue to rage every single day, and they are doing it right now, as we speak. I know it is late in the day for us, but those firefighters are going to be working even harder than we are tonight. They are going to be going all night, and they are going to be doing it with the risk of not returning home. I ask that we all keep them in our hearts and in our prayers tonight as they continue to battle raging wildfires across our country, in hopes that help truly comes from this place.

• (2225)

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I too want to convey my thanks to members of the Canadian Armed Forces, who are deployed as part of Operation Lentus. I thank the firefighters as well, who are spanning out across the country to fight these wildfires.

One thing we heard during debate on my bill, Bill C-224, was the impact on firefighters after a wildfire. We heard about the fires in Fort Mac and the impact on firefighters, who are now seeing a high incidence of cancer from a lifetime of exposure in such a short amount of time.

People in Ottawa right now having trouble with respiratory problems because of the smog, which is basically across the country. These wildfires are putting people not just at immediate risk, but also at long-term risk. Therefore, could the member opposite elaborate a bit on the indirect effects we are starting to see?

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, there is no question in my mind of the service put forward by firefighters and first responders in the service they conduct, at the height of the worst conditions and realities imaginable for everyday people. They put their lives at risk. They hold on to that fear, and they manifest courage. What is most important for us to know is that, when they put that courage on, they are also putting on equipment that is risking their lives and that has been found to contribute to cancer.

I am so thankful for the bill put forward by the member opposite, because this is something we are truly united around. We have all had firefighters come join us, and we have all promised them we would do something about what they are experiencing. That is exactly what we are going to do.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I was reading in *Le Devoir* earlier that a “jewel of the Innu nation”, an outfitting camp owned by the Innu government of Uashat-Maliotenam near Sept-Îles on the north shore, was destroyed by fire.

I also read that 80% of indigenous communities in Canada live in forested areas and are among the first victims of this growing phenomenon. My colleague made the connection between climate change and global warming.

I would like him to talk more about what we must do. What is our responsibility as elected members to protect these communities?

[*English*]

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for the question, because it is one I was hoping to be asked. I hope to provide a good response to it on behalf of the many indigenous people who have provided me with the lessons, history and knowledge that go hand in hand with the prevention of these terrible disasters.

In the boreal forest of Treaty 8, Treaty 10 and Treaty 11 territories, there is a tradition of prescribed burns, where indigenous people burn x amount of land in order to prevent an even greater fire from being produced. Without prescribed burns, this fuel gathers, builds and becomes dangerous. That is exactly what happened when we banned the ability of first nations and Métis communities to have prescribed burns; unfortunately, this is still a reality in Canada. If we want to ensure that indigenous people get to the point of restoring the lands, which they have done for thousands of years, we have to make sure that we listen and get laws out of the way that are currently prohibiting indigenous people from practising the traditional ecological work they are supposed to do.

• (2230)

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, could the member for Edmonton Griesbach, as an indigenous leader in this place, elaborate on how differently we would be approaching wildfires and the climate crisis if we were to centre indigenous knowledge and wisdom in doing so?

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for that question, because it is something that we often do not have the opportunity to speak about in this place. Indigenous people have long stewarded Turtle Island, North America, when catastrophes happen, from floods to natural disasters, such as forest fires, as well as huge, immense, prolonged winters.

We have a history, stories and knowledge. The history that is present here and that we often talk about is short. It is a small piece of what Canada is. Canada is an immensely ancient place, a place with tradition and knowledge. Indigenous people have been installed in a position to care for and administer this.

We know about prescribed burns. When we take care of forest fires at a low-risk level by destroying the fuel in the forest early, rather than stacking it up by banning prescribed burns, then we deal with what would become a much worse fire, which is what we are seeing in Alberta today. If we had invested and allowed indigenous people the jurisdiction and the resources to do what traditional wildland firefighting looks like, we would not have had this issue; we would stand a chance.

Hon. Kamal Khara (Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Madam Speaker, before I begin, I would like to inform you that I will be sharing my time with the member for Sudbury.

I would like to acknowledge that I rise in my place here on the traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people. I am very pleased to be able to join in the emergency debate on the wildfire situation in Canada.

I want to begin with two important messages, as these are top of mind for me and, I suspect, for all those here today. First, for all those affected by the wildfires burning across the country, whether they have had to evacuate their home, experienced the loss of a pet or property or had their life upended in some way, I want them to know that the Government of Canada is with them. We are working hard to provide help where it is needed. Second, for the brave workers and volunteers fighting these fires, whether on the front lines as firefighters, police, search and rescue personnel or members of the Canadian Armed Forces, or behind the scenes as dispatchers or staff, we are beyond grateful for their heroic work.

To put things in perspective, as of June 5, which is today, there have already been 2,214 wildfires nationally; approximately 3.3 million hectares have been burnt. We are already in the thick of another severe wildfire season. In many areas, the season is shaping up to be historic. Resources are already stretched to their limits and beyond. I know that many Canadians are understandably concerned and wondering how the Government of Canada is responding.

Emergencies like these are, of course, first managed at a municipal level. If they begin to escalate, municipalities may request assistance from their province or territory. In turn, if the situation continues to deteriorate, provinces and territories may then submit re-

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quests for federal assistance, or RFAs. These are initiated when an emergency event overwhelms or threatens to overwhelm the resources of a province or territory, and additional federal resources are needed to support the impacted region.

Once an RFA is received, the government operations centre leaps into action to coordinate the response, including consultation with provinces or territories and all implicated departments. We received RFAs from the Province of Alberta on May 10 and May 27, from Nova Scotia on May 31 and from Quebec on June 3. We were asked to help with the severe situations under way in these provinces. All these requests were approved.

In Alberta, the Government of Canada has provided resources, including Canadian Armed Forces resources, for an initial period of two weeks, with a possible one-week extension. CAF resources in Alberta include firefighting personnel; airlift resources for tasks that include evacuation of isolated communities; and engineering support, including heavy equipment. There are roughly 150 soldiers in total currently deployed in support of firefighting tasks in the Fox Creek region and Fort Chipewyan. The Government of Canada is also providing resources from numerous departments, including contracting support for supplies and logistics, RCMP response and law enforcement, enhanced Service Canada hours, mobile outreach support and much more.

The CAF resources are also being deployed to Nova Scotia for an initial period of three weeks, with a possible one-week extension. An immediate response unit from Canadian Forces Base Gagetown, New Brunswick, is also available to assist with basic firefighting. Other supports are similar to those being offered to the Province of Alberta, as well as additional air-quality monitoring capacity, deployment of response personnel and assets from the Canadian Coast Guard, support for affected first nations through the emergency management assistance program, and more.

In Quebec, there are now 150 soldiers deployed to the Sept-Îles region to assist with firefighting activities. The Canadian Red Cross and other non-governmental organizations are actively deployed in multiple regions across the country, providing support as needed.

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• (2235)

In addition to our robust, efficient response on the ground to these emergent situations, we are also undertaking donation-matching programs to further provide financial assistance and encourage the same from Canadians. We are partnered with the provinces of Alberta and Nova Scotia and the Canadian Red Cross to match donations and to help provide relief to the most severely impacted communities and families in these areas. Thus far, the campaign in Alberta has already raised \$20 million.

We are also implementing a donation-matching initiative with the Northwest Territories and the United Way to support relief and recovery efforts in several communities. Canadians, as we all know, are known for their selflessness and generosity for a reason, and I have no doubt that they will step up in a big way with donations for their neighbours.

I have just provided an overview of our immediate response to the emergency situations under way across the country. Fighting these fires and addressing their immediate impacts is no small task, but it is only one small part of a disaster response. We know that even after the smoke clears, there lies before us a very long recovery. That is why we have programs, such as the disaster financial assistance arrangements, or DFAA, whereby the federal government provides post-disaster relief supports to provincial and territorial governments, about \$7.9 billion since the inception of the program in 1970, in fact.

The Government of Canada can also cover up to 90% of costs, but provinces and territories have full say over the design and delivery of their recovery plans. Eligible costs might include evacuation, emergency shelter, repairs to public buildings or infrastructure, removal of hazardous material and, of course, repairs to individual homes, small businesses or farms. We know that recovery is not always easy, but we are here to help with financial, tactical and practical support. I want Canadians to know that all governments and partners are working together with their safety in mind and with a high degree of co-operation.

As we head into summer across the country, we are seeing hot, dry conditions, and that has led to very active wildfire conditions across central, eastern and western Canada. There are 413 current wildfires burning. As we continue to see an influx of firefighters and resource-sharing right across the country, I would like to once again take an opportunity to thank all of our partners, indigenous communities, federal, provincial and international counterparts, for their excellent co-operation. We maintain continuous communication, and impacts on communities are being monitored on a 24-7 basis.

Once again, we are grateful for the tireless work of Canadian firefighters on the front lines, behind the scenes and in the hearts of our communities. I thank them, all our partners and Canadians, for staying safe and stepping up to help. To all the Canadians who are impacted by these wildfires, I want them to know that we will continue to be there for them.

• (2240)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the minister for her work on the emergency that

we are in. I also want to thank my colleague from South Okanagan—West Kootenay for calling for this important debate today.

The Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs just wrote an op-ed in *The Globe and Mail* yesterday and cited how Canada is becoming more and more reliant on over 90,000 volunteer firefighters. It also highlighted in its op-ed that, number one, it wants to make sure that the government sends a clear message to firefighters that they are needed, valued and appreciated. It highlighted that the tax benefit for firefighters who do over 200 hours of volunteer work get about a \$450 benefit. They get a \$3,000 tax threshold relief. They have been calling for that relief threshold to be raised from \$3,000 to \$10,000, and the right thing would be to support this. It is identified in my private member's bill, Bill C-310.

Will the government support what is really a small token given the inflationary costs and the costs on firefighters? They are being stretched to the max. Some of them are working right now. On top of the normal work they do, they also fight wildfires. Will the government honour this ask?

Hon. Kamal Khara: Madam Speaker, I think that every single member in this House joins us in first and foremost giving thanks to firefighters right across this country for stepping up every single day in and day out, but particularly during these unprecedented times. I know that all members in this House want to continue to support firefighters.

My hon. colleague, the deputy House leader, has been a champion in our caucus to make sure that we continue to support firefighters and that all brave men and women in uniform will continue to have our support, with her private member's bill.

This is an unprecedented time. As we have done before as the government, we will continue to support all members of communities but particularly those who are risking their lives every single day to keep us safe.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, earlier this evening, I had the opportunity to personally thank the Minister of Emergency Preparedness, who has been providing the opposition parties with daily updates on the situation in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada. We are very grateful for that. When Minister Bonnardel requested federal assistance, the federal government was quick to respond. That is reassuring.

What is not so reassuring, however, is to hear the Canadian Prime Minister and the Quebec premier say that the current situation could continue throughout the summer. This is an abnormal situation that will become increasingly normal. The local authorities and the provinces are doing an extraordinary job, and I think the federal government's role is to lend its support where necessary.

However, if this situation does become increasingly normal, does the federal government even currently have the capacity and resources to support the provinces?

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[*English*]

Hon. Kamal Khara: Madam Speaker, this has been an all-hands-on-deck approach. We are working in very close collaboration with municipalities, provinces and territories.

We are closely following the wildfires across Quebec. We have been in touch with, of course, the province to ensure that they have all the support that they need. Following requests from the province, we have approved the deployment of Canadian Armed Forces to assist in that response. Officials are also continuing to assess where further available federal resources will be needed.

We know that this has been and will continue to be a very challenging wildfire situation across the country. As in the past, the Minister of Emergency Preparedness has been working very much in collaboration with members of this House to make sure that they are informed of all the decisions that we are making and to make sure that they have all the resources and tools needed.

This is an all-hands-on-deck approach and we are going to continue to support those communities wherever needed.

• (2245)

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to stand in this House and speak on this urgent emergency.

Let me begin by recognizing the incredibly hard work of firefighters and first responders across the country. They have been on the ground fighting these wildfires for days and weeks, working around the clock to keep their communities safe. Today, and every day, we are deeply grateful for their efforts.

We are asking everyone to please keep an emergency kit ready and important documents by the door. If an evacuation is ordered, please follow that direction. If someone has already experienced the unimaginable loss of your home, prized possessions and memories our thoughts are with them. We stand with them at this difficult time and we will continue to work with all partners to ensure everyone affected has the support they need.

As a society we have used this word a lot the past few years, but Canada is facing a truly unprecedented wildfire season. Over 3.3 million hectares of land have burned across Canada. That is larger than the entire country of Belgium. It is just under six Prince Edward Islands. As of June 4, across the country there are 413 wildfires burning, 249 of them are out of control. There have been 2,214 fires to date. The 10-year average for this time of the year is 1,671 fires.

[*Translation*]

We are in constant communication with our federal and provincial partners, including indigenous communities. The impacts on the communities are monitored 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

[*English*]

As we stand ready to support any province and territory that seeks federal funding, including facilitating the movement of firefighters within Canada or from international allies or other federal supports, the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre, or CIFFC, leads coordination of firefighting support across all jurisdictions in

Canada. CIFFC is an independent agency. The federal government supports its work with a \$1.2-million annual grant, and NRCan's experts provide data and advice throughout the fire season. This agency has facilitated the movement of hundreds of firefighters and firefighting equipment between provinces and territories so far this year.

Firefighting support is also brought in from allies like the United States, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. We have also authorized the deployment of Canadian Armed Forces in three provinces at their request: Alberta, Quebec and Nova Scotia. While their tasks differ slightly depending on each province's identified needs, support includes helping with fire turnover, mop up, hot-spot dousing as well as logistics and planning support. For the jurisdictions that requested it, airlift capacity is also available in case of urgent evacuations.

However, federal support does not stop there. We are taking a whole-of-government approach to this emergency. When our provincial and territorial counterparts ask for help, it is all hands on deck. Indigenous communities on reserve, which can be particularly vulnerable to wildfires and other natural disasters, are supported during emergencies through Indigenous Services Canada's emergency management assistance program. ISC works with communities on reserve and can help pay for both response and the rebuilding costs incurred when there is a wildfire evacuation.

The Canadian Coast Guard has made personnel and equipment available. This includes helicopter assistance, as requested and based on asset availability, to transport essential supplies in and out of affected regions, as well as the transportation of people for non-emergency but necessary movement.

ESDC and Service Canada are working hand in hand to ensure those affected by wildfires have access to federal services and benefits. We are prepared to offer emergency contracting support for goods, services and temporary accommodations.

Our government has also agreed to match donations made to the Canadian Red Cross's response in Alberta and Nova Scotia and to the United Way's response to the Northwest Territories. With the respective provinces' and territories' support, this means that every dollar will be turned into three for those who need it most.

These are just a few examples of the federal resources that have been activated or are ready to respond to provincial and territorial requests. Also, we are always prepared to work with our counterparts to address any gaps that arise and pose a potential risk to Canadians.

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I will note that our work will not end once the fires have been extinguished. Through the disaster financial assistance arrangements, the federal government is able to provide extensive financial support to provincial and territorial governments in the aftermath of large-scale natural disasters. When Fort McMurray experienced the devastating wildfire season in 2016, for example, we provided over \$374 million to support the recovery. We are prepared to work with all provinces and territories that seek support through this program as they rebuild.

This is an issue that goes beyond partisanship. Excellent work is being done across the country at all levels of government. In this emergency, we are all focused on what matters most: the safety of everyone in Canada. As we move into summer and the rest of wildfire season, we will continue to put Canadians first.

• (2250)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member gave a good overview of the federal contributions to wildfire fighting in Canada.

In my speech, I mentioned the fact that a growing number of experts, including Mike Flannigan, have been calling for the formation of a dedicated firefighting service in Canada; something that would complement what the armed forces do, but people who are specifically trained for this. He suggested maybe 20 teams of 20 each, which is about how many people we bring in from other countries every fire season. I am wondering if the member could comment on that idea, which would be available to all provinces as needed.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: Madam Speaker, we are doing many things.

One of the things we are doing is investing to train more community-based firefighters across the country this season. That includes 300 indigenous firefighters and 125 indigenous fire guardians. We are also receiving hundreds of firefighters from other countries to support our efforts over the coming days and weeks.

It is a multipronged approach, and it is something we continue to gauge and respond to as the needs vary through this emergency situation.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Sudbury for her speech and her concern. Sudbury is like the Rouyn-Noranda of Ontario. I feel like I know her riding almost by heart, even though it has been a number of years since I went to see the Big Nickel as a small child.

One of the issues that is of great concern to people in my region is air quality. I am sure the same is true in Sudbury. Even in places where there are no fires, the air quality is clearly being affected. As bad as it was today in the Outaouais and Ottawa region, it was even worse at home over the weekend.

Are there any measures the government could take to improve air quality and ensure that it helps the most vulnerable people, especially seniors?

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question and his comments on Sudbury.

We know that the fires can have an impact on health and air quality for Canadians. That is very important. I know that we are working closely with the leaders in our health care system who are monitoring the situation and giving a lot of advice to those who are affected by the smoke.

[English]

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I want to start by recognizing and appreciating the member for Sudbury and the federal government's response to deploy resources across the country, as well as its collaboration across parties.

I want to ask the member a question. She mentioned the term “all hands on deck”, and I think that is the response we have seen in this emergency. However, we also have to recognize that we did not just fall into this. It has been decades in the making. It is a climate crisis that is fuelling these wild fires. It is not one party. We have never had an “all hands on deck” response to this climate crisis.

Could the member reflect on the human condition of why it is that we are so much better at getting all hands on deck in emergencies than proactively ensuring that we do not end up in this place in the first place?

• (2255)

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: Madam Speaker, we know that the situation today has been caused greatly by global warming, which creates higher temperatures and more dry fuel available to burn, which results in more persistent hot and dry weather. That leads to fires that intensify and spread much faster.

That is why it is our important that our plans and our ability to manage these situations need to evolve. We have seen the evacuations of tens of thousands of Canadians across the country. We need to keep evolving our plans. As our expertise grows, so does that of the people who are responding, as well as the policymakers who are supporting them in the work that they do.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for South Shore—St. Margarets.

I am usually pleased and honoured to rise in the House to speak. Often, I am called upon to speak to issues of the day. I am always grateful for the opportunity I have to speak out against things that I find unfair and to debate important issues. However, that is not the case tonight.

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I am not at all happy to give this speech. I am sad, even. I have been very troubled and worried these past few days. I am, of course, talking about the wildfires that are raging across the country.

The wildfires have been the top news story for a few weeks now. The Government of Canada has never seen wildfires so early in the season. All these fires are having an unprecedented impact. If this unfortunate situation keeps up, Canada could see its worst wildfire season on record. All Canadians are worried about these wildfires. They are also worried about what will be left when this is all over.

In all, there are 400 active forest fires across Canada right now. Of those 400 fires, 155 are burning in Quebec. The surface area of the forest in Quebec is as large as France. In other words, the vast majority of our province is covered in forests and trees.

Let us consider the following: When the province is the victim of Mother Nature and we are struggling with these types of fires, it is a real environmental and human disaster. Fires are burning across the country. I am deeply saddened by this situation.

I want to talk about the regions of Quebec such as Saguenay and Abitibi that are experiencing the worst of the forest fires. An article on Radio-Canada this morning showed that Abitibi—Témiscamingue is the most affected region in Quebec. Schools will likely have to close tomorrow because the air quality has become too toxic. In fact, I want to commend the work of the member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue who is leaving this evening for Rouyn-Noranda. Everyone has to pull together in tough times like these.

The second most affected region is mine, Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean. I just came back from a weekend in my riding and people back home are really stressed out. There are currently 30 or so active fires in the region. Some are in my riding, but the majority are in the riding of my colleague, the member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

This is not an easy time for us as MPs, because we feel powerless in the face of disasters that are bigger than us. Citizens are coming to us for help. Sometimes those citizens have lost their homes or had to be evacuated.

The first fire to break out in my constituency was in Ferland-et-Boileau. As luck would have it, it started the day after celebrations for the 60th anniversary of the local forestry co-op. This small municipality is surrounded by trees, which put the residents particularly at risk. In all, 40 homes had to be evacuated because the situation had become too dangerous. Families were left homeless for several days. It is all very stressful for parents and children.

The second major fire took place in Rivière-Éternité, near the Montagne à Adrien, a few days ago. Once again, the forests in this small municipality fell prey to the flames. Approximately 30 residents were evacuated.

• (2300)

Furthermore, Marie-Médiatrice elementary school had to close for the day for safety reasons. Four water bombers and forest firefighters battled the fire for many hours. It was not easy to control the fire on the side of the mountain.

At present, fires are raging in the riding of my Bloc Québécois colleague, the member for Lac-Saint-Jean. A dozen fires are active in the ZEC Des Passes.

No emergency evacuation plan has been implemented, but the ZEC is ready in the event that a state of emergency is declared due to the smoke caused by the fire becoming thicker. The fire, located near Notre-Dame-de-Lorette in Lac-Saint-Jean, covers more than 5,600 hectares of forest. It is the largest fire in the region.

The spokesperson for SOPFEU, Josée Poitras, mentioned that this fire is deemed to be “out of control”. This is a great concern but, luckily, this very competent organization provides an update of the situation every hour to limit the damage before intervening directly with methods to stop the destruction, such as fire lines.

Fortunately, there has been no loss of life reported from the forest fires burning at the moment. That is due to the excellent work of the forest firefighters.

I would like to commend them for their bravery and their extraordinary efforts. Of course I would also like to thank SOPFEU, whose mission is to protect the forest as well as the infrastructure. I would also like to once again thank all the personnel who provide assistance to disaster victims and ensure that citizens feel safe, despite the conditions. They are essential and indispensable in these times of crisis.

Not only do fires devastate the vegetation and the wildlife, but they also mess up the air. Air quality in much of the province will be affected. Many schools are having to close their doors, because the situation is critical.

Quebec has requested 480 firefighters, 30 command teams and four water bombers. Ottawa needs to listen to what Quebec is asking for, because our province is in a very bad situation right now. The federal government needs to make an unwavering commitment, and it must be based on what Quebec is asking for.

To Canadians across the country, I want to remind everyone how important it is to refrain from going into the woods unnecessarily, and especially to not start any fires at home. The danger is real. Everyone needs to appreciate how serious this crisis is and work together.

• (2305)

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to begin by thanking my colleague from Chicoutimi—Le Fjord for his kind words and for standing in solidarity with all regions of Quebec. I thank him for his kind words about my colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean.

As he mentioned, now is the time to stand together. People in our communities are very anxious.

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I would like the member to talk about coordination between public safety officials and the SOPFEU and how they are working on the ground. I would also like him to talk about the important role that we, as elected officials, can play as a liaison and the importance of communications and local media.

I would like the member to talk about how to get the message out and to share the necessary information to keep people safe.

Mr. Richard Martel: Madam Speaker, I think it is very important to listen, to be present on the ground if the situation becomes more urgent, to talk to the mayors across our ridings and to be aware of everything that is happening. It is also important to know where the SOPFEU is at with its operations and so on.

I think those are very important things, but we also have to stay connected with the people and stakeholders in our region in all of this.

[English]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, first, I want to thank my colleague for highlighting how the smoke and the air pollution are impacting people due to fires. In fact, we were just at the all-party climate caucus, where we had representatives of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment. They highlighted that seven million people worldwide, and this is according to the World Health Association, are dying from air pollution. It is rivalling smoking, which is at eight million. It is also contributing to 18% of premature deaths. The impact is severe on human health.

We know we have to mitigate climate change, but actually putting out fires quickly is an important role and responsibility in doing that. Does my colleague agree that the federal government needs to ensure that we have equipment so we can tackle these fires quickly?

I think of Coulson Aviation, from my riding, which is fighting fires in Argentina and Australia. It works with the federal governments there to refit their aircraft. We know the Canadian military needs to have the right equipment if it is going to support provinces in need as we see fires pop up in different parts of the country.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Martel: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the very good question.

We see the importance of having adequate equipment when certain disasters happen or situations arise. The problem is that often the situation has not been anticipated, and we do not think about what equipment is needed when a disaster occurs. Of course, we must be very vigilant. My colleague is right. We must also be aware of the fact that climate change is real and we must all work together to reduce CO2 emissions.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I would first like to say that my heart goes out to everyone in the riding of the member for Chicoutimi—Le Fjord who is affected by these forest fires.

However, I have to ask the member something. These fires are fuelled by the climate crisis and the member's party moved a mo-

tion earlier today to remove the most basic climate policy we have in this country, which is a price on pollution.

Does the member see a disconnect between his deep concern for his neighbours during this emergency and his party's motion earlier today, which would weaken our response to the climate crisis?

• (2310)

Mr. Richard Martel: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Of course we need to reduce CO₂ emissions, but we can do that with new technologies, not with a carbon tax. It is important to keep one other thing in mind. I would like to know what target the Liberals have met since coming to power. We often get fingers pointed at us, but it is important to look at what the Liberals have done. Canada ranks 58th out of 63 of the worst polluting countries.

[English]

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, we have heard some very good speeches tonight on this important issue. I would like to start by thanking the member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay for bringing this forward.

I would like to make more of a personal comment. I am not the first member of Parliament who has had to deal with wildfires in the riding, but two of the largest wildfires in Nova Scotia are in my riding, and one of them is still out of control. Therefore, I would just like to personalize this a bit with what the last eight days have been like in my province.

Going back to Sunday, May 28, two Sundays ago, as members of Parliament, most of us were either flying to Ottawa to come here to do our jobs, as we do every week, or we were preparing, like I was, to leave early on Monday morning. It was late in the afternoon of that Sunday when my phone started to go with an alert that there was a fire and an evacuation going on 10 minutes from my house.

There was a major fire in the community of Tantallon, which I am sure nobody in the House had ever heard of until eight days ago. It is a wonderful community up behind exit 5, as we call it, off the 103. It is the exit where people get off to go to Peggys Cove and St. Margarets Bay. It is a community of families and young families. There are three day cares there. There are a lot of retired folks, including quite a few retired RCMP and Canadian Armed Forces personnel, up there. There is an RCMP detachment in Tantallon, right there by the Sobeys. There is one street in and out of this subdivision, and it has no fire hydrants. On the back of it is the wilderness that is Nova Scotia. It is about a 15-minute drive from downtown Halifax.

That day, the wind was about 40 kilometres an hour in Nova Scotia. On the first evening of the evacuation on that Sunday, I went to the newly opened comfort centre in the Black Point fire hall, which is about 30 seconds from my house. It was opened quickly by one of the two volunteer managers of the community centre, Janet Fryday Dorey. As people streamed in, they were really just in a state of shock.

I talked to one couple who were sitting on their porch at about 3:30 in the afternoon having a beverage, as people tend to do after they have cut the lawn or done their chores on the weekend. They were sitting there and said that in so-and-so's back yard there was a fire going. Then the fire started to get bigger and within moments it had spread to their house and very quickly, because the winds were 40 kilometres an hour, it spread to the next house. The couple said, "We'd better get out of here". They quickly got in their car and left. There was a roofer working on a roof next door who saw the fire happening, got off the roof and started to knock on people's doors to get them evacuated.

When they came in, they were saying they did not know what was happening, that their neighbourhood was on fire and they did not know where to go or what they would do. This was not a comfort centre where people could sleep. It did not have showers. Community members started to come in, saying, "I have a room" and "I have a place for somebody to stay if they need it." People from a couple of local inns in Hubbards came in and said, "If there is anyone who is evacuated, they can stay here for free." Then food started to arrive. For Nova Scotians and most Canadians, food is the first response to a crisis, and food started to come in so that people had food to eat.

I was there until about 11 o'clock at night. I got home when the centre closed. My cellphone rang, and it was the Minister of Emergency Preparedness calling on a Sunday night. On that first night, he phoned me, the local member of Parliament, to ask what was happening from my perspective, which I greatly appreciated. I was still a bit in shock.

● (2315)

I knew there had been a fire starting in the south of my riding two days before. It started around a lake. I also knew that on that same day, 20 minutes down the road in a community called Chester Basin, another fire had started on Beech Hill Road. It was out of control, and the winds were blowing at 40 kilometres an hour.

This modest fire in Shelburne County on a lake started on Friday night, May 26, at a party on a lake, when a fire was set to keep people warm. It was accelerated by the wind that Sunday and started to spread across the county.

The next morning, the deputy fire chief of Halifax and the Department of National Resources were holding a media briefing to say what was going on. That was in Tantallon for the fire in Tantallon, not the Shelburne one. There were over 100 fire trucks from around the province on the scene in Tantallon, where in the space of two hours, over 16,000 people had been evacuated from their homes and had to find a place to live temporarily.

The fire only got worse on Monday and Tuesday. In Shelburne County, the fire doubled in size every single day. If anyone knows

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Shelburne County at all, it is the big lobster fishing community in the southern part of my riding. There are two main towns and a lot of villages. The two main towns are the town of the Shelburne and the town of Barrington. This fire spread between the two of them. They are 30 kilometres apart. Over the next few days, half of that county was evacuated.

That fire is still out of control. It has grown to 25,000 hectares, or 65,000 acres. Luckily, we had some rain on the weekend and it has not grown. It grew a bit on Sunday, but it has basically been stable. Some 5,000 to 6,000 people in that community were evacuated.

Part of the fire in Halifax spread into the riding of Halifax West, and over 20,000 people were evacuated in Nova Scotia. During the week, while we were fighting the fire in Shelburne, an additional fire began behind the town of Shelburne, and another one in East Pubnico.

There were a number of volunteers at the comfort stations. The Red Cross was running the comfort station in Shelburne, and the Salvation Army was feeding and running a station for the firefighters. My lead constituency assistant is a volunteer firefighter and has been fighting this fire every day since it started in the woods. I was back in the woods with them. They brought me back one night.

We had communities shut off. We had firemen shut off. Firemen had to drop their hoses in communities like Clyde River and run for their lives to get on their equipment to escape the speed of this fire. It is feet down in the Earth now. It is a fire we are going to be dealing with in Shelburne County for months and months to come.

The Halifax fire is 100% contained. There are still about 5,000 people evacuated in Halifax. The amount of work that has to happen to allow the rest to go back is huge in terms of determining safety, determining water quality, because most are on wells, and restoring power. The premier, the minister of emergency preparedness provincially and the federal Minister of Emergency Preparedness have been working well with all of the municipal officials as one team.

This is unprecedented. We have never had this happen in Nova Scotia. There was no playbook for dealing with a suburb of Halifax burning at the same time as the largest fire in our province's history in Shelburne County.

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• (2320)

I just have to thank all the firefighters and all the first responders, as well as all the volunteers who are still helping to feed the firefighters. I ask for the patience of all those who are still evacuated; I ask them to please not go back until the evacuation orders are lifted. It is not safe. There is no going around it on an ATV or by boat. People will put themselves and others in harm's way if they do that. I ask them to please listen to local officials so we can deal with this as expeditiously as possible.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is wonderful to get that first-hand account of what not one, but two, big fires can be like in the one's neighbourhood. I know these are not everyday occurrences in Nova Scotia.

I would like to ask the member to give further detail on how Nova Scotia has been handling this. How has the federal government been helping? Can he share some ideas on how we can do this better in the future? We have parts of Canada that do not deal with fire on a daily basis. In the midst of it all, would it be better to have some federal resources to call on immediately? That way we would not have to wait a day or two, as Nova Scotia did, even though we were trying hard.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, that is a great question. In everything, we can always do better, but in this case, because this was so unprecedented, I think things came together fairly well. I heard, and still hear, enormous frustration from residents of my community who ask why all of it did not happen with a faster response. With 40-kilometre-per-hour winds and this thing rolling through like a freight train, it was very difficult to react as quickly as people wanted everyone to.

The member talked about federal resources. I think that is a great idea. I think one of the things this experience has taught me is that the federal government's role is coordinating and trying to find all the assets that are across the country. Right now, there are not any available. That was a challenge. The federal government should have some ability to have some equipment to add. This is not the first or primary job of the armed forces. We were thankful they could come in, but they are not professional firefighters. They do not have professional firefighting equipment. They do not have water bombers. There were six water bombers that had to come on Friday night from Montana. There were three from Newfoundland and a number from New Brunswick. For Nova Scotia, that will be part of the analysis afterwards. It needs to have a little more ability. I think it is an important area we should be looking at from the federal government to see what kind of resources we could have available more permanently.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member opposite for sharing, with the House, the realities on the ground. I know his riding was hit hard during hurricane Fiona also, so it has not been a very easy time for the residents of his riding.

At the end of his speech, he alluded to a warning for community members to not return to their homes until it was safe to do so. I would like to offer the opportunity for the member to talk about any other advice he would like to give Canadians who may be watch-

ing, in terms of safety advice, whether it be with respect to camping season or avoiding having open fires. Is there any advice he would like to give others, as we are seeing wildfires across Canada, to prevent a situation similar to what his riding is facing?

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, when we have no-burn rules that have come from our provincial governments, saying that people should not burn, or should be very cautious when we have dry seasons like we have, people should not think they can control the fire because they are someone special. That seems to still happen in Nova Scotia during all of this.

These are ridings that rely on their own water, their own wells and septic systems. When people go back, they cannot drink the water; they have to have it tested. The provincial government of Nova Scotia is going to be providing, starting tomorrow, free water testing to make sure that, when people go back, that gets done.

Primarily, people need to think about what they do on their own property. They need to make sure it is clean so there is not material there to catch fire. Most important, I ask people, when we are in this type of situation, to please not be lighting even local campfires or local bonfires at night just because they think they can control them.

• (2325)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia for a brief question.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, since I do not have much time, I will make a comment instead. I really want to commend my colleague and thank him for his personal commitment in the situation in Nova Scotia. I want to commend him and his constituents for their courage and resilience. I think we can all agree that Nova Scotia has not had it easy over the past few years. There was the pandemic, hurricane Fiona, Portapique and now the wildfires. I want to thank him for his work.

During a briefing given to us by the office of the Minister of Emergency Preparedness, the minister said that my colleague was his man on the ground in Nova Scotia. We could see the trust and communication between the minister's office and the members of the opposition, and I think that is a good thing. We all need to work together in situations like these.

[*English*]

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, I do appreciate that this cooperation has been real, but the only way I could do that was to actually be in the communities, as I was, back and forth to Barrington, Shelburne, Tantallon every day. However, there was not courage from me. There is courage in the firefighters and the people fighting these fires. That is where all the courage and the heroes are.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to inform you that I will be sharing my time with the member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

I would like to once again thank my colleague, who is far too humble, in my opinion. Naturally, we are grateful to local authorities, the provinces and everyone who is pulling together right now, but to see a member become involved this way too is unusual. Of course, we are there for our constituents, to reassure them, or at least to try. That is part of our role. However, I think the member's involvement in this case is of a different order.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would like to express my support for everyone affected across the country. We are talking about more than 26,000 evacuees at the present time. The situation is extremely fluid. I think that all members who have risen to speak this evening have reported different figures on the number of fires and on the number of fires currently burning out of control, simply because the situation is changing so very quickly.

The teams in the field, local authorities, firefighters, the provinces and the federal government, which agreed to help the provinces that ask for it, all deserve our acknowledgement.

Early last week, we saw Quebec fire crews lending a helping hand out west. Now we have to bring those people back home because we need to have as many resources as possible all over.

I am starting to look at websites that show a map of Canada and what is happening everywhere. There is data on air quality. What we are going through right now is extremely worrisome.

I really want to give all my support to the people affected. I am thinking especially about my colleague from the north shore, the member for Manicouagan, my colleague from Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou and my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue, who is going home tonight to be with his constituents.

I commend them because when we go through times like this, we wonder a bit about what our role is. It is obviously not always easy. When Quebec was first affected, the Quebec government was in charge of the situation along with SOPFEU and local authorities. As federal members, we were asking what we should be doing.

Not long ago, a tragedy occurred in my riding and civilians were killed. We wondered what we could do in that type of situation. We do not want to hinder the authorities who are doing their job, but it is important that we be there to reassure people and inform them of the information that must be passed on. That is what my colleague was doing before me.

I believe that it is important to repeat messages. I was reading about the potential causes of fires. I know that some are caused by lightning, but we must also mention open air fires and cigarette butts that could be thrown out and start fires. I believe that these messages bear repeating; we also need to make clear that no one should try to be braver than the others, that we should let professionals handle the situation and that we should follow the authorities' instructions.

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I think our role is to be there for our constituents, so I would like to salute the work of my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois and across the country. I know that many members are affected.

I want to reiterate my gratitude to the Minister of Emergency Preparedness and his staff. They have been working hard to keep us, the critics for public safety and emergency preparedness, informed of the situation. They told us from the outset that they were going to communicate directly with the MPs affected, because it was important for them to know what is going on.

I have worked with a number of ministers in the House since 2019. I really want to emphasize that collaboration with the Minister of Emergency Preparedness is always impeccable. It is good to see this level of cross-party collaboration. We can set politics aside in these situations. I think the affected citizens deserve nothing less.

Is it important to have this debate tonight? Of course it is. It is urgent. This situation must be discussed and solutions must be found. As I was saying, most members are out on the ground. Afterwards, they will be able to come back and give us their assessment of the situation. They will have seen first-hand the resources mobilized. They will know what additional resources are needed and what should have been done better.

I know I am not allowed refer to the presence of members in the House, but I am glad to see that the people who have to work on this are doing so while we are discussing it.

• (2330)

I do not know what will come of this debate tonight. We certainly need to talk about it. I am talking about Quebec's experience. Until there is evidence to the contrary, we saw that the federal response was quite quick once the request was made. Are we going to run out of resources? That may be the case. We have to ask ourselves these questions. I think there is a contingency plan under way. We need to ensure we have these resources, particularly given that the Premier of Quebec pointed out this afternoon that the situation is likely to continue throughout the summer. Approximately 3.3 million hectares of forest have burned down so far. That is far more than the ten-year average. Normally, it is about 260,000 hectares. That is worrying. We need to make sure we have the necessary resources.

I think we need to take stock and understand the root cause of all this. Obviously, there is the inevitable link with global warming. We have to ask ourselves these questions. Today may not be the right day for that. The Bloc Québécois feels that the priority is putting out the fires and making sure we have the resources on the ground.

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I am going to talk more specifically about the situation in Quebec, and my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue will provide a more detailed description of what is happening in his region. I can speak on behalf of my colleague from the north shore, who went to be with her constituents on the ground as soon as she heard that residents of Sept-Îles were being evacuated. The situation is extremely worrisome. We are talking about two fires that are very close to each other and are surrounding the city of Sept-Îles. I was told that the wind was out of the southeast but that, if the wind changes, then the whole city could be destroyed. Obviously, that is very worrisome.

I often hear my colleague from the north shore talking about the importance of breaking the isolation of that area. I would imagine that it takes a situation like this to realize how important it is to do that. When we look at the situation that people from the north shore are currently facing, we see that they have a forest on one side, where the wildfires are burning, the ocean on the other side, and the Touzel bridge, which is currently damaged. They are a bit trapped. People are being evacuated by air, mainly for medical reasons. Supplies are going to be sent in to people in some communities that are also somewhat trapped.

We should be asking important questions about these heavily forested regions, which may be more affected than others. I was saying earlier, in response to a speech by my colleague, that the majority of indigenous communities live in forested or wooded regions. They inevitably become the first victims of this growing phenomenon. What are we as elected members doing to protect these communities?

I understand that fire crews are currently focusing on the out-of-control fires that are closest to inhabited communities, and we can understand what that is urgent. However, seeing the photos, the images of fires that are devastating hundreds of square kilometres of forest, makes me very sad. Obviously, the priority is human beings, but it is still shocking to see how much of the forest has been obliterated.

Today, I travelled from my riding to Ottawa. I live just on the other side of the north shore, so I expected the air back home to be thickly contaminated. It was not too bad. Oddly, the closer I got to Montreal and the Outaouais region, the heavier the smog became. Now, even the people living in communities that are nowhere near the fires cannot say that they are unaware of the situation and unaffected by what is happening.

My colleague was showing me a map of his riding. The fires are closing in. For some communities, it is only a matter of time before the fires reach them. Obviously, this is worrying. More than 780 international firefighters have been or will be deployed on the ground. President Macron will be sending approximately 100 firefighters and fire experts, particularly to Sept-Îles on the north shore. Firefighters have come from South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and the United States. The Canadian Armed Forces have also deployed soldiers and military personnel to lend a hand. The scale of the situation is obvious. I hope we are ready to face what is coming.

• (2335)

[*English*]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for the update on the situation in Quebec, especially around Sept-Îles.

When I was getting prepared for my speech tonight, I was looking at the long-term forecast for the rest of the season across the country, and what really stood out for me were the areas that will be affected. The hottest, driest areas were in northwestern Quebec, northeastern Ontario and basically all of British Columbia. Until now, British Columbia has largely escaped fires, at least west of the Rockies, except that one started just north of my hometown this afternoon.

I am wondering if the member could perhaps talk more about the mid-term and long-term consequences of a fire season like this. What do we need to do to be more prepared?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent question. I was watching the news on the weekend and the woman who does the weather. She spoke about the air quality in certain regions.

I thought to myself that it was not normal to be speaking about that. Is that the new normal? Will the weather forecast now be about the rain, the sunshine and the air quality?

This has a huge impact on people and human health. Scientists have been saying so for a long time. Climate inaction will be more costly in the long term. The costs to human health will be enormous.

I was saying earlier that this may not be the time to talk about causes or point fingers, but I believe that we have a lot of work to do. We must do more and we must do better, especially when it comes to climate change. The fact that we are already at adaptation and mitigation is not a good sign.

[*English*]

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, I again would like to thank the member for her kind comments.

One of the experiences we had, as I mentioned in my remarks, were areas where there was only one road in and one road out. The evacuation on the north shore of Quebec, the Minister of Emergency Preparedness explained to me the other night, was a big challenge because 10,000 people had to go through one road and one bridge, and that bridge had been damaged.

What does the member think we can do to better plan and look at these communities in a different way to provide assurances or ways to have alternative exits in case we face this again, which we will?

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• (2340)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Madam Speaker, that is exactly what I was saying earlier. The people of the north shore are practically stranded by the fire. They have the forest on one side and the sea on the other. The Touzel bridge has been closed for other reasons since last week, and the Rio Tinto rail line that runs north has also been damaged.

I was talking earlier about opening up the region. We are going to have to adapt our infrastructure, even in remote regions. It is just wrong that such a large community would have no emergency exits. I often say that my riding is big, at 15,000 square kilometres, but Manicouagan is a different story. It is immense. These people could find themselves completely cut off. It just does not make sense. Investment in this infrastructure absolutely must be considered right away, since it really should have been done long ago.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I thank my dear colleague, the member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia. She speaks the truth, as always. There is just a slight difference between us, or maybe not. I am talking about the new normal.

We are currently seeing a global temperature increase of 1.1 degrees Celsius. We need to avoid an increase of 2 degrees and, if possible, keep it at 1.5 degrees.

I do not think this is a new normal, but the writing is on the wall. We are now in a situation where it is almost impossible to imagine that we can keep it at 1.5 degrees. We are already at 1.1 degrees. I think that in the future, we will look back wistfully on the summer of 2023.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Madam Speaker, it is always daunting to answer a question on the environment and climate change from my colleague, who knows so much about the subject.

I was talking about climate change adaptation and mitigation earlier. Unfortunately, some changes are already at a critical point, already irreversible, and we are going to have to live with that, unfortunately. As she said, we may have missed the boat on temperature.

Is Canada's climate change plan enough? Certainly not. Are the plans of other major countries sufficient? Certainly not. We should have done better.

Now we are at the adaptation stage. What are we doing to adapt to these new realities? Earlier, we were talking about adapting infrastructure. Some essential infrastructure is under threat. There is certainly more to be done in this area.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to a subject that is vitally important to my region of Abitibi—Témiscamingue and all areas of northern Quebec that are dealing with raging wildfires.

As my colleague mentioned, I am going to get back on the road following this evening's debate. It made sense for me to be here today. It gave me an opportunity to talk to many members, particularly on the government side, who are stepping up. I think that enhances the work that we can do as elected officials, and I thank them for it.

I stand before my colleagues with a heavy heart and a deep sadness to talk about the areas that have been ravaged by fire and the people who live there.

Many of the fires were caused by lightning, but human activity also contributed to the situation. The fire, which has a mind of its own, is laying to waste our peaceful forests, leaving in its wake widespread destruction reminiscent of an apocalyptic movie. One need only look at the photos of cities in Abitibi—Témiscamingue, northern Quebec, the north shore or Lac-Saint-Jean, where the sun is hidden behind a haze of smoke and where you can smell wood burning a hundred kilometres away from the affected areas.

In these areas, where nature is lush and vibrant, there are now only ashes or burning memories. The majestic forests that shelter an incredible diversity of animal and plant species will be reduced to blackened stumps and silent cries.

There is something far more precious than the trees and flowers that have been ravaged by the flames: the human lives that have been affected by this tragedy. After being evacuated, many families are waiting to find out whether their home and their belongings avoided the worst. Many people are waiting to find out whether the lands filled with their memories will still be there after the fires have gone or whether loved ones will be affected. Lives have been disrupted, dreams are now on hold. My thoughts are with the Clova community.

Through the darkness of the smoke, the light of solidarity has guided us. The people of Abitibi—Témiscamingue, of the north shore and of every region in Quebec stand together. The people of these regions have joined forces to face adversity.

Firefighters are on the front lines. They are fighting fires, facing the flames and prepared to fight to save communities. Volunteers are working alongside them. Armed with machinery and backhoes, they are putting their know-how at the service of their community. Thousands of unknown heroes are volunteering without expecting anything in return.

Police officers, first responders, municipal authorities and SOPFEU are there. They are making preparations and assessing the risks. They support one another to protect people's assets and ensure everyone's safety.

In addition, there are all the people in the community who are helping out, offering land, housing, food or a cot. They are ready to lend a helping hand to save animals, especially in farming areas, by working together, supporting each other and sharing tears, suffering and worries. The solidarity of Quebec regions is a source of inspiration to us all. This solidarity will continue to be essential for our communities until the last fire threatening them is put out.

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I would like to take this opportunity to provide an update on the situation back home in Abitibi—Témiscamingue. When a disaster of this magnitude occurs, information is often hard to come by. I would like to salute my brother Philippe, who is a regional director with the Quebec department of transport. He was able to reassure me on certain points and give me the facts, which is always important.

An important meeting was held yesterday under the leadership of the Conference of Prefects of Abitibi—Témiscamingue and Sébastien D'Astous, the mayor of Amos and prefect of the Abitibi RCM. Also at the meeting was Danielle Guimond from Quebec's public safety department, which was reassuring. However, this meeting also made us realize the amount of work that needs to be done on the ground.

Of course, I want to recognize the work being done by SOPFEU, and especially Sylvain Labelle, who coordinates its operations. There is also the Abitibi-Ouest RCM and its prefect, Jaclin Bégin, as well as Norman Lagrange, who was on the ground to set up one of the camps in La Sarre.

Today my colleagues may have heard for the first time in their lives the names of the towns of Normétal and Val-Paradis. Both communities were threatened by the flames and had to be evacuated.

I also want to commend all the elected officials in Abitibi—Témiscamingue who are rallying together, particularly my provincial counterpart Suzanne Blais, the MNA for Abitibi-Ouest, with whom I have had discussions.

The real work will begin once these fires are put out. Many forest communities may have seen their livelihoods disappear. Nearly 3.3 million hectares of forest have been decimated in Canada. This will require an inner strength that will be seriously put to the test.

● (2345)

Solidarity will guide us once again. We will have to rebuild what was lost and heal the wounds. The regions devastated by fire will need us to help them rebuild and restore hope.

We must invest in fire prevention, improve early warning systems and strengthen safety measures. We must also redouble our efforts to fight climate change and climate deregulation, which increase the frequency and intensity of these natural disasters.

This has a major economic impact. Who knows what the flames will have devoured in our communities or what road or rail infrastructure has been affected? I am thinking of the north shore. Just think about the serious impact that the destruction of fibre optic infrastructure alone has on communication with the rest of the world at a time when people need information. We cannot imagine what an impact that can have.

All of this will take time, effort and, most importantly, money. I know that the governments will step up. The economy of the regions will depend on it.

We must show empathy and compassion to those who have been affected by this tragedy. We must reach out to them, give them our

support and comfort. Together, we can heal the wounds, rebuild homes and help communities get back their *joie de vivre*.

One thing is certain: The forest will need our help the most. It contributes to our economy and our environment. My region centres on outdoor activities, outfitting operations and forestry. The forest has always been resilient, but this time, it may need some help. It is up to all of us to contribute. We need to replant trees, while respecting the principles of sustainable forestry management. Let us remember one thing: Out of the ashes of these apocalyptic scenes, a seedling will emerge, its branches held high.

This is not the first time our forests have been through such an ordeal. I am thinking about a squat little cedar tree on the islands in Lake Abitibi in Duparquet. It has witnessed much history, being more than a thousand years old. It has pretty much seen it all, from climate change and forest fires to the arrival of settlers in Abitibi—Témiscamingue, all the way back to the coming of the Anishinabe first nations. It still stands there, proud and tall, just as Quebecers in our region will stand proud and tall after this difficult time, ready to rebuild and ready to reforest to help our Quebec continue to prosper.

As I have a little bit of time left, I will continue to name those involved. The armed forces are making a difference in our communities, especially the soldiers from Valcartier who have been mobilized. The Union des producteurs agricoles has made itself available to the people who have been asked to support the cattle that are particularly affected in Abitibi-Ouest and to try to find refuge. There may be some assistance in that regard. Due to the lack of resources in small municipalities, they will require a helping hand.

Once again, I want to salute the excellent work of SOPFEU. I want to point out the excellent work of my colleague, the member for Manicouagan, who was a source of inspiration in the current situation. In Abitibi—Témiscamingue, I feel somewhat like the little white house in Lac-Saint-Jean on the weekend. It is as though the entire neighbourhood was burning, but only my house was unaffected. We could smell the forest fire in Larder Lake in Rouyn-Noranda, which is about one hundred kilometres away.

Of course, when speaking of Chapais and Lebel-sur-Quévillon, there is everything that is happening in the riding of my colleague from Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou. The fire was 500 metres from the Nordic Kraft mill and could have had devastating consequences given all the potential explosive products on site.

There are the indigenous Anishinabe communities of Lac-Simon and Kitchisakik; Louvicourt, which is the gateway from Abitibi—Témiscamingue to the rest of Quebec; Val-d'Or, which has had evacuation alerts; the people of Normétal and their mayor, Ghislain Desbiens, who have had to mobilize; Saint-Lambert also had an alert; Saint-Dominique-du-Rosaire and its mayor, Christian Legault, whom I would like to acknowledge and to whom I spoke briefly today, where fires broke out and were quickly brought under control; La Reine and Fanny Dupras, with whom I have frequent discussions. I want to say thank you and bravo for their resilience and for welcoming the SOPFEU teams.

All of this unimaginable work is being done in collaboration. Solidarity remains perhaps the most important value under the circumstances.

• (2350)

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his intervention today and for providing us with information about what is happening in his region.

Today, I have been spending a lot of time thinking about people in Alberta, of course, my home province, and certainly about the indigenous groups in northern Alberta, such as Chief Adam and the group in Fort Chipewyan. We know that people in remote communities, indigenous communities, are much more at risk for wildfires due to their location. I wonder if the member could speak a bit to that.

I know my colleague brought up, earlier, the idea of FireSmart programming and ways we can prepare our communities for forest fires. I wonder if he could speak to that a little more.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her excellent speech and her concern about the issue of indigenous communities. Of course, it is very difficult for me to suggest concrete solutions at this point, but, certainly, some will have to be found.

It makes me wonder about the economic model that has been promoted for decades and that may have brought about the result we are seeing today.

The first nations in my riding, particularly the Anishinabe people, are in my thoughts. Perhaps they will be able to share their philosophy and spirituality with us, in the circumstances. Most importantly, we will have to rely on our patience, resilience and strength as human beings. I will no doubt be guided by that.

• (2355)

[English]

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Chair, what the hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue's community and that of the member for Manicouagan are going through right now is very similar to mine.

One of the experiences I had, and it was not a good time but a very difficult time in the community of Shelburne, was that, when the lobster season was ending, I asked the government if it would extend the lobster season to get the traps out of the waters because the lobster fishermen were most of the volunteer firefighters, and they were also evacuated from their homes, so they could not get to their boats and could not get on the water. The government accommodated that and continues to accommodate that.

I was behind the lines with the volunteer firefighters. Most of our firefighters in rural Canada are volunteers. They are putting in 18-hour days around the clock to try to deal with this, and for the rest of the day, they are sleeping at the fire station where they are.

S. O. 52

I am wondering if the member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue could share with us any of what he is hearing about the role of the volunteer firefighters in his community and that of Manicouagan and other communities in Quebec.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, who is co-vice-chair of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology and who is an inspiration to me, especially under the circumstances. As I said, I am going to hit the road so I can become the man on the ground that he has been for the people back home in his riding. He gave us several examples, including the lobster industry.

I see a broader issue here. It is about decentralization. Why can the people themselves not be the ones to decide on the ownership of their resource, in order to ensure its sustainable development? Why can they not be the ones to decide when the season is, based on community priorities and the sustainable management of the stock? I see this as a critical aspect.

The member has reminded us of the human element, of the people who are risking their lives and working such long hours. They will go to the front, literally, and leave their families to help others. I sincerely appreciate them.

The international community is also helping. I mentioned that in an earlier speech. There are people coming from France, the United States, Portugal and South America. I am very touched and inspired by that show of solidarity. I hope that every community in Canada will live in such solidarity. It is happening in Abitibi—Témiscamingue, northern Quebec, Nova Scotia and Alberta.

We have some serious questions to ask ourselves, but the best answer will be to stand in solidarity.

• (2400)

[English]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate my two minutes to speak to this emergency debate on the wildfires, and I appreciate all of my colleagues here tonight.

We are taking up a debate that operates at two levels. We have spent most of this debate on the first level, and that is appropriate. That first level is the immediate, the now. It is what we have just gone through, which is not over yet. As my hon. colleague from South Shore—St. Margarets pointed out, the idea of forest fires raging in areas of Nova Scotia, my home province, where the month of May is not known to be hot and dry but rather cold, miserable and very rainy, is so unknown to a Nova Scotian that it is rather chilling.

S. O. 52

As my hon. colleague from South Shore—St. Margarets said earlier tonight, the fire is deep, several feet underground still. That is the immediate. That is the now. That is knowing that over the last 10 years in this country, the month of May has had an average area burnt of 150,000 hectares. The last 10 years have already been affected by global warming, so if we were to go back 100 years, it would have been less. This month, May 2023, saw in excess of two million hectares burnt. That is the immediate. That is the now. That is the courage of the firefighters we salute. That is the patience and forbearance of people who leave their homes without question, get to safety and do it in an orderly fashion.

However, I think we also know that right now we are at the very edge of being too late on the larger question of the climate emergency. This place voted that we were in a climate emergency on

June 18, 2019. That same year, Greta Thunberg used fire as the analogy that should have caused our generation and our leaders to do what was required to avoid getting to this point. As she said, “Our house is on fire.... I want you to act as if our house is on fire. Because it is.”

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It being midnight, I declare the motion carried.

[Translation]

Accordingly, pursuant to order made on Tuesday, November 15, 2022, the House stands adjourned until later this day at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 12 a.m.)

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