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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, June 16, 2023

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

CANADA BUSINESS CORPORATIONS ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-42, An Act to amend the Canada Business Corporations Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts, as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

• (1000)

[*English*]

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: There is one motion in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-42. Motion No. 1 will be debated and voted upon.

MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC) moved:

That Bill C-42 be amended by deleting the long title.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise on Bill C-42, an act to amend the Canada Business Corporations Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other acts. I outlined the amendment because we really did not study or work on too many other acts.

Earlier last week, when we finally had time to debate this bill and study it extensively at committee, it was very unfortunate that we had our committee witnesses appear the hour before we were to discuss amendments and go through clause-by-clause of the bill. There were some aspects of the bill that could have been improved had we had more time.

An example is the threshold for significant control. While the government repeatedly claimed that 25% is the international standard, witnesses made clear that it was only a guideline and that Canada could be a leader by reducing it. James Cohen, executive director of Transparency International, noted:

I don't think, for one, lowering the threshold from 25% to 10% and a risk-based approach are mutually exclusive. I think they actually go hand in hand. I would note that the 25% isn't so much a standard as it was an initial global recommendation that everyone just kind of grabbed on to.

Furthermore, when asked if a lower threshold would create unnecessary administrative complications, Superintendent Denis Beaudoin, director of financial crime for the RCMP, stated, "The RCMP standpoint is that the more names and more information, the better. As we're trying to make links in a criminal investigation, it certainly can help." Both Conservative and NDP members of the committee tabled amendments to reduce the threshold for significant control from 25% to 10%. However, they were blocked by the Liberal and Bloc Québécois members.

The next aspect of the bill that could have been improved had we had more time to go through the amendments and hear from expert testimony relates to searchability. The Conservatives tabled two amendments to improve the searchability of the public registry, which were both raised by Transparency International in its submission. The first would have required that the jurisdiction of residence for tax purposes and the name of the corporation be included for each individual listed on the registry. The second would have added specific language to the bill requiring that the registry be made available to the public in a searchable format. Other good-faith amendments that were rejected included the inclusion of real estate in Bill C-42 and interoperability measures that could have improved the ability to work with the provinces and territories to have all the data that our law enforcement needs to go after white-collar crimes.

The next clause that was deleted that I think could have improved the bill related to law enforcement access. This amendment would have added specific language to the bill to ensure that law enforcement and other investigative bodies like FINTRAC could access information from the director rather than having to go to corporations individually. It also would have removed a reference to prescribed circumstances in relation to exceptions, ensuring that only minors are automatically exempted from having their information disclosed and that all others must apply for an exemption and prove that it is necessary.

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There was a good-faith amendment brought forward by the Conservatives and recommended by Transparency International related to post boxes. This amendment would have barred individuals from listing a post office box as their address to be made in the public registry. Transparency International and the End Snow-Washing campaign requested that this be included in the bill. Ministry staff assured members that disallowing the use of post boxes is already standard practice at Corporations Canada and that including this language in the bill would be unnecessary. However, that analysis did not account for fact that the provincial registries may have different guidelines. If we are to truly seek interoperability and go after white-collar crime, we have to be more open to explicit language in legislation like this to give law enforcement the tools it needs and to close as many loopholes as possible.

● (1005)

Another good-faith CPC amendment was related to penalties on provincially registered corporations. This amendment would have changed the definition of a corporation in the context of offences to include provincially regulated corporations. This was important to ensure that when we reach a stage of interoperability with all registries, either provincial or federal, all people who are in contravention of the bill, and hopefully future law, are subject to the same penalties and convictions under the Criminal Code of Canada. I will note that the Conservatives, in good faith, did support an amendment that we also tabled to increase the fines for people committing an offence under the corporations act and it was supported. It was one positive aspect of the process at committee.

However, overall, while enemy cannot be the perfect of the good, I think the bill could have used just a few more meetings to hear from witnesses to get it at a stage where we could be really assured that we made the necessary and appropriate amendments. I say that because there was a good-faith commitment from all parties on this legislation to move quickly. I will repeat that it is not good parliamentary practice to have serious witnesses appear an hour before we are doing clause-by-clause, especially when they are bringing forward substantive amendments and have very little time to present.

I will go over some of the positions of the Canadian Bar Association, which had concerns with public access to the beneficial ownership registry and ensuring that Bill C-42 complies with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It noted this in a letter to me:

Individuals have legitimate personal and business reasons for not publicly disclosing sensitive personal information of beneficial owners. Canada should be mindful that businesses will look carefully at the requirement to make information public and determine how and in which jurisdiction they want to structure their corporations.

Public disclosure of additional corporate information may deter corruption and money laundering, and frustrate the efforts of fraudsters to use sham corporate vehicles for criminal purposes. However, it may also increase identity theft...which could undermine the anti-fraud rationale of the registry.

I think we needed to hear more from the Canadian Bar Association to get the balance between personal information being disclosed publicly and the need for law enforcement to have the necessary tools to do its job effectively. Indeed, the letter from the Canadian Bar Association said that a key aspect of this bill is balancing public interests and privacy rights. It noted:

In 2022, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) examined an anti-money-laundering directive...establishing a Register of Beneficial Ownership where some information on the beneficial owners was accessible to the general public. The CJEU held that the directive was invalid because the public's access to information on beneficial ownership constituted a serious interference with the fundamental rights to respect for private life and to the protection of personal data.

Although witnesses did appear before committee, they had very limited time to bring forward all of their amendments. In fact, we only received amendments from Publish What You Pay Canada, Transparency International and Canadians for Tax Fairness on June 8. They outlined a number of really key amendments, some of which we were able to get on the floor at the very last minute. However, again, had there been a week in between hearing from serious witnesses and going through the amendment process in clause-by-clause, the bill could have been a bit better.

For example, Transparency International outlined the verification of identity of a significant individual. It recommended for "the Government of Canada to review Division Two and consider amendments requiring corporations to provide identity documents to the registrar upon request for the specific purpose of verification." Transparency International outlined the need to improve intergovernmental corporations, which was a big aspect of the work we did to study the legislation. It also pointed out, especially in the context of a place like British Columbia, where we see a lot of foreign investment or at least a lot foreign money entering our real estate market and local businesses, that more needed to be done to ensure that the country of residence, the name of a corporation and valid government ID be part of these registries moving forward. As I outlined earlier, it mentioned that post office boxes should be included and should not be used as a place to do business in Canada.

Overall, we did get some good work done on this bill, but a lot more could have been done.

● (1010)

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, corporations, joint stock companies, were conceived almost 150 years back as a means for individuals to pool their resources, de-risk their investments and channel their resources for commercial gains. That is the fundamental reason why these corporations exist. It is not the right of any individual, Canadian or someone outside of Canada, to form a corporation. They do not have this right. They can form a corporation, but the details are not made public.

I would like to ask the hon. member whether he agrees that, because it is a privilege offered by the government to individuals to form corporations, the fundamental details of the names of the shareholders and their citizenships should necessarily be made public.

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, I actually raised the hon. member for Nepean's testimony from the debate we had at second reading during the amendment process. We should do more to ensure that valid government identification is included in the registry, maybe not on the front end that the public can access, but making sure that our law enforcement agents can in fact review that information in a timely manner.

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Indeed, citizenship and current address should be included as a part of these measures as well. I will be encouraging members of the other chamber to look more closely at those aspects of this legislation to ensure that we get it right.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech.

In the United States, the U.S. Congress is currently introducing the same kind of registry. Rumour has it that some elected officials oppose the idea because revealing the source of donations would hurt the financing of their permanent election campaigns. Does my hon. colleague think that this kind of approach could be considered in the House?

[*English*]

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, if we are to compare the way we take information for someone who donates to a political campaign in Canada versus the United States, I think we can rest assured that in Canada, we have a maximum donation of \$1,700 for an individual. No corporations are allowed to donate in Canada, and we have a public registry that is updated on a regular basis by Elections Canada.

I think, in Canada, we have done a very good job of creating a level of transparency so that everyone in our country knows who donates to which political party. Indeed, in America, the arrangement between corporations and donating to elected officials is very different. I am very proud of the Canadian system we have today.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, the thing that stood out to me most about the member's speech was when he said that we should not let the perfect be the enemy of the good in this case. I take his points about the process. I think there are ways that this model can be improved upon; I am also cognizant of the fact that, in order for this registry to be implemented by the beginning of 2024, I believe the legislation has to pass before the end of the month. This will give officials time to implement the will of Parliament on this matter.

I know that there is a sense of urgency because of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine and the extent to which folks think that Russian oligarchs have assets in Canada. A public beneficial ownership registry would be an important tool in pursuing those folks.

In the opinion of the member, should we get this legislation passed by the end of the month in order to allow for this registry to be put in place in a timely way that allows Canada to pursue Russian oligarchs who are hiding assets in Canada?

• (1015)

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, indeed, the member raised some important points. I do not believe that any of the security officials who appeared at committee, in their limited time, referenced a correlation between this legislation and the invasion by Russia into Ukraine.

I think what is important in this registry, as the lawyers from the Canadian Bar Association outlined in their information to the committee, is that we balance the Charter of Rights and Freedoms right to protection of personal information with the need for a public reg-

istry to ensure that we end snow washing in Canada. Indeed, that is a very fine balance. That is why we needed just a few more meetings to get this legislation right and hear a bit more testimony. A couple of meetings, even if we were meeting next week on this legislation, would have been enough to get to where we needed to be.

For that reason, because we were not able to get as far as we needed, we are going to have to push for amendments in the Senate, which is actually going to slow the process down more. We are better off to do our work very well the first time and not the—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country.

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to offer a few thoughts on Bill C-42, which proposes amendments to the Canada Business Corporations Act, or CBCA, and would make consequential changes to other statutes to create a federal beneficial ownership registry. This registry would be, arguably, the most important tool we could utilize to better detect, deter and prosecute money laundering, tax evasion, fraud and terrorist-financing activities.

First of all, I want to congratulate all members of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology for their hard work. They studied a bill with more than 20 clauses, dealing with a highly complex subject matter, and heard from numerous stakeholders who represent a spectrum of views.

Among other factors, the committee heard that the interoperability of the registry is a key concern and is, in fact, a key ingredient to the success of a pan-Canadian beneficial ownership registry. Certain witnesses appearing before committee emphasized the need to ensure adequate alignment, both domestically and internationally. The need for this is obvious, given the transnational nature of organized crime and the complexity and sophistication with which actors can conceal the true owners of different assets. We need to be able to work together to counter this.

Interoperability has many dimensions, but it generally means that Canada not only respects international best practices on thresholds and uses the best available data standard but is also similarly aligned with domestic best practices. Thus, provinces are enticed to join a pan-Canadian registry and information can be shared seamlessly to trace illicit activities across jurisdictions. That is why Canada has adopted the beneficial ownership open data standard, which is an internationally accepted open standard for modelling and publishing information on the beneficial ownership and control of companies. It is used for collecting, sharing and using data on beneficial ownership. Canada's use of this standard would ensure that our registry could communicate and speak using the same technical language as beneficial ownership registries around the world do, as well as communicating with our provincial and territorial partners.

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The standard would also mandate that corporations provide information about individuals who have significant ownership stakes and control in any corporation, thereby empowering law enforcement, the CRA, banks, journalists and the general public to accurately ascertain the true owners of any given company. This will help prevent criminals from using anonymous, numbered corporations, or shell companies, which are sometimes spread across multiple jurisdictions as a shield to conceal the true owners of companies.

Furthermore, I want to highlight the work of the committee in increasing the maximum penalties for those found to have failed to comply with the legislation, with fines now up to \$1 million. This will ensure that there is a sufficient deterrent effect for individuals frustrating the important purpose of the legislation.

The provinces and territories have a major role to play here, because the vast majority of companies are in fact incorporated provincially. That is why I am pleased to see my home province of British Columbia taking a leadership role in response to widespread allegations of money laundering in the province. B.C. has tabled legislation to create its own beneficial ownership registry for corporations, and it has already created a beneficial land ownership registry, which is now in effect.

It is easy to see why action is important. A 2018 report estimated that money laundering has played a role in increasing housing prices by approximately 5% in British Columbia. The lack of knowledge regarding the true owners of over half of the top 100 most-expensive properties in B.C. not only worsens the problem of housing affordability but also raises further concerns about potential tax evasion related to the treatment of principal residences. Furthermore, clear ties have been made between money laundering and the devastating health crisis we are facing in B.C., the opioid epidemic, where illicit funds garnered from the sale of fentanyl and other illegal drugs are laundered through real estate and other opaque means, contributing to the problem.

That is why, in addition to Canada's adoption of the beneficial ownership open data standard, the federal government has worked and continues to work alongside its provincial and territorial counterparts to continue to move the needle ahead on ensuring beneficial ownership transparency in Canada. This collaboration began at the officials level in 2016 and was formalized in a 2017 agreement among federal, provincial and territorial finance ministers. They agreed, in principle, to pursue legislative amendments to their respective corporate statutes that would require corporations to hold accurate and up-to-date information on beneficial owners, as well as to eliminate the use of bearer shares.

In 2019, finance ministers further agreed to “cooperate on initiating consultations on making beneficial ownership information more transparent through initiatives such as aligning access through public registries, while respecting jurisdictional responsibilities with respect to corporations.” The ongoing collaboration has resulted in, among other things, the majority of the provinces making amendments to their corporate statutes to create and maintain a beneficial ownership registry of their individuals with significant control. These amendments largely emulated the 2019 legislative amendments made to the CBCA. This means that, for most businesses op-

erating in Canada, there will be information available on their beneficial owners.

• (1020)

Our ongoing collaboration with the provinces has also culminated in the establishment of a common platform called the multi-jurisdictional registry access service, or MRAS for short. MRAS is a common front-end portal that provides access to all the corporate registries in the country. It was a project adopted many years ago among the provinces, the territories and the federal government, and it represents one of the options to build on in creating a pan-Canadian registry.

Our efforts to harmonize federal and provincial beneficial ownership regimes are an ongoing initiative. To illustrate this, it is notable that, on June 5, Minister Champagne and Deputy Prime Minister Freeland sent a joint letter to their respective provincial and territorial ministerial counterparts, asking them to once again join the federal government's effort to create a pan-Canadian beneficial ownership registry and seeking specifically to understand each—

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I must interrupt the member.

The hon. member for Joliette is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, with all due respect, it is the practice of the House that we do not refer to ministers by name but by their title of office.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I completely agree. I was distracted. The hon. member is quite right; we do not use the names of members.

[*English*]

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Madam Speaker, the letter was seeking to specifically understand each jurisdiction's particular needs and any supports required to facilitate their participation in a pan-Canadian system.

During the committee hearings, requests were heard to lower the ownership threshold to disclosure from 25% to 10%. First, it is important to point out that the decision to adopt a 25% threshold was made in 2018, and it was approved by Parliament in 2019 in Bill C-86.

With that said, the government does not support lowering the ownership threshold from 25% to 10%, because doing so could introduce significant interoperability issues. The 25% threshold makes the most sense for the following reasons: It is in line with the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act, Canada's anti-money laundering and anti-terrorism financing legislation. It also aligns with the beneficial ownership thresholds put in place by Canadian provinces, including Quebec and British Columbia. It is also in line with the ownership threshold adopted in all major jurisdictions in the world, including the U.S., the U.K., the European Union and Japan. Finally, it is compliant with the G20 and the norms set by the G20's Financial Action Task Force.

It should be emphasized that lowering the ownership threshold is not necessary to uncover significant control. Individuals who have a right to or actually exercise significant influence or control over a company are still required to be registered, even if they own less than 25% of the shares.

To ensure the effectiveness of the new registry, it is crucial for Canada to stay in line with domestic and international norms. Otherwise, the data it collects would not be interoperable or comparable; this would create both a significant burden on businesses and a significant challenge in ensuring compliance. Lowering the ownership threshold from 25% to 10% will take us out of alignment with best practices, both domestically and internationally; therefore, it is not recommended by the government.

The lack of beneficial ownership transparency is impairing Canada's ability to combat serious financial crimes, such as fraud, money laundering and tax evasion. It also limits our capacity to enforce domestic and international sanctions and to effectively trace and freeze financial assets. Finally, it is impacting the trust of Canadians and foreign investors in our marketplace.

Our inability to quickly and quietly identify a company's beneficial owner delays criminal investigations; denies law enforcement leads to potential suspects, witnesses and evidence; and impairs the identification and seizure of suspected proceeds of crime. It also reduces the ability of private businesses to protect themselves.

It is clear that the registry proposed by this bill and the interoperability measures that form part of the regime would significantly improve Canada's ability to fight financial crime. It would help public authorities verify owners across corporate layers, help businesses better validate the identity of their trading partners and render more difficult the use of corporations for illicit activities.

Future areas that should be examined to improve our ability to ascertain the beneficial owners of assets include bringing in new requirements for foreign companies doing business in Canada to disclose their beneficial owners, as well as for the Government of Canada to play a coordinating role in assisting the provinces and territories to establish a pan-Canadian land ownership registry. This registry would be able to work in concert with the corporate beneficial ownership registry. It would dovetail the important legislative changes to improve our ability to tackle financial crime that were announced in this year's budget implementation act.

A forthcoming review of the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act will surely identify further

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measures to take. I hope all members of this House will join me in supporting this important bill's passage so that we can continue to improve our ability to protect Canada from financial crime and the illicit activities that it supports.

• (1025)

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon is Canada's number one riding.

I will just note that, during the witness testimony, we heard from Transparency International and the RCMP that the standard practice the government keeps talking about was not actually a standard practice; it was just a norm that became adopted.

I fail to see why the government sees such an impediment to decreasing the threshold, as if it were going to suddenly stop us from doing more work. The RCMP wants it. The leading experts in Canada on money laundering think lowering the threshold is a good idea. As well, in conjunction with lowering the threshold, more businesses, under the federal corporations act, would be included. I should point out that we did not even have a chance to discuss the stacking of corporations in conjunction with the change in thresholds as well.

I do not know why the government is so stuck on not doing this. The RCMP thought it would be a good—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Madam Speaker, I would say my riding is the most beautiful riding in the country.

I talked quite a bit about the rationale for keeping the disclosure threshold at 25%. It is important for it to be seamless in order to operate and communicate with all jurisdictions around the world that are implementing this system. Making sure we are consistent would be very helpful and seamless for the sharing of that information.

I think there are always opportunities to see if this might be changed down the road. I know some jurisdictions are actually now thinking of lowering the threshold. If that were to take place around the world, then I think there would be good rationale for us to emulate that; however, I think, as it stands right now, this is the standard, and it is important for us to be consistent.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, first of all, I invite my two hon. colleagues to come and visit the riding of Joliette. I am certain they will change their minds about how they rank the ridings by beauty.

I would like to congratulate my colleague on such a wonderful, informative speech. He also pointed out that this government's process of working with the provinces has been beyond reproach, and I am grateful for that, as it seems quite rare these days.

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In my opinion, this is really a step in the right direction. However, we are going to have to go further. For example, we need to know the identity of the companies' real beneficiaries, who could be in tax havens. What does my colleague think about that?

• (1030)

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Joliette for his question. I look forward to seeing his riding as well.

That is a good question. We need to be able to determine the identity of the true owners of companies that come from other countries. As I said in my speech, this is a subject that could be researched in anticipation of future amendments to the act. I think this could present problems, because criminals are starting to use very sophisticated methods and they operate in several countries. We need to find ways to fight them.

[*English*]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, there is no debate that I do live in the most beautiful riding in the country.

To my colleague, who is also from British Columbia, I say that there was a really important study done by the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, called “Sharing Risks and Benefits”, and it was by commercial fishers, to ensure that their needs are being met, because we have a broken commercial fishing industry in Canada. On the east coast, we have a local ownership model. On the west coast, we have a concentration of commercial interests.

One of the top asks of commercial fishers in this study was to ensure that we know who owns the quota in our public fishery.

Can my colleague assure that commercial fishers in Canada would know, through this legislation, who owns the quota, so we can better manage our fisheries and ensure that the concentration of wealth actually ends up in the hands of those fishing—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Madam Speaker, I want to wish my hon. colleague from Courtenay-Alberni well. I know there have been some serious issues with forest fires impacting transportation throughout his riding. I wish him the best, and it is good to see him here.

I very much agree with the premise of his question. The fact that we do not know how the quota is allocated is something of significant concern. I certainly support looking into what it might look like to have that quota allocated to the fishermen themselves, not to companies that are perhaps reselling that quota.

Now that we have created this beneficial ownership registry, it would be interesting to see how that might be able to be expanded to the owners of the quota as well, so we can better understand—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, as previously stated, the Bloc Québécois supports Bill C-42. This bill will reveal who is really behind shell corporations. The bill will make it

easier to fight tax evasion, money laundering and the financing of illegal activities.

Furthermore, the process that resulted in this legislation is beyond reproach and respects the jurisdictions and autonomy of Quebec and the provinces. This approach is becoming increasingly rare in Ottawa, and we applaud it in this case. Finally, I would like to remind the House that Quebec already has its own registry.

However, for anyone who believes in tax fairness, surely it is high time we cracked down on tax havens. As members know, by using them, the ultra-wealthy are evading taxes like never before, and so are the big banks, multinationals and web giants. These companies justify their actions on the grounds that their schemes are legal, even though their greed is completely immoral.

I would now like to refer to two economists, Emmanuel Saez and Gabriel Zucman, who clearly illustrate the method in their book *The Triumph of Injustice*.

First, they explain that the legal framework for multinationals has changed little since they were first developed in the 1920s. Subsidiaries of the same multinational are treated as autonomous entities. For example, “Apple Ireland must be considered for tax purposes as a firm of its own, distinct from Apple USA.” Since Ireland's tax rate is half that of the United States, it is in the multinational's interest to transfer its profits there to pay half the tax.

In theory, subsidiaries must exchange goods and services at market value, on an arm's-length basis, as if the entities were independent of each other. In practice, however, they have considerable leeway to shift profits to tax havens.

The principle, which has barely changed, was developed in the 1990s by tax optimization consultancies. It involves the sale between subsidiaries of assets that have no market price, such as logos, brands, management services or financial services.

The economists give some examples:

What's the price of Apple's logo? It's impossible to know: This logo has never been sold in any market. What's the price of Nike's iconic “swoosh”? What's the price of Google's search and advertisement technology? Since these logos and trademarks and patents are never traded externally, firms can pick whatever price suits them.

The firms sell all-in services, that is, a creative intragroup transaction accompanied by a certified “correct” transfer price. Saez and Zucman explain what this means:

Thanks to the proliferation of intragroup transactions conducted at doctored prices, high profits [in the hundreds of billions of dollars] end up being recorded in subsidiaries where tax rates are low, and low profits in places where they are high.

The economists estimate that \$800 billion U.S. in multinationals' profits is transferred to tax havens. That represents 40% of their global profits and 60% of the profits of U.S. multinationals.

Variations on these schemes are made available throughout the world by the Big Four accounting firms, Deloitte, Ernst & Young, KPMG and PricewaterhouseCoopers.

It is always the same thing. Here are two examples provided by the authors:

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In 2003, a year before it was listed as a public company in August 2004, Google sold its search and advertising technology to its own “Google Holdings,” a subsidiary incorporated in Ireland but for Irish tax purposes a tax resident of Bermuda, an island in the Atlantic where its “mind and management” are supposedly located.

Transfer pricing was kept secret, but it was certainly low. Otherwise, it would have had to be declared to the Securities and Exchange Commission. Saez and Zucman estimate the figure at \$700 million U.S., tops, when the same algorithms have, for example, enabled Google Holdings to report \$22.7 billion U.S. for doing business in Bermuda in 2017 alone. That is 30 times more for a single year. Talk about the goose that lays the golden eggs.

Economists have pointed out that, in Asia, Singapore is the location used instead of Bermuda. Its tax rate for multinationals is also nil, or zero.

● (1035)

Here is the second example. In 2004, Skype, which was founded by a Swede and a Dane, transferred the better part of its technology to its Irish subsidiary. However, thanks to LuxLeaks, the leak of confidential documents from PricewaterhouseCoopers in 2014, we know the details of that transaction. The cost of the technology transfer was estimated at 25,000 euros, which is scandalous, given that Skype was bought by eBay a year later in 2005 for \$2.6 billion U.S., over 100,000 times the price of the transfer. Saez and Zucman explain that corporate tax dodging schemes are quite simple. They said the following:

At its core, it involves manipulating the price of intragroup transactions in goods (like iMacs), services (as when a US firm buys “management advice” from an affiliated party in Switzerland), assets (such as Google selling its search and advertisement technology to its Bermuda subsidiary), or loans (as happened during the Netherlands Antilles frenzy of the early 1980s).

In that regard, the Netherlands Antilles frenzy was a sort of dress rehearsal for the use of tax havens. It started in the late 1970s and was banned in the late 1980s. This new corporate tax evasion industry fits within the context of the emergence of the neo-liberal ideology, which occurred at the same time as the boom in tax havens for individuals. Saez and Zucman illustrated that as follows, and I quote:

Here is how it worked. A US firm would set up a subsidiary on the island of Aruba, Bonaire, or Curaçao. It would then have this affiliate borrow money from a European bank at the prevailing interest rate, around 3%, and lend it back to the US parent company at a much higher interest rate, around 8%.

The difference in rates helped shift the profits from the United States to the Caribbean.

As we know, the use of tax havens really took off in the 1990s. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, neo-liberalism triumphed. The new generation of executives focused their corporate role on serving the shareholders exclusively. In the meantime, the share of profits earned overseas doubled from 15% to 30% for American multinationals.

The response from wealthy states was to lower the corporate tax rate, which did not help repatriate their profits. Between 1985 and 2018, the average corporate tax rate was halved, going from 49% to 24%. As the two economists point out, in the early 1950s, corporations paid as much in taxes as individuals. Today, with the tax cuts and the use of tax havens, this ratio has changed dramatically. Busi-

nesses contribute 10 times less than individuals. Back home, in Quebec, this imbalance has been documented extensively by Professor Lauzon.

Multinationals now reign supreme; they artificially relocate their profits to tax havens to avoid paying taxes. The profits they do not relocate are taxed at half the rate they were 30 years ago. Not to mention that they outsource their real activities to countries where the people are underpaid, allowing their profits to swell even more.

The solution to this injustice is first and foremost political. In fact, that is the pretext that multinationals use. According to their rhetoric, all of this is legal. What is more, they undertake a colossal amount of lobbying to keep it that way. Saez and Zucman take issue with that:

It's a weak defense: nothing of substance happens in Bermuda, so it stands to reason that Google has booked \$22.7 billion in revenue in that island to avoid taxes, in violation of the economic substance doctrine.

The authors conclude it will take a revolution in how things are done if we want to change the game, saying, “In need of a Copernican revolution, [the OECD has] been busy refining the Ptolemaic model”.

I therefore invite the House and this government to be the revolution the world needs.

● (1040)

[*English*]

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my riding of Nepean has two rivers, farmland, a greenbelt and a high-tech processing and testing facility. Best of all, we have the best people in Canada, who speak 120 different languages. It is not only beautiful but it is also a mini-Canada.

These days, with the number of corporations being set up, sometimes there is no difference between tax avoidance and tax evasion. The hon. member mentioned the tax havens around the world. I want to pick his brain and get his comments on the global corporate minimum tax that is being proposed, and which would be implemented soon.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, I would really enjoy visiting my colleague's wonderful riding.

I think that the plan to establish a global minimum tax rate is a good solution. I think people were waiting for the OECD or the G20 to endorse it before they moved ahead with implementation. In my view, the fact that the Biden administration is using its influence could help the proposal pick up steam. As far back as 2009, after the last economic crisis, the President of France at the time, Sarkozy, said that playtime was over. Since then, nothing has changed.

It will take something big for words to turn into action. Maybe this time is the right time. Even though 15% is not enough, it is a step in the right direction.

Government Orders

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for informing us, like a good teacher, about the tax evasion issue. I would like him to go into greater detail about one of the points he raised in his speech. I am referring to international lobbying and the large corporations that set up tax evasion schemes.

Is there any way to raise their awareness or simply enact legislation to prevent them from doing these things?

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, just looking at the registry of lobbyists reveals how many times big players like Google, big accounting firms and large multinationals meet with members of this government. It is the same elsewhere. It is astounding.

One has to wonder whether the minister spends more time with them than he does with his children and his family. That definitely needs to change. Obviously, it is going to be difficult. Legislation is needed, but to make these legislative changes, the government has to serve the people, not these big multinationals.

When we think of Paul Martin, who made Barbados a legal tax haven while he was building his clubhouse there, when we think of Bill Morneau, who was the finance minister and whose company Morneau Shepell boasted of selling advice on how to use tax havens on its website, one has to wonder who this government serves.

• (1045)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, we know that arrangements that allow for tax evasion are made in secret, but we also know that the consequences are not secret when governments do not have enough revenue to pay for the services Canadians rely on.

I wonder if my colleague could elaborate on the consequences of not having the tools to expose the arrangements that allow for tax evasion.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, that is an insightful comment and question. I thank my hon. colleague, with whom I am fortunate to serve on the Standing Committee on Finance.

When a Toronto bank reports its profits in the Caribbean, this means unpaid taxes, longer hospital wait times and less school funding. These are directly linked. This is so important. We all remember the tragic fires in Fort McMurray. The IMF said that these fires were causing a recession in the Caribbean, where Canadian corporations and Canadian banks report their profits, because there was a direct impact. That gives us an idea of the situation. It is opaque, but we can indirectly see the scale of the problem. This has to change, but it takes political will. I implore the government to do something about it.

[*English*]

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill C-42 at report stage. I will be talking about themes that have already been explored today.

One of the reasons a public beneficial ownership registry is so important is because Canada, notoriously, is losing tens of billions of dollars in tax revenue every year as a result of tax havens. That is

where Canadian corporations are able to declare their revenue in other jurisdictions, and then either bring that money back into the country or not, without paying any sort of tax. That means, despite corporations doing their business and raising their revenue here in Canada, they are finding ways out of paying their fair share.

That is from a more general point of view and about paying into general revenue that then goes to paying for things such as the Canada health transfer and other important sources of funding that ensure Canadians have access to health care, education and the other important services they depend upon. It is also because these companies are making use of a fair amount of Canadian infrastructure, which Canadians pay for through the public purse, to create the profits they are getting. It is only right that they pay their fair share.

If we look at the share of government revenue that comes from business and corporate tax over the last number of decades, that share has been decreasing considerably against the share that working Canadians are paying. We do end up in a difficult situation that is not financially tenable, where corporate Canada is no longer paying as much of the bill as it used to for government services.

One of the tools to do that is to better define the extent to which tax revenue is being avoided or escaped by corporate players in Canada. Part of that puzzle is lifting the veil of secrecy that so often covers various business arrangements and makes it hard to tell who needs to be held to account for their business practices.

Even though I think it is an interesting idea to have a global minimum tax, which is not to say that means Canada has to have a minimum corporate tax, we have a lot of other competitive advantages that make us an attractive place for investment, and Canada should not sell itself short in that regard.

Nevertheless, even if we did have a world minimum corporate tax, it is not going to address the issues of secrecy that a public beneficial ownership registry rightly addresses. It is also important to say that, in the current context and over the course of the last year or so, the arguments for a beneficial public ownership registry have become even more urgent because there is another side to this story.

When I talk about the veil of secrecy around corporate actors and ensuring they are paying their fair share, that is just one part of the story. We also know that there are malignant actors who are not just getting out of paying their fair share of taxes, but who are doing far more. I think of some of the Russia oligarchs who are known to be close associates of Vladimir Putin, who is currently waging an illegal and unjust war in Ukraine. Canada, unfortunately, is one of the places where they have seen fit to stash some of their cash and assets.

To be able to properly enforce sanctions against people like that, we have to lift the veil of secrecy around corporate ownership because those are the spaces where these kinds of folks are hiding. That is why we have seen so many of Canada's allies across the world, in the last 18 months or so, really accelerate their own programs for beneficial public ownership registries. This is why Canada cannot be left behind.

Government Orders

My understanding is that, to implement this registry, it will take some time after the legislation passes to do that. That is why I believe it is important this legislation pass before we break for the summer. That gives about six months to the end of the year for officials to, with a legislated mandate from Parliament, begin to put this registry into effect.

That is one thing we can do to support Ukraine and ensure that Canada is not a haven for those that would do Ukraine harm. It is why this has to pass with urgency.

• (1050)

I take some of the points that were made earlier in debate about the imperfections of the process at committee. What I am hearing is that there is some goodwill around this bill and a willingness, I hope, as we move forward, to look at some of the weaknesses of the bill and improve upon it in the future. However, I would rather see us improving upon something that is in place than continuing to talk about what might come to be in a context where the buddies of Vladimir Putin are having a relatively free run here in Canada because we do not have the information we need to adequately track those sanctions.

I will give an example. There has been talk about lowering the ownership threshold under the public beneficial ownership registry. That is an idea I am quite open to, but I am also mindful that, if this registry is going to be a success, we need to have participation from the provinces. My understanding is that, where provincial registries already exist, the threshold is around 25%, so that is a conversation the federal government needs to have to work with the provinces to bring everyone along together in order to lower that threshold. If we end up with a federal registry with a lower threshold and some provinces decide not to participate, or to delay their participation, I do not think we will be doing ourselves a service.

That is why, while there is room for legitimate criticism and an opportunity to do better as we learn more about public beneficial ownership registries, it should not delay this legislation's passing before summer, so this can be brought into place in a timely way. Then Canada would be able to begin applying more pressure, as it rightly should, to folks who are supporting Vladimir Putin and his illegal war in Ukraine.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to understand the rationale behind lowering the significant threshold from 25% to 10%. Indeed, the New Democratic Party supported this amendment after hearing testimony during the debate at committee on why Canada should be a leader in money laundering to adopt a more progressive threshold, which was outlined by the RCMP.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, as the member likely knows, when we talk about problems in the tax regime and folks who would like to evade paying their taxes, they can often structure their business in a way to come right up to the threshold but not exceed it. Therefore, with a 25% threshold, the concern is that it leaves a lot of latitude for a corporate organization to be able to go right up to a relatively higher threshold.

However, as I say, if Canada is going to have a lower threshold, which I am quite open to as an idea, that is not a decision that can be just taken here in Ottawa alone. It is a decision that the

provinces have to go along with. It sounds like we are not there yet, unfortunately. I do not think we should delay setting up the registry while that conversation happens, and I certainly encourage the federal government to have a strong dialogue with the provinces about how to get that threshold lower. We should enable the government to set up that infrastructure now, while those conversations are happening, instead of insisting on the conversation before the infrastructure.

• (1055)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his very detailed and interesting speech. With regard to the last question, it was mentioned that Canada could become a leader in the fight against tax evasion. Would this not require a major revolution?

I will give an example. There have recently been document leaks. Radio-Canada reported that Canada recovered 20 to 30 times less money than European countries. We also learned that even Revenu Québec recovered more money than the Canada Revenue Agency, and that is just for Quebec. Is that not outrageous?

We really need to send a message to the Canada Revenue Agency and the government that they need to do a lot more.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. A Canadian author, Alain Deneault I believe, wrote a book that describes the role played by Canadian banks in the creation of the entire international infrastructure of tax havens.

We need a major change in culture in Canada, not just in government, but in the banking sector, which is truly an integral part of this entire international enterprise. We have work to do.

We must change how we think about this to ensure that Canada is no longer a place where it is impossible to obtain justice for accountants who want big corporations to pay their taxes, and not just the Canadian workers who are footing the bill.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I just want to emphasize that, when we talk about corporations and laundering and so forth, it is important to recognize that many of these companies are actually under provincial jurisdictions. With the federal government bringing forward legislation of this nature, this demonstrates leadership and the hope that the provinces and territories would do likewise. Both complementing each other would give strength to what is actually being proposed.

Could the member expand on that particular point?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, this is certainly an area for federal and provincial co-operation.

Statements by Members

As I said before, what is important is that we create the legislative mandate for the federal government to move forward as expeditiously as possible, and that the government take a lot of the constructive feedback that has already been offered in the course of this debate into very serious consideration. It should take that into their conversations with the provinces and territories so that we could build the best possible public beneficial ownership registry.

What we have in the legislation now is good, but it could be better. However, we do not need it to be better to get started on all the work that needs to happen in order to start applying pressure to folks like Putin's buddies who are stashing cash here in Canada.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate all graduates across Canada, especially those in my riding of Don Valley West.

Graduation marks the culmination of years of hard work, opening the door toward a future filled with endless possibilities.

I would say that the graduates at Leaside High School, Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute, York Mills Collegiate Institute, École secondaire Étienne-Brûlé and Northern Secondary School are the generation of leaders to come, innovators and change-makers. As they embark on their new adventures, I encourage them to stay curious and be courageous while pursuing their dreams.

I also recognize the integral role played by the teachers, administrators, parents and guardians, who have supported graduates in our elementary, middle and secondary schools. Their support, encouragement, advice and love for all of these graduates will shape their lives in the future.

I say congratulations to the graduates. May their futures be filled with excitement, happiness and fulfillment.

* * *

• (1100)

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, I give a big shout-out to the dedicated staff at Langley Memorial Hospital, who continue to deliver top-quality health care despite many challenges, such as a lack of personnel, space and resources.

Despite our Prime Minister doubling the national debt, our hospitals and clinics are suffering more than ever. Conservatives will cut the waste, speed up approval for foreign-trained doctors and nurses, and start to piece together what the Prime Minister has broken.

Also, I thank the Langley branch of the Rapid Relief Team for throwing an appreciation barbecue last month for the dedicated staff at our hospital. I want to thank it also for the personal invitation to be at that great event. As its members live out the Christian

principles of care and compassion, their efforts to bring relief and encouragement at home and abroad are noticed and appreciated.

* * *

JAMES WILFRED EAGLE

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to James Wilfred Eagle, a decorated veteran and respected community leader among the Ojibwa people, who passed away in April.

Jim Eagle served in Korea with the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry and went on to serve for 25 years in the CAF, reaching the rank of sergeant.

Jim was a residential school survivor. He spoke his language fluently and provided for the indigenous community through his work with the Odawa Native Friendship Centre and the Wabano Centre. He was leader of the Ottawa chapter of the National Aboriginal Veterans Association, where he was instrumental in creating the National Aboriginal Veterans Monument in Confederation Park in Ottawa.

Jim left behind his beloved wife Cecilia, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

We owe Jim a deep debt of gratitude. He was a warrior. He was a true hero. He lived a good life.

Meegwetch, Jim.

* * *

TRANSCONA MEMORIAL UNITED CHURCH

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the career of two United Church ministers, Carol Fletcher and Jeff Cook.

At the end of June, Carol and Jeff will retire after 35 years of ministry at Transcona Memorial United Church, serving the congregation and the wider community. In the course of their exemplary community ministry, Carol and Jeff have answered Jeremiah's call to seek the welfare of the city we are in.

Since coming to TMUC in 1988, their stewardship has supported the Transcona Food Bank, Families Connecting groups, the nursery school, the Transcona Council for Seniors, the Transcona scouting movement, and put Transcona on the map with the world messy church movement, among other things.

In recognition that Jesus loves us as we are, Jeff and Carol guided our congregation to formally becoming an affirming ministry. They created opportunities to learn what it means to live as treaty people, and they fostered connections with newcomers, nurturing English conversation groups and most recently providing support to people from Ukraine.

Statements by Members

On behalf of the congregation and the wider community, I thank Jeff and Carol for their good work and wish them all the best in their next chapter.

* * *

• (1105)

[*Translation*]

FATHER'S DAY

Ms. Annie Koutrakis (Vimy, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this Sunday we will be celebrating our fathers and the sacrifices they made for all of us.

I dedicate this statement to my 91-year-old father, Elias, who survived the war and who, in 1957, left his very poor village in Greece to move to the modern city of Montreal, without an education or money and without being able to speak anything other than Greek.

[*English*]

He immediately started working at a factory and spent time earning extra income by playing the bouzouki and entertaining others like him in the diaspora at Greek nightclubs. Many years later, in 1977, he started a successful business and did not take a day off for three years.

He achieved the Canadian dream in one generation and taught me the value of hard work, a love for Canada and also about real love, openness and faith. I thank my dad.

[*Member spoke in Greek*]

[*English*]

* * *

BABA'S CLOSET

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Madam Speaker, over the past 16 months, Baba's Closet has assisted over 1,900 newly arrived Ukrainian refugees in Saskatoon. Nettie Cherniatenski and over 30 volunteers worked seven days a week providing free and donated clothing, housewares and toys to newly arriving Ukrainians in Saskatoon fleeing Putin's war of aggression.

While many can feel helpless when watching the news about what is happening in eastern Europe, those in Saskatoon always had a place to volunteer and make the lives of others easier. This meaningful act of service and generosity gave the necessary helping hand that changed the lives of the newly arriving Ukrainians for the better.

Sadly, Baba's Closet recently closed, but happily the work done there will last a lifetime through those who benefited through these most difficult times. They will never forget the generosity that they received.

I thank Nettie and all the volunteers at Baba's Closet for all their hard work and hope she enjoys her well-deserved retirement.

100TH BIRTHDAY CONGRATULATIONS

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Vi Roden as she marks the remarkable milestone of turning 100. Vi has dedicated the majority of her life to helping others, perhaps most notably by establishing Act 2, which has been supporting those who have suffered sexual abuse, violence and trauma. Forty-three years after she founded it, it is now a \$2.2-million non-profit agency with 25 staff.

Vi compassionately pushed for improvements in the treatment of female prisoners, resulting in a royal commission on women's prisons in 1979 that made sweeping improvements to the issues she highlighted. After retiring from Act 2 at 65, she became a star volunteer, fundraising for buses and services that improved the lives of seniors in her community, and was awarded the West Vancouver community commitment award for her dedication.

Vi has spent 70 years in political activities and campaigned at all three levels of government. This is not an exhaustive list by any means of Vi's accomplishments. A community powerhouse and a dedicated wife and mother, she is admired by all those around her. As she celebrates turning 100 years young, I look forward to seeing her continue to live by the motto, "Rest and you will rust".

I wish Vi a happy 100th birthday.

* * *

EVENTS IN CLOVERDALE—LANGLEY CITY

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to share some exciting events that are happening this summer in Cloverdale—Langley City. First, the Surrey Pride festival will be taking place on June 24 for a celebration of diversity, inclusion and equality. I look forward to celebrating Pride Month in our community.

On June 29, my office will be hosting our first summer barbecue at Langley City Park. This barbecue is a great opportunity for us to come together for music, fun and delicious food. On July 15, we have the Al Anderson pool party, a chance to beat the summer heat with freezies and other cooling-off activities. During the second weekend of August, we can look forward to a warm movie night in the park, complete with popcorn and a starry sky. As we embrace the spirit of summer activities, let us connect and celebrate the season of summer with our constituents.

Lastly, I would like to wish all dads, including my own dad, Don, a happy Father's Day.

* * *

WILLIAM JAMES PERKINS

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, this is the first Father's Day without my dad, William James Perkins, who we lost three months ago, just eight months after we lost our mother.

Statements by Members

The son of immigrants, he was born in the Depression and raised in Halifax during World War II. After high school, he worked his way up from office boy to financial services executive and board member. The proud father of four, my dad taught me to think independently and to always ask questions. He loved writing and poetry. He was passionate about Shakespeare and live theatre.

A winning sprinter in his youth, he was an exceptional golfer into his ninth decade. He was a “student of the human condition” he would say, always trying to figure out what made people tick so he could understand himself better. He lived by Hamlet’s words, “To thine own self be true”.

We are all busy. We think our parents will live forever. When they are gone, the hole is immense. On Father’s Day, let us celebrate dad. Most importantly, let us love our parents completely, daily, and tell them so.

* * *

• (1110)

MEN’S HEALTH

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Milton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, June is Men’s Health Month. This week has been International Men’s Health Week, and we also recognized June 15 as Men’s Mental Health Awareness Day.

I sat down with representatives from both the Canadian Mental Health Association and the Centre for Suicide Prevention to talk about men’s health, because unfortunately men do not prioritize or talk about their physical or mental health enough. The CMHA and the Centre for Suicide Prevention told me that men aged 40 to 60 die by suicide more than anyone else. We discussed Buddy Up, a campaign that encourages dialogue and meaningful conversations between men: man to man, in the car, at the game or watching TV. Talking about our health is so important. I also want to commend the Canadian Men’s Health Foundation for recognizing the value of physical activity and sport, and for making sure that men are taking care of themselves, both physically and mentally.

This weekend is also Father’s Day, so I wish my dad, Joe, a happy Father’s Day. I will see him on Sunday. Happy Father’s Day to all the dads of Milton, and I want to express sympathies to everyone who is missing their father this weekend.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Madam Speaker, no matter how much the Liberals like to pretend, things are not easy for Canadians right now. Buying a home has never been so unaffordable. Food bank usage has doubled for the unemployed and for the employed. Over the last ten years, Canada has experienced the worst economic growth since the Great Depression.

The cause of these problems is no great mystery. Liberal deficits have led to Liberal inflation, which has driven a cost of living crisis and is now driving up interest rates, making the housing market a ticking time bomb. The government’s low-growth, high-spend agenda has imposed austerity on Canadians.

It is time to change that austerity into prosperity, and the path to that prosperity is clear; it is the common sense of the common people for your home, my home, our home. Let us bring it home.

* * *

WORK PERMITS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Madam Speaker, there is nothing I love to hear about more than a newcomer who is looking for a work permit.

This is, now more than ever, relevant, particularly to the 700 plus newcomers to Canada who arrived but were defrauded by the shady consultants who gave them fake admission letters. We intervened to fight for those students to have the ability to stay here, complete their studies and stay in their jobs. The government, we are pleased, has backed down to our demands and allowed these students to stay and work lawfully in this country. The problem is that they do not yet have work permits. They want the ability to keep their jobs and contribute to our economy while they wait for their applications for permanent residency to go ahead.

This is exactly what we want from newcomers: creating more powerful paycheques, contributing to our economy and building a better country for all of us.

Will the government get out of the way and grant work permits to these hard-working people as they work towards being part of our country?

* * *

QUEEN’S YORK RANGERS

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today I am honoured to rise to speak to the valour, dedication and ongoing service of the Queen’s York Rangers. The regiment and the regimental family are proud to be a part of and contribute to the vibrant communities of Toronto and of Aurora, in my riding.

The regimental council is also a registered charity that does phenomenal work, and I attended their York County Day last week. The Rangers trace their roots back through some of the most notable events in our history, such as the First World War and the founding of York, where they built many of the original city streets. More recently, the regiment has deployed members on many Canadian Armed Forces overseas missions, including Afghanistan and Iraq.

This week, one of my constituents of whom I am very proud, a member of the Rangers, Sergeant Josh Ballard CD, was in Ottawa to receive a commendation from the chief of staff of the Department of National Defence for his quick thinking during a live-fire exercise, which saved the lives of his comrades. He exemplified the motto of the Queen's York Rangers, which is "Swift and Bold".

I want to congratulate him for his heroic—

• (1115)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

* * *

PENTICTON VEES

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I may be a little late to this party, but this is the first opportunity I have had to stand in this place to congratulate the Penticton Vees, who won the Fred Page Cup last month, for the second year in a row.

The Vees were carrying on the tradition of the Vees of 1955, who won the world hockey championship by defeating the Soviet Union five to nothing. The Vees won 50 games this year, losing only three, and they have won 43 straight games at home. Their last home defeat was at the hands of the Trail Smoke Eaters, a team I have to say is in my riding as well, and is also a team that defeated the Soviet Union to win the 1961 world championships.

The B.C. Hockey League pulled out of the Canadian Junior Hockey League last year, so the Vees have not been able to go on to win the Centennial Cup, but I think, in both years, they would have given the Brooks Bandits a run for their money.

I would like to congratulate coach Fred Harbinson for his incredible leadership, and the entire team, but especially brothers Brady and Josh Nadeau, who led the team and the league in scoring.

Go, Vees, go.

* * *

[Translation]

MANICOUAGAN

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am immensely pleased today to extend a warm invitation to my colleagues and to all Quebeckers and Canadians to come visit my riding, Manicouagan, this summer.

To the people back home, Manicouagan really means the north shore, a true country within a country, its 350,000 square kilometres teeming with so many wonders that the north shore tourism bureau aptly describes it as "nature beyond measure".

I may be biased, but I cannot help but boast that Manicouagan has 1,300 kilometres of beaches, 60% of the salmon rivers in Quebec, Anticosti Island, which is the size of Corsica, 168 dams, including the Daniel Johnson dam, the largest arch-and-buttress dam in the world, the Manicouagan-Uapishka Biosphere Reserve, numerous outfitters and controlled harvesting zones, and thousands of lakes, not to mention whales and caribou. In short, the north shore is a veritable feast for the senses.

Statements by Members

In closing, I invite everyone on the north shore to become ambassadors for our region and show the entire world that our passion for wide open spaces is equal only to our love for people.

We look forward to welcoming visitors.

* * *

[English]

SENIORS' BUS ACCIDENT IN MANITOBA

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, today is a heartbreaking day. I rise in Parliament, from my home province, with a loss of words to acknowledge the lives taken near Carberry, Manitoba.

Yesterday, nearly 25 individuals departed the Dauphin Active Living Centre. They were on their way to southern Manitoba for what was supposed to be an enjoyable day trip. Today, at least 15 of those Canadians did not return to their loved ones, after a deadly vehicle accident took their lives on the Trans-Canada Highway.

I represent this rural region, and I know rural Canadians are strong and resilient. I know this tragic news has touched the hearts of Canadians across this country, but I also know this will leave a wound on many communities and families, a wound that may never heal.

I thank the first responders for being there in this time of need.

On behalf of all parliamentarians, I extend my sincere thoughts and prayers to the victims of this devastating accident. Canadians are here for them at this time.

* * *

VOLUNTEERISM

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to honour a sterling citizen and community stalwart.

On June 24, Graeme Maag will be celebrating 50 years of community service, including 34 years with the Pointe-Claire Volunteer Rescue Unit. Graeme has helped structure and transform the rescue unit into a pillar of emergency response in Montreal's West Island. In addition to responding personally to hundreds of calls in Pointe-Claire and neighbouring municipalities, Graeme has created a solid governance framework for the rescue unit. He authored the unit's first constitution, standing orders, annual training program and inventory system, and was instrumental in the acquisition of vital rescue equipment.

A man for others knows no boundaries. Despite his responsibilities with the Pointe-Claire Volunteer Rescue Unit, Graeme has still found time to sit on the boards of directors of various community and charitable organizations.

Oral Questions

I thank Graeme for all he does. I thank him for having our back.

ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1120)

[*Translation*]

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Madam Speaker, at three o'clock this afternoon, Canada's population will hit 40 million. At the same time, we have learned that the number of houses built in Canada will drop by 19% this year.

Where are we going to put everyone?

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

However, I would like to remind him that members of his own party say one thing but think another. I think that, before they even talk to Canadians, they should agree within the party on what they want to do about housing.

On our side of the House, we have a national housing strategy. We want to work with the provinces and the municipalities, certainly not insult them.

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Madam Speaker, today at 3 p.m., we will see Canada's population hit 40 million people, while the number of houses built is dropping 19%.

Where are we going to put everyone?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think it is very important that we do not start to believe that the solution to our housing challenges is to close the door to more newcomers. We need to use our immigration policies to help bring in the people who have the skills we need to help build more homes.

I think that all members of the House, hopefully, support continuing to integrate newcomers into our society. We need to adopt policies to allow us to build more homes to ensure that people do not just arrive here but that they are also set up for success. This is something we have been working towards over the last number of years with the national housing strategy, and with new policies, we will have dedicated draws for skilled workers who have the talents we need to build more homes for Canadians who have been here for generations and for those who arrive in the future.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Madam Speaker, the solution is to build more homes, yet since the Prime Minister took office, the number of houses per capita in this country has dropped. The average mortgage payment is up 122%. The average rent is up over 100% and the average down payment is up over 100%. That is his record of doubling housing costs, after eight years of running deficits that drive interest rates up and of funding local gatekeepers that block construction.

Will the Liberals balance the budget to bring down interest rates and inflation, and link dollars for cities to the number of houses completed?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to hear my colleague talk about working with the municipalities. I am happy that the tone has changed and that the municipalities are no longer the target of insults.

As a former Montreal city councillor, I think we want to make sure that the municipalities build more housing. This is exactly what the housing accelerator fund is doing for municipalities.

What the leader of the official opposition is proposing is exactly what we said we would do last year. I am very pleased to see that we were able to inspire his party's messaging today.

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Madam Speaker, while the government pretends to plagiarize my policy on removing gatekeepers, there is a very big distinction. It brought in this so-called accelerator. Since that time, housing construction has decelerated; it is down 19% year over year, and in May, it was down 33% on an annual basis. We are building fewer houses since this \$4-billion monstrosity came into place. Our approach is to require the completion of homes before cities get the money. The Liberal approach is to fund promises.

Why will they not fund results instead of promises?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we know the opposition leader's policy when it comes to housing; it was to do nothing. For 10 years, the Conservative government did not invest a dime in housing; it did not prioritize or even talk about housing. It left it to every other level of government. What we have done instead is to say that the federal government has to be a leader in housing.

What Conservative members have done, frankly, is to come up with ideas that we have already been doing for years. While they insult mayors, throw slurs at them and talk about how incompetent municipal governments, elected in their own right, are, we will stand up and get the job done.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Madam Speaker, what we delivered was affordable housing. The average house cost when I was the minister responsible was \$450,000. Today, it is well over \$700,000. The average mortgage cost was \$1,400; now it is over \$3,000. The average rent was \$1,000; now it is over \$2,000.

The member is right, though, that our programs cost far less to taxpayers. We spent far less to achieve far more. Housing was cheap. The way we can make it affordable again is by requiring that cities get out of the way and let builders build.

Why do they not bring in place a “dollars for doors” policy that gets things—

• (1125)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. government House leader.

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we knew the opposition was good at making fake cheques with the Conservative logos, but when it came to actually delivering action, there were 2.7 million more people in poverty when they were in government than what is happening today. They presided over the worst growth that had been seen since R.B. Bennett.

When the economy was down, when more people were in poverty, things were cheaper. That is true. As our economy is growing and booming and Canada is leading the world in growth, we have to meet the challenge of growth. Instead of having the problems of falling apart, we have problems of growing. Those are good problems to have. We are rising to meet them.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Public Safety was completely unaware that Paul Bernardo was being transferred, even though his office knew about it for three months. He told us that the problem has been solved because he instructed his office to keep him informed.

The same thing happened with the Prime Minister regarding China's threats against an MP. He had not been made aware either, but everything is fine now: The Canadian Security Intelligence Service was given a directive to inform his ministers from now on.

This government has been in office since 2015. It needs to reassure us that it is simply not true that it took eight years for ministers to ask to be informed on their files.

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as the member across the way understands, the decision to transfer an incarcerated person is an independent choice. That is essential in our system. The decision in the case in question was a choice made by Correctional Service Canada. It is very important not to politicize such a serious issue.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, we now know that the ministers do not really seem to be informed about what is happening.

It is common knowledge here that everyone works via text messaging, because texts are practical. When the recipient sees the message, the system tags the message as “read”. We can even see what time the message was read.

Would it be possible for the government to implement the same kind of system for ministerial briefing notes? At least then when

Oral Questions

they say that they have not been informed about their files, we would know whether it is actually true.

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the crime in question is so serious that there are no words to describe it.

In March, staff were informed that someone might be transferred, but it was just a possibility. It was only once we had all of the details at the end of May that the Prime Minister—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Vancouver East.

* * *

[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, people fearing gender-based persecution are adversely affected by the safe third country agreement. Today, the Supreme Court of Canada stated that equality rights are just as important as every other human right. Even the government's lawyers argued that an urgent exemption for migrant women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people in the safe third country agreement is needed.

Will the Liberals do the right thing and expand the exemption in the safe third country agreement for people fearing gender-based persecution?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her advocacy on behalf of vulnerable people in Canada and around the world.

Of course, members will have seen by now that the Supreme Court of Canada has upheld the safe third country agreement, recognizing that Canada and the United States have the ability to make decisions to monitor and control the flow of people who seek asylum in Canada in a way that respects the need to be compassionate toward the world's vulnerable but also to have an orderly and regular migration system.

To the extent that we want to look for ways to improve the agreement over the years ahead, we will continually monitor this particular issue to ensure that those fleeing violence who are vulnerable and may not have the opportunity to seek protection elsewhere have the ability to have their claims considered in Canada.

Oral Questions

• (1130)

GROCERY INDUSTRY

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, in the debate between the Conservative leader and the Liberal finance minister, we hear a lot about public spending and inflation, but what neither of them will say is the role that outsized price increases and record corporate profits have been playing in driving inflation for Canadian households. Canadians know it, as they are the ones paying the bill, and the number one stressor for them now keeping them up at night is their financial position.

The agriculture committee has finally recognized that the New Democrats were right to call for a windfall profit tax on those very same corporations. Now that we have a multipartisan recommendation to implement a windfall tax on giant grocery companies, will the Liberals finally do it?

Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I wish my hon. colleague would have spoken to some of his members. What the recommendation says is that politicians should not be deciding what is a reasonable profit and that the Competition Bureau should be looking at it. As the recommendation talked about, if the Competition Bureau decided that, yes, there were excess profits, then perhaps the recommendation would be to look at implementing a windfall tax. However, politicians should not be deciding that. At the Competition Bureau, there is a process in place and it is looking at that.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Madam Speaker, the government likes to deny its role in the transfer of killer Paul Bernardo from a maximum-security prison to a medium-security prison, but it is responsible. The Liberals passed Bill C-83, which allowed for this transfer. In fact, the Minister of Public Safety knew for three months and did nothing to stop this transfer. Why does he not do the honourable thing and resign?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to express how troubling it is that the opposition continues to bring up a horrific crime that is impacting not only victims of this criminal but all victims across this country, some of whom have reached out to me. To spread misinformation that Bill C-83 is in any way responsible for this is irresponsible. That bill ended segregation and put people into structured intervention units. It has absolutely nothing to do with classification and where offenders are placed in our prison system.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Madam Speaker, I think Canadians are really tired of the government's fake rage. The Prime Minister, in 2015, promised Canadians accountability, yet his Minister of Public Safety has misled this House on a minimum of five occasions. Most recently, he misled the House on the fact that he received a briefing about the transfer of Paul Bernardo from a maximum-security prison to a medium-security prison. Why does he not show just a little bit of respect for Canadians, a little bit of respect for the House and a little bit of respect for the victims of Paul Bernardo and resign?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, of course, the member opposite knows that we all have the deepest regard and respect not only for the victims of Paul Bernardo but for the entire country that he traumatized by these events.

As the member knows, we are all horrified anytime we hear these crimes raised, but we also know that we have an independent corrections system that makes decisions about the transfer of inmates independently. It is supposed to be free from politics. What we need is a mature conversation about how we deal with this and our rightful outrage, making sure that we continue—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Kelowna—Lake Country.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, serial killer and serial rapist Paul Bernardo was transferred to a medium-security facility, and a previous Liberal bill, Bill C-83, was helpful in allowing this to happen. The public safety minister said that there should be a review to determine if Bernardo should go back to a maximum-security facility. This is unbelievable.

The Liberals changing laws allowed this monster of our time more freedoms and comforts. When will the minister take public safety seriously and reverse changes the Liberals made that allowed for Bernardo to have more comforts and freedoms?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think we have to be very careful. These are horrific, grievous crimes.

The inference that there was some other system is patently not true. The reality is that transfers in this country have always been done independent of government and remain outside of politics.

I am certain the member's outrage on this is equal to mine, but we need to make sure that we respect the independence of corrections and have a mature conversation about how we deal with this issue and the emotions that we rightly have about it while maintaining the independence of corrections.

• (1135)

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, the friends and families of Bernardo's victims deserve a better answer than that.

Yesterday, the Liberals had an opportunity to expedite a Conservative bill that would have kept serial killers and rapists in maximum security, but they rejected it. Victims of crime are constantly the bottom priority of these soft-on-crime Liberals. The Conservatives offered a way to quickly fix the mess the Liberals have created, but they rejected it.

Again, when will the minister take public safety seriously and reverse course on the changes the Liberals made so that people like Bernardo do not have access to more freedom?

*Oral Questions***DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I do not doubt the member for a second when she talks about her concern for victims. I am concerned that she would cast aspersions on any member of this House, as if we do not share equally in her concern for victims. Every single person in this House has been touched by crime, unfortunately many times viscerally and in ways that were very destructive.

The way to meet that is with evidence. The way to meet that is to make sure that we have the best policies to keep our communities safe, not to let emotion lead the debate, as it did in the United States, as an example. Newt Gingrich, who was the father of a movement, said it was the biggest mistake of his career and a disaster.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Madam Speaker, for three days now, we have been calling for the Minister of Public Safety to resign. He is still in office. For three days now, we have been asking the Prime Minister to answer our questions. He has not. He does not have the guts to explain to the families of Bernardo's victims why he created conditions that allowed Bernardo to be transferred to a medium-security prison. Bill C-83 allowed that to happen.

Is the government sorry for what it did?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, that is not the case at all. It is very unfortunate that such things are being said, especially when we know that our correctional system is founded on independence and that we have one of the best correctional systems in the world.

If they want to discuss the importance of this issue and the emotions it stirs up, that is entirely valid. However, it is important to have that conversation responsibly and honestly.

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Madam Speaker, Bill C-83 is the latest in a series of errors, questionable decisions, backtracking and contradictions we have seen from this government when it comes to protecting victims. This time, the families of Bernardo's victims are suffering a second time because the government has allowed this dangerous criminal to enjoy less strict conditions.

Can the government reverse its decision and support our proposal from yesterday to keep dangerous criminals in maximum-security prisons?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Bill C-83 has nothing to do with the current situation and it has nothing to do with the correctional service's unfortunate decision regarding Mr. Bernardo.

Bill C-83 is a response to a Supreme Court of Canada ruling and to what we have heard from other experts, which is that solitary confinement violates the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We have created another type of structured intervention to address the problem.

I can say that Bill C-83 has nothing to do with the current situation.

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, we have just one week left until the House rises for the summer. There is only one week left for the government to finally launch the commission of inquiry into Chinese interference that the public has been calling for since last winter.

I urge my Liberal colleagues to face reality. They must all realize by now that this commission of inquiry is inevitable. Above all, I appeal to their democratic values. There is a real risk. They must also realize that such a commission would absolutely have to publish its recommendations on how to better protect democracy before the next election.

Will the government give the green light to this independent public commission of inquiry?

[*English*]

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as the hon. member knows, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs has indicated that that is an option on the table. We are currently reviewing all options on how we move forward.

However, let us be really clear: All of our elections have been fair. They have been determined to be fair and there was no interference. We will always take action when a hostile foreign actor is trying to interfere in our country.

• (1140)

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, hope springs eternal, but as Paul Valéry added, it is like walking a tightrope.

The government says it wants to work together, but there is only one week left for parliamentary business. It has one week to announce a commission of inquiry, and it does not have carte blanche. The government must have the consensus of the House regarding who will lead the commission. It must give the commissioner the flexibility to define the terms of reference. It must ensure that the commission can conclude its work before the next election.

The clock is ticking. The government must announce this commission of inquiry immediately, so why waste precious time?

[*English*]

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are optimistic that these conversations are ongoing. The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs has received the leader of the Bloc's letter with some suggestions and recommendations. The minister is having fruitful conversations with party leaders across the aisle.

There are important details that must be determined in relation to a public inquiry, such as what the terms are, what the mandate is and how this would work. We are only going to do that by working together. That is precisely what the minister is working on.

*Oral Questions***PUBLIC SAFETY**

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Public Safety's failure to prevent the transfer of notorious killer Paul Bernardo to a medium-security facility was not a mistake. It was a direct consequence of the Liberals' soft-on-crime policies, like Bill C-83.

Yesterday, Conservatives gave the government an opportunity to rectify this injustice, but it voted us down. Canadians are watching. The Minister of Public Safety needs to be held accountable for this travesty.

Will the Prime Minister have the courage to sack the incompetent minister, or will the minister do us all a favour and resign already?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Conservative partisan interest in disliking the minister has been well-established, and they continue to repeat that.

That is a separate conversation from the conversation we need to have about this situation, which is greatly upsetting to everyone. A decision was made, independent of government, by Correctional Service Canada to make a transfer effective, and that is something that we are deeply concerned about. That is why there is a review. In two weeks' time, Correctional Service Canada could come back with its decision. I fundamentally reject the premise that the approach the member is talking about would work. It has failed everywhere in the world.

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, the offices of the Prime Minister and of the Minister of Public Safety knew about this transfer for three months. This was no mistake. This was a result of the Liberal government's agenda.

This did not have to happen. Yesterday, Liberals had a chance to right this wrong, but instead they chose to double down on their failure. For the Liberals to claim otherwise is misinformation. When will the minister formally change his title from Minister of Public Safety to minister of misinformation?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there is a peppering of partisan comments here. I would just say that this is a deeply serious issue about crimes that every single one of us were impacted by.

As I said earlier, this is a decision that was made by Correctional Service Canada and we have long made sure throughout the history of our country, that it operates independently of the actions of politics. We have been very careful to ensure that politics is not inserted in that process.

If we want to have a conversation about the outrage we feel about this crime—

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

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberal bill, Bill C-83, allowed rapist and killer Paul Bernardo to be moved from a maximum-security to a medium-security prison.

Under the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, the Minister of Public Safety has the power to send him back to where he belongs, but he refuses to do so. His office knew about the transfer for months, but the minister chose to remain blissfully ignorant.

Why will he not take responsibility and resign?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is categorically false to say that. Bill C-83, which was aimed at ending solitary confinement, a practice that had been condemned by human rights groups and was found to be against our charter, was replaced by something called structured intervention units to allow for a more direct and equitable form of intervention in those cases.

The link between Bill C-83 and the decision made by Correctional Service Canada to transfer this known killer is misinformation.

• (1145)

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Madam Speaker, Paul Bernardo is the worst type of human being who can exist, yet over and over again, Liberal ministers stand on their feet to defend his right to the comforts of medium-security prisons.

The minister may not understand, but it is the Liberals' very own Bill C-83 and its change to section 28 of the act that allowed this serial rapist and murderer to be transferred to easy street. This is not something that just happened. The Liberals made it happen. Yesterday, the government would not support a Conservative bill that would fix this by requiring serial killers to stay in maximum-security prisons.

When will the government take public safety seriously, reverse these ridiculous changes and keep notorious—

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, many people in the House are parents, and I am a father. The—

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Do you have a daughter? What would you do if your daughter were a victim?

Hon. Mark Holland: Yes, I am the father of a daughter, and they are yelling out to ask about my child.

Madam Speaker, the idea that I would find those crimes anything other than repugnant, and that I or any member of the House would not do everything in their power to ensure public safety, is repulsive. The difference is that we will not mis-characterize information. We will not torque. Saying something that is not true, that a bill that has absolutely no impact on this matter is involved, is politicizing this, and that is something that should not be done.

*Oral Questions***CANADA POST CORPORATION**

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, post offices are the heart of rural communities. We rely on them to keep in touch with loved ones and to pick up essentials, but consecutive Liberal and Conservative governments have been starving them of resources.

It started with making postmasters find their own facilities. When that fails, the Liberals privatize our mail, destroying union jobs. Shockingly, when privatizing government services does not work out, they just plop in a mailbox and call it a day. What is the minister's plan to stop the privatization scheme, save rural community hubs and save well-paying union jobs?

Hon. Helena Jaczek (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as the member opposite knows very well, Canada Post is a crown corporation at arm's length from government. However, of course, ongoing discussions do occur between me and the chair of the board at Canada Post.

As is the case with many other postal carriers around the world, Canada Post is evolving to meet changing customer needs and expectations. There is a top priority in keeping its employees in the communities that it serves, and it will continue to serve Canadians with the service they can rely on.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, with all due respect, that answer was not good enough.

The government's policy on postal service is failing rural communities. It is not working in Atlin. It is not working in Telegraph Creek, and it did not work in the 120 communities in rural Canada that lost have their post offices since the government took office in 2015.

Therefore, I would like to give the hon. minister another chance to answer this question: Is she aware of the impact her government's policy is having on rural communities when it comes to post offices? If so, what is she going to do to ensure that not a single additional community loses its post office?

Hon. Helena Jaczek (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I suppose I need to reiterate that Canada Post is a crown agency at arm's length from government. However, we do work together to always ensure that the corporation provides the high-quality service that Canadians expect, at a reasonable price, and that reaches Canadians across the country. We will continue to work with Canada Post to ensure that the corporation continues to meet the evolving needs of Canadians, including changes brought on by the pandemic.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this month is pride. Just last week, the pride flag was raised on Parliament Hill, showcasing our tremendous support of members of the 2SLGBTQI+ community, who continue to face systemic barriers.

One in four entrepreneurs have faced discrimination or lost their businesses because of their 2SLGBTQI+ ownership. Can the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and

Economic Development update Canadians on yesterday's historic announcement?

● (1150)

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the entrepreneurs and businesses of the 2SLGBTQI community contribute tremendously to Canada's economy, contributing \$22 billion and employing half a million Canadians, yet they face discrimination. A third lose business because of who they are, and 40% are not able to get access to capital or funding.

Therefore, yesterday I announced \$25 million to help these incredible business owners, businesses and entrepreneurs from the 2SLGBTQI community to empower them to grow their businesses across Canada and contribute—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, Paul Bernardo is a serial killer and rapist. Vile monsters like him are living more comfortable lives because the Liberals are soft on crime. If they were not, the government would have supported the member for Niagara Falls' motion yesterday to keep mass murderers where they belong, in maximum security.

This minister has yet to explain to Canadians how he could sit on the news of Bernardo's transfer to medium security for three months. When will the Prime Minister find the courage to stand up for the victims of monsters like Bernardo?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first of all, all of us stand up against monsters like Bernardo. That is why we ran: to keep our communities safe. The principal difference is that we are saying we have to use evidence and make sure we use reasoned, levelled arguments. The Correctional Service has always been independent.

Oral Questions

Yesterday there was UC motion. I find this interesting because when I talk to the opposition House leader, he often tells me that we cannot use UC motions to just blow through the process. He complains that they are used in that way, and then they move a massive change that would change how we deal with corrections. They have said that they should not be used that way.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, three indigenous police services in northern Ontario are out of money because the public safety minister did not bother to renew their contracts. At first I thought it was his staff who did not tell him. However, yesterday that same minister rejected a Conservative motion to keep rapists such as Paul Bernardo where they belong in maximum security.

The minister cannot hide behind his staff any longer. When will the minister stand in the House to explain to the victims of Paul Bernardo why he is okay with this monster having more freedom and comfort?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will say to the victims, not just of Paul Bernardo but of anybody who has faced crime, that we will meet the horror and trauma they are faced with with the best evidence to keep them safe and to make sure that we restore to the best condition possible after what they have gone through.

That requires us being reasonable. It requires us not playing politics or attempting to extract partisan gain in dealing with this debate. These are deeply serious crimes, some of the most awful crimes that have ever happened in this country. We cannot and should not play partisan games with them.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, it was this government that introduced into Bill C-83 section 28, which states that all offenders must be placed in the least restrictive environment for them.

That is why, yesterday, the member for Niagara Falls asked the House to adopt a unanimous motion to repeal this portion of the section and ensure that offenders such as serial rapists are placed in an environment that contains the necessary restrictions. That is simple. We could have taken action.

Yesterday, the Liberals refused. Why?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Bill C-83 addressed the issue of solitary confinement. We changed the system to introduce structured intervention units. The Correctional Service of Canada has always had the authority to make such decisions. It is an independent service. It has to be that way.

We were open to the idea of reviewing the situation. As the government House leader just said, we have to study bills the right way.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is so independent that when the Liberals got caught, they requested a process to review the decision by CSC. If it is so independent, then why did they request a review of the process? They found out about it three months ago.

The Prime Minister's Office, his staff, the office of the Minister of Public Safety found out three months ago that Paul Bernardo, that serial rapist, would be transferred to a medium-security institution. That is unacceptable. The victims had the right to know.

Why did they refuse to do the right thing and ensure that Mr. Bernardo was returned—

• (1155)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me again clearly explain that the choice to transfer a person who is incarcerated is a choice that is made independently by the correctional service. It is essential that Correctional Service Canada operate independently, free from politics.

Now, we are asking Correctional Service Canada to conduct an investigation to determine whether it is possible to change this decision. In two weeks, we will have a response.

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VETERANS

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, Veterans Affairs Canada has a backlog of 8,365 disability claims. These 8,365 claims exceed the already long service standard of 16 weeks. The Parliamentary Budget Officer presented the solution in 2020, however. Ottawa needed to hire just 400 permanent employees, but it made half of those positions temporary.

The result is that thousands of veterans are still seeing these unacceptable delays. Will the minister finally hire permanent employees—

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. Minister of Veterans Affairs.

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government has invested nearly half a million dollars to allow us to hire hundreds of new staff and speed up the process to ensure that veterans receive what they deserve more quickly.

As of last week, the backlog is currently under 6,000, and we have seen a significant decrease of over 70%. However, there is still more work to do, and we will continue to do it.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois had to put the pressure on in 2021. It used to take 57 weeks to process initial disability claims for francophones. This number is now down to 29 weeks. That is not bad.

However, the service standard is still the same, which is 16 weeks. That is still well above demand. Behind these numbers are veterans who are suffering, veterans who are waiting, and veterans who feel totally abandoned by the government.

Can the minister say what he is going to do today to speed up claims processing?

[*English*]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have reduced the gap in the wait between francophone and anglophone veterans by 80%. Now, the average French-language application takes about 2.4 weeks longer than an English application, compared with a 15-week gap in 2021.

I agree with my hon. colleague that it is longer than it should be. We are working to make sure that these applications are processed as quickly as every other application. I appreciate my hon. colleague's input and help at the committee to make sure that all veterans receive what they should in an appropriate manner.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Madam Speaker, earlier this year, the Liberals own officials predicted a major decline in new housing construction thanks to inflationary spending, interest rate hikes and labour shortages. They were correct. Yesterday we learned that new housing construction is down 23% from this time last year.

That does not sound like the life-changing housing plan that Canadians were promised by the government, so when will it admit that its borrowing of billions of dollars is actually making the housing crisis worse?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague on one thing: Canadians across the country are having a hard time finding the housing they need. Not only do we need to increase the supply of housing, but we also need to work on the right to housing.

I am curious to know whether my colleague agrees that his party should finally recognize the right to housing as a human right.

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Madam Speaker, just yesterday, we heard the housing minister talk about how they are getting the job done. We built more houses in the seventies than we are building right now, and they have this accelerator fund, where they are basically promising money for municipalities that just promise to get the job done but are not doing so.

My question is this: Why do they not promise dollars for doors instead of promises that never get fulfilled?

• (1200)

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am glad to see the

Oral Questions

Conservatives have a renewed interest in housing, because for the 10 years while they were in government, they actually underspent and cut programming when it came to affordable housing. I will just quote something: "Housing insecurity is widespread and homelessness is on the rise". Oh, that is a quote from 2012.

Let us change the topic and see what we are doing today. We have invested billions of dollars, refurbished and built hundreds of thousands of units and supported vulnerable Canadians with the Canada housing benefit. We are bringing forward the housing accelerator fund to work in partnership with municipalities to build more housing units for those who need it the most.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, the dream for Canadian families is to own a home so that they do not end up living with their parents. That dream has become inaccessible because of this incompetent Liberal government's inflationary policies that keep driving up construction costs.

Canada needs more than 100,000 new housing units a year, and housing starts are down across the country.

As July 1 approaches, what does the Prime Minister intend to do to address the housing crisis as quickly as possible?

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

Since taking office in 2015, we, on this side of the House, have put in place the national housing strategy, which provides direct support to those who need housing and helps to build more housing. We made historic investments in the housing accelerator fund for municipalities and with the \$1.5 billion for co-operatives. What is more, we will work on the right to housing.

On this side of the House, we believe that all Canadians deserve to have a roof over their head.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the boreal caribou is a species found only in Canada. This species plays an important role in the culture and history of indigenous peoples in Canada and is central to the diversity of the boreal forest. The federal, provincial and territorial governments share responsibility for ensuring the caribou's long-term survival and recovery.

Oral Questions

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance tell the House what our government is doing to protect caribou?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question. The forest fires raging in Quebec right now are certainly having an impact on the national caribou population, which is already in decline. This situation makes it all the more urgent to take action. Just yesterday, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change set out a timetable for the plans to protect Quebec's caribou.

* * *

[English]

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Madam Speaker, the resignation of a Canadian executive from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank confirms what we have long been saying. The bank is a tool of the Chinese Communist Party to spread its authoritarian model of governance throughout the Indo-Pacific region. The bank has said that it is willing to lend to Myanmar's military junta, which has been targeting the Rohingya minority, and there are suggestions that it is willing to resume lending to Russia.

What more proof does the government need to conclude that this bank runs contrary to Canada's interests and values?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as the member opposite knows, the Government of Canada has halted all government-led activity at the bank, and the Minister of Finance has instructed the Department of Finance to lead an immediate review of Canada's involvement. The Canadian government is currently discussing this issue with allies and partners that are also members of the bank.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Madam Speaker, just a couple of years ago, Global Affairs Canada advised the government that the bank is an example of how Beijing "promotes perspectives on governance, economic security, and human rights that diverge in fundamental ways from Canada's."

Just two years ago, the finance committee recommended that the government withdraw from the bank. Moreover, former solicitor general and Liberal finance chair Wayne Easter said that the recommendation should "serve as a 'wake up and smell the roses' moment" for the government.

When will the Prime Minister heed the advice of Global Affairs Canada, heed the advice of senior Liberals and withdraw Canada from the bank?

[Translation]

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I was saying, the Government of Canada has effectively halted all government-led activity at the bank. The Minister of Finance has instructed the Department of Finance to lead a review of Canada's involvement.

The Canadian government is also discussing this issue with our allies and partners who are members of the bank.

• (1205)

[English]

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, six years ago, the Liberal government had plenty of praise for the Asian infrastructure bank. The Prime Minister said joining was "good sense for Canadian know-how and for [Canadians abroad]."

His former finance minister was quoted saying that he was pleased with Canada's gift of tax dollars and added that the bank was "independent of any government". Now, six years and \$200 million later, the most senior Canadian at the Beijing bank has quit, stating that the bank is "dominated by Communist Party members" and that Canadians are not served by the AIIB.

Conservatives told them so. When are taxpayers getting their money back?

[Translation]

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance has instructed the department to conduct a comprehensive review of Canada's involvement, and our government has halted all government-led activity at the bank.

* * *

[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Madam Speaker, with a strong tradition of service in my home province, B.C.'s Lower Mainland is home to thousands of military members and their families. We have seen members of the armed forces serve Canadians, often leaving their family at a moment's notice.

The sacrifices are difficult, but military families make these sacrifices in service of a safer and more prosperous Canada.

Could the parliamentary secretary share with the House his work with Seamless Canada in supporting military families?

Mr. Bryan May (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam for his hard work and his commitment to the Canadian Armed Forces.

Recently, I met with provincial counterparts at Canadian Forces Base Gagetown for Seamless Canada's annual meeting. We discussed key initiatives, such as improving military spousal employment, reliable health care and access to child care.

Our government is dedicated to bolstering the resources and services available to the Canadian Armed Forces, so that their families can move and serve seamlessly across our country.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, abandoned vessels have been left to sink, polluting our coastlines. The Liberals promised to clean this mess up, yet in the last year, only 33 vessels out of thousands on the west coast have been removed. What is worse is that the number of these derelict vessels is only increasing. Luckily, there are solutions. Yesterday I tabled a bill calling on the government to work alongside locals and first nations to protect our oceans.

Will the Liberals stop pretending they have this under control and clean up these abandoned vessels?

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, indeed, abandoned vessels are a blight on our oceans and on our coastlines, leaking oil and other materials. That is why, as a government, we brought in the Wrecked, Abandoned or Hazardous Vessels Act. It gives us the tools to do just that. We are working on identifying the vessels that need to be acted upon and putting in place the measures through Transport Canada and the DFO that can complete that work.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.): Madam Speaker, in the past few days, we learned that our soldiers deployed to Latvia, on the Russian border, are buying modern equipment themselves because they are running out of patience waiting for National Defence to outfit them properly.

When she testified in committee, the Auditor General stated that the government and the public service did not assess the dangers we face. She wondered whether there was any urgency in Canada to properly equip our military and our troops.

There is an urgent need to invest in our Canadian Armed Forces. Can the Prime Minister or the Minister of Finance tell us if they plan to issue a clear directive to address the situation?

[English]

Mr. Bryan May (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, that soldiers are equipped with modern and effective equipment remains a priority to the Canadian Forces. Some examples of progress in 2023 include the delivery of upgraded combat clothing; the ongoing delivery of modern weapons for use by soldiers at home and during deployment, including the new C22 pistol; and the upcoming delivery of personal equipment, including next-generation full ballistic helmets, gas mask carriers, thermal blankets and sniper concealment kit.

Procuring modern equipment for the Canadian Armed Forces remains our government's top priority.

Oral Questions

• (1210)

TRAGEDY IN MANITOBA

The Deputy Speaker: Following discussion among representatives of all parties of the House, I understand there is an agreement to observe a moment of silence for the victims of the tragic event that took place in Manitoba.

I invite hon. members to rise.

[A moment of silence observed]

* * *

WAYS AND MEANS

MOTION NO. 17

(On the Order: Government Orders:)

No. 17 — June 9, 2023 — The Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations — Consideration of a ways and means motion to introduce an Act to give effect to the self-government treaty recognizing the Whitecap Dakota Nation / Wapaha Ska Dakota Oyate and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussion amongst the parties, and if you seek, I believe you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order, special order or usual practice of the House, Ways and Means Motion No. 17, notice of which was laid upon the table on June 9, 2023, be deemed concurred in, that a bill passed thereon standing on the Order Paper in the name of the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, entitled an Act to give effect to the self-government treaty recognizing the Whitecap Dakota Nation/Wapaha Ska Dakota Oyate and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be deemed to have been introduced and read a first time, deemed read a second time, and referred to the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs.

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 please say nay.

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

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order arising from question period.

During question period, the Liberal justice minister and several members of the Liberal Party claimed that the Conservatives were spreading misinformation about Bill C-83. I have a document from the Library of Parliament, containing a description of Bill C-83, which says that under their amendments, the Correctional Service of Canada must provide the least restrictive conditions for offenders.

I seek leave to table this document in this House.

The Deputy Speaker: There is no consent.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS***[Translation]***LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS**

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the document entitled “Proposals to correct certain anomalies, inconsistencies, out-dated terminology and errors and to deal with other matters of a noncontroversial and uncomplicated nature in the Statutes and Regulations of Canada and to repeal certain provisions that have expired, lapsed or otherwise ceased to have effect”.

* * *

*[English]***WAYS AND MEANS**

NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and pursuant to Standing Order 83(1), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, a notice of ways and means motion to introduce an act respecting the recognition of certain Métis governments in Alberta, Ontario and Saskatchewan to give effect to treaties with those governments and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

Pursuant to Standing Order 83(2), I request that an order of the day be designated for consideration of the motion of the notice of ways and means.

* * *

● (1215)

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the documents entitled the Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Agreements with the Métis Nation of Ontario, with the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan and with the Métis Nation of Alberta.

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GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 14 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

*[Translation]***COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 19th

report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

[English]

The report is entitled “The Human Rights Situation of Tibetans and the Chinese Residential Boarding School and Preschool System,” which outlines what is happening right now to the Tibetan people, by the Government of China. The children are being put into residential schools.

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

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 20th report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, entitled “Canada's Approach to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Women Globally”.

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

[Translation]

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present our supplementary report.

[English]

INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, entitled “Reclaiming, Revitalizing, Maintaining and Strengthening Indigenous Languages in Canada”.

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

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PETITIONS

BUSINESSES IN LYTTON

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the first petition I would like to present today is on behalf of the village of Lytton, which was decimated by fire on June 30, 2021. We are coming up on the two-year anniversary.

When this petition was written, Lytton was still under an evacuation order. That was lifted two days ago.

Since the rebuilding has yet to begin, all of the businesses that were destroyed are asking very clearly of the government to forgive their CEBA loans.

We presented one petition, and the government neglected that request, so we are again asking it to forgive the CEBA loans of the businesses that have not been able to be rebuilt that really need an extra hand from the Government of Canada.

LETS'EMOT REGIONAL AQUATIC CENTRE

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I would like to present today is on behalf of the people of Agassiz, who are trying to build a regional aquatic centre. This project was inspired by a progressive approach to reconciliation.

All of the local first nations have worked with the District of Kent to get the Lets'emot community and aquatic centre built.

So far, the federal government has only committed \$450,000. The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to increase that number and increase access to swimming pools for children living on reserve.

• (1220)

SHIP RECYCLING

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and privilege to table a petition on behalf of my incredibly and deeply frustrated constituents of Union Bay, which has become a test pilot for unregulated shipbreaking. They cite there are significant risks not only to the environment but to workers who are associated with shipbreaking due to the presence of a wide variety of hazardous materials in end-of-life marine vessels.

Unlike other jurisdictions, Canada lacks standards on shipbreaking and unregulated shipbreaking activities, which are putting our oceans, coastal communities and workers at risk, including the people of Baynes Sound in Lambert Channel.

The lack of domestic oversight of shipbreaking and disposal of end-of-life marine vessels frustrates Canada's ability to ensure compliance with its international obligations under the Basel Convention.

The petitioners are calling on the government to develop enforceable federal standards to reduce the negative environmental and social impacts of shipbreaking that meet or exceed those set out in the EU ship recycling program, and to provide assistance through loans or grants to long-term reputable shipbreaking companies, like those in Port Alberni, to facilitate implementation of new federal standards into their operations.

Finally, the petitioners are calling on the government to develop a strategy for recycling end-of-life federally owned marine vessels so that this is not taking place in communities like mine, putting jobs and the environment at risk.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am rising today on behalf of many Canadians who support Bill C-262. They want to see Canadian companies represent our country well abroad, with a meaningful concern for human rights, and not just on a voluntary basis but on a basis where they are required to do so by government and where there are meaningful consequences for them if they do not ensure that they are adopting best practices in respect of human rights and reporting out on that regularly.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I also rise today on behalf of Canadians who support Bill S-243, an act to enact the climate-aligned finance act.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners do not just want to see government policy align with climate objectives in this era of climate change coming home to roost; they also want to see private capital and private investment align with our climate objectives through clear benchmarks, good reporting and meaningful consequences for those who do not ensure that their economic activity is coherent with Canada's goals and the world's goals for reducing emissions and mitigating the worst effects of climate change.

SENIORS

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36, I rise to present a petition to the House on social affairs and equality.

My constituents have petitioned in support of including seniors aged 65 to 74 in the 10% increase to old age security payments, which was provided to seniors 75 and older in July 2022. Furthermore, if such a policy were to be implemented, my constituents also call herein for retroactive payments to July 2022 for those aged 65 to 74.

ELECTIONS IN PAKISTAN

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to present two petitions today on behalf of the Pakistani community in Regina and southern Saskatchewan, who are concerned about the recent political turmoil in Pakistan.

The first petition calls on the Government of Canada to use all reasonable avenues of diplomacy to influence the Pakistani regime to hold free and fair elections that are consistent with the rule of law and the constitution of that country. This is, of course, following the recent arrest of former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, who is attempting to once again let his name stand in general elections in Pakistan later this year.

The second petition calls on the Government of Canada to use its membership in the International Monetary Fund to require that both the issuance of new loans and the extension of existing loans to the Pakistani regime be conditional on the holding of free and fair elections in that country. This sounds like a very reasonable measure to take, given that free and fair elections in Pakistan are in the best interests of Canada, Pakistan and the international community.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to present these petitions here today in the House of Commons.

Routine Proceedings

● (1225)

INDO-CANADIAN COMMUNITY

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here is an interesting fact. In two and a half hours, Canada's population will hit 40 million, and a good portion of that rapid growth is coming from Canada's Indo-Canadian community.

I am tabling a petition that is calling for the Prime Minister, the government and all MPs to look at ways in which we can enhance airline services, both private and international, from Canada to India.

Given the rapid growth of our Indo-Canadian community, I think this is a petition that deserves some attention. I would ask that we do what we can collectively to support the growth of our Indo-Canadian community.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 1471, 1475 and 1481.

[Text]

Question No. 1471—**Ms. Leah Gazan:**

With regard to individuals that had their Canada Child Benefit (CCB) payments reduced in March 2023, broken down by province and territory: what is the total (i) number of families in receipt of CCB who had an overpayment for which recovery began in March 2023, (ii) number of families whose March 2023 CCB payments were reduced by more than 25 percent as a result of an overpayment recovery, (iii) amount recovered in March and April 2023?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, “offsets” are a standard procedure that the CRA uses to collect overdue balances from taxpayers. Offsetting involves proactively applying tax refunds and benefit payments, such as the GST/HST credit, to tax and other government debts. However, in May 2020, the CRA temporarily paused benefit offsets in an effort to provide relief to Canadians during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since October 2022, the CRA has resumed its activities aimed at offsetting taxpayers' debt. When an individual has a government debt, that debt will be identified for them directly on any notice of assessment, determination or redetermination they receive from the CRA. These notifications were issued throughout the pandemic and individuals were able to access their amounts owing even while certain collections activities were paused.

The CRA has also begun to recover overpayments for the Canada child benefit, CCB. The first CCB payment impacted was the March 2023 payment. Unlike other benefits, the CCB payment can only be used to pay a CCB debt. Other kinds of child benefit payments can only be used to pay a debt from the same benefit.

If a recalculation shows that an individual was overpaid CCB, the CRA sends a notice of redetermination that includes a remittance voucher to inform the individual of the balance owing. The CRA may keep all or a portion of future CCB payments, income tax refunds, or goods and services tax/harmonized sales tax, GST/HST, credits until the balancing owing is repaid. If an individual re-

ceives any kind of payment from the CRA, the notification they receive will include both the payment amount and how that payment was applied to outstanding government debt.

As is the case with any income-tested benefit program, CCB entitlement may fluctuate from year to year depending on the amount of income assessed in a given tax year. Income is often comprised of a variety of sources, e.g., employment income, dividends, pension income, rental income, capital gains, etc. In addition to a change in income, CCB entitlement may increase or decrease for other reasons such as the age and number of children. Factoring in all of the above, the CRA cannot attribute a change in CCB entitlement to one particular source. For these reasons, the CRA is unable to offer a detailed response, as the data is not captured in the manner requested.

Question No. 1475—**Mr. Frank Caputo:**

With regard to exemptions given by the government to certain ski resort areas related to the Prohibition on the Purchase of Residential Property by Non-Canadians Act: (a) why was the area around Whistler Blackcomb allowed to be exempted from the act; (b) why was the area around Sun Peaks not exempted; and (c) which ski resorts or surrounding communities requested an exemption and (i) received it, (ii) did not receive it?

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a), the Prohibition on the Purchase of Residential Property by Non-Canadians Act and the accompanying regulations clarify that the prohibition applies to residential property located in a census metropolitan area, CMA, or a census agglomeration, CA. The definition of residential property is not specific to the intended use of the property or its municipal zoning. The regulations include an exception for any residential property found outside of a CMA or CA as identified in Statistics Canada's Standard Geographical Classification 2021. The area around Whistler Blackcomb is outside the boundaries of a CMA or CA and exempted from the regulations.

In response to part (b), the area around Sun Peaks is within the boundaries of Kamloops CMA and is not exempted from the regulations.

In response to part (c), the regulations include an exception for any residential property found outside a CMA or CA as identified in Statistics Canada's Standard Geographical Classification 2021. Both CMAs and CAs are formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centered on a population centre, or the core. A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000 of whom 50,000 or more must live in the core. A CA must have a core population of at least 10,000. An online tool is available on Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's website to help determine if a property is situated in a CMA or CA.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1481—Mr. Tony Baldinelli:**

With regard to the Indigenous Tourism Fund announced in budget 2022, as of May 1, 2023: (a) how much money remains in the Fund; (b) how much money has been transferred to funding recipients; (c) what are the details of all funding recipients, including, for each, the (i) name, (ii) location, (iii) type of business; and (d) how much of the fund has been spent on administrative costs?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the development of this funding is still under way by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada and, as such, funds have not yet been distributed to recipients.

The development of the fund is being informed by engagements, ongoing since April 2022, involving indigenous tourism partners. These engagements are providing information on key challenges and opportunities facing indigenous tourism businesses, and potential funding design parameters that may best help meet these needs.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the government's responses to Question Nos. 1470, 1472 to 1474, 1476 to 1480, 1482 and 1483 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1470—Ms. Leah Gazan:

With regard to government funding allocated within the constituency of Winnipeg Centre for fiscal year 2022-23: what is the total funding amount broken down by (i) department or agency, (ii) initiative, (iii) amount?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1472—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to usage of the government's fleet of Challenger aircraft, since February 1, 2023: what are the details of the legs of each flight, including the (i) date, (ii) point of departure, (iii) destination, (iv) number of passengers, (v) names and titles of the passengers, excluding security or Canadian Armed Forces members, (vi) total catering bill related to the flight, (vii) volume of fuel used, or an estimate, (viii) amount spent on fuel?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1473—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to the Prime Minister's trip to New York in April 2023 for the Global Citizen summit: (a) what hotel did the Prime Minister stay at; (b) what was the paid room rate for the Prime Minister's hotel room; (c) between April 25 and 29, 2023, what was the total amount spent on accommodations in the New York City area for the Canadian delegation or any other Canadian government official, including diplomats; (d) what are the details of all hotel accommodations in or around New York City that were paid for by either Global Affairs Canada, the Privy Council Office, or the Office of the Prime Minister between April 25 and 29, 2023, including, for each location where expenditures were made, the (i) name of the hotel, (ii) number of rooms for each night, (iii) room rate, (iv) total amount paid by the government?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1474—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to usage of the government's Airbus CC-150 Polaris aircraft, since February 1, 2023: what are the details of the legs of each flight, including the (i) date, (ii) point of departure, (iii) destination, (iv) number of passengers, (v) names

and titles of the passengers, excluding security or Canadian Armed Forces members, (vi) total catering bill related to the flight, (vii) volume of fuel used, or estimate, (viii) amount spent on fuel?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1476—Mr. Ryan Williams:

With regard to government grants and contributions since January 1, 2016, broken down by fiscal year: what is the total amount of government grants and program contributions given to any telecommunications company, broken down by (i) date, (ii) company, (iii) program, (iv) project description, (v) amount requested, (vi) amount received?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1477—Mr. Blake Richards:

With regard to disability benefit applications received by Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) since January 1, 2016: (a) how many applications were received, broken down by medical condition; (b) for each medical condition for which applications were received, how many were (i) received, (ii) accepted, (iii) denied; and (c) how many instances have occurred where veterans who were medically released from the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), had their VAC disability benefit application denied for the same condition from which they were released from the CAF?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1478—Mr. Blake Richards:

With regard to housing units owned by the Department of National Defence (DND): (a) how many housing units does DND own, broken down by location; and (b) how many and what percentage of the units in (a) are (i) occupied, (ii) vacant?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1479—Mr. Ryan Williams:

With regard to Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada's auction of the 3,500 megahertz band of wireless spectrum, conducted on July 29, 2021: (a) for each of the wireless spectrum licences auctioned off, which entity (i) originally purchased the license at the auction, (ii) currently owns the licence; and (b) for each instance where the current owner is different than the original owner, what are the details of the transfer, including the (i) previous owner, (ii) new owner, (iii) license and description of what was transferred, (iv) date of the transaction, (v) date of the ministerial approval?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1480—Mr. Tony Baldinelli:

With regard to the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, between January 1, 2020 and May 1, 2023: how much funding did Business Improvement Areas located within the City of Niagara Falls, the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, and the Town of Fort Erie receive each year, broken down by each individual Business Improvement Area?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1482—Mr. Colin Carrie:

With regard to Health Canada's website currently titled "Report a side effect to a vaccine: Consumers": (a) why was the website changed in December 2020 to prevent consumers from reporting vaccine injuries directly to Health Canada; (b) why did the website change back on February 28, 2023 to allow consumers to resume reporting vaccine injuries to Health Canada; (c) who authorized the changes in (a) and (b); (d) how and on what dates were (i) health care providers, (ii) the general public, (iii) provincial and territorial health ministers, (iv) provincial and territorial immunization authorities, (v) regulatory bodies, (vi) local health authorities notified of each of these changes; (e) for each notification in (d) did it mention a legal obligation to report adverse reactions; (f) what efforts did Health Canada take to inform vaccine recipients of their ability to report adverse reactions through the website; and (g) what were the expenditures incurred by the government promoting the efforts in (f), broken down by type of expense?

(Return tabled)

*Government Orders***Question No. 1483—Ms. Michelle Rempel Garner:**

With regard to instances, since November 4, 2015, where the government awarded a grant or contribution to a for-profit corporation that has since went out of business or ceased operations: (a) how many such instances have occurred with respect to a grant or contribution valued over \$10,000; and (b) what are the details of such instances, including, for each, the (i) recipient, (ii) date the grant or contribution was awarded, (iii) type of grant or contribution (grant, non-repayable loan, etc.), (iv) purpose of the grant or the contribution, (v) announced value, (vi) amount paid out, (vii) amount recovered by the government, if applicable, (viii) summary of what happened to the company, if known, (ix) date the company went out of business or ceased operations, (x) location of the company headquarters?

(Return tabled)

[*English*]

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROTECTION ACT

BILL S-8—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Kamal Khara (Minister of Seniors, Lib.) moved:

That in relation to Bill S-8, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, to make consequential amendments to other Acts and to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations, not more than five further hours shall be allotted to the consideration of the report stage and five hours shall be allotted to the consideration at third reading stage of the said bill; and

That, at the expiry of the five hours provided for the consideration at report stage and the five hours provided for the consideration at third reading stage of the said Bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this Order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the Bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period. I invite hon. members who wish to ask questions to rise in their places or use the “raise hand” function so the Chair has some idea of the number of members who wish to participate in the question period.

We will begin with the member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

• (1230)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Parliament is about to rise for the summer, but once again, the government is showing us that, despite its coalition with the NDP, it cannot manage the House agenda without having to ram through legislation by using time allocation motions. This is unfortunate, because the government is responsible for the agenda and the business of the House. If only it had managed things differently, we could have gotten through the bills that it wanted to see passed before the summer without having to adopt all these time allocation motions.

As we saw this week, the worst part is that the government even moved a time allocation motion to change the Standing Orders,

which is completely unacceptable and breaks with every tradition, since major changes are normally made by consensus.

Will the Liberals admit that they are simply incapable of managing the House and that they could not care less what the opposition parties think?

[*English*]

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have great respect for my hon. colleague and had the opportunity to spend my first few years as a member of Parliament on the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities with him. Unfortunately, in this particular instance I have a different perspective.

The use of time allocation, I remind him, was a routine part of proceedings before we formed government in 2015. There are many hundreds of examples when former House leader Peter Van Loan used the exact same tool to put forward significant omnibus legislation when the opposition wanted to have a say.

The reality is that, as a result of our trying to get a number of things done as we approach the summer session and as a result of certain tactics being deployed by His Majesty's loyal opposition, we found ourselves in a scenario where we were being threatened with filibusters that would potentially continue through to the end of the session and that were going to delay important things from getting done.

This is a particular piece of legislation that has been well litigated in this chamber and the other, and we now have an opportunity to move forward on an issue for which I expect there is largely agreement between multiple parties. This will enable us to move over to other priorities I know people in parts of Canada care deeply about, whether it is protecting the environment, advancing health care reforms or including investments that will make life more affordable.

We need to be able to have these debates and complete legislation in a timely way, and I am going to be pleased to see Bill S-8 form part of Canadian law hopefully in the very near future.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I just want to say that there was a problem with the interpretation as you were rereading the motion, but the interpretation was working when the government member read it, so we were able to hear it then. With that, I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My question for my colleague, for whom I have a great deal of respect, concerns the competence of his House leader. We have seen him run roughshod over the practices and traditions of the House by amending the Standing Orders without unanimous consent and by imposing time allocation.

We sat late all week. We worked a lot of overtime last week and even before that. Summer is right around the corner, and several bills are being rushed through. We have been sitting a lot.

Government Orders

Does my colleague think that in addition to trampling on the practices and traditions of the House, his House leader is bad at planning?

[*English*]

Hon. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, to the contrary, my answer is no.

I too have great respect for my colleague. Again, in this instance, I think it is appropriate to exercise the government's ability to use time allocation in order to complete a piece of legislation that would make a fundamentally important change to render people inadmissible to Canada who have been sanctioned for gross human rights violations, for corruption and now for serious injuries to international peace and security.

This is something on which I do expect there is largely agreement among the parties. It would result in ensuring that the many people who have been sanctioned as a result of their participation in Russia's invasion into Ukraine or the massive abuses that are taking place against innocent people in Iran are not admissible to Canada.

My view is that the House leader has done an exemplary job of managing the agenda of the House in order to implement important reforms that we have worked together with opposition parties to secure, and this is the latest example that will allow us to move forward expeditiously with legislation that would improve Canada's laws and better serve Canadians by rendering inadmissible people the government has sanctioned for serious injuries to international peace and security, which I hope is something that will receive the unanimous support of members in this chamber.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it has been said many times that there are two Bloc parties in the House of Commons. There is the Bloc Québécois and the “block everything” party. The “block everything” party, the Conservatives, have blocked everything from dental care to the grocery rebate to affordable housing. Yesterday, we will remember, they blocked the hybrid Parliament, except that two-thirds of Conservatives used the hybrid provisions to vote against the hybrid Parliament. We just cannot make this stuff up. Now they are blocking Bill S-8.

My question to my hon. colleague is simply this. Why is the “block everything” party blocking everything that would actually help their constituents, including dental care, which would help about 10,000 people in each and every Conservative riding?

• (1235)

Hon. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but feel this question period is a reunion among friends. I mentioned my friend with whom I sat on the transport committee for a few years. The next two questioners I have spent considerable time on the finance committee with, which I very much enjoyed.

I cannot speak for His Majesty's loyal opposition, but I can observe from my own perspective a desire to interfere with the government's agenda for fear that people may actually see that the government is advancing measures that help people in communities. I believe there is a dissonance between the Conservatives' perspective on time allocation today compared with when they actually held government prior to October of 2015, a time when we will see

hundreds of examples of the government of the day using this very specific remedy in order to advance legislation when opposition parties were in disagreement.

I sense that when time allocation is being objected to on an area where significant debate has already taken place and where I expect potential unanimous agreement, this is more about the political effort to make sure the government cannot advance its agenda to help Canadians rather than it is the need to exhaust debate further.

These issues have been litigated in this chamber and in the other place. They would render inadmissible people conducting themselves in a way that seriously injures international peace and security. This is something I hope we can get behind, because the criminals responsible for Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the criminals responsible for the death of Mahsa Amini and for the many other protesters who have now been harassed, punished or killed do not deserve to come to Canada.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to reinforce what the minister is saying with regard to sanctions that are in place and preventing the individuals on whom the sanctions have been applied from being able to come into Canada. The minister is correct when he says there is broad support for it. Canadians as a whole, I believe, are behind the legislation. What we have seen in the debates I have witnessed in the chamber is that all parties will, in fact, be supporting the legislation.

The minister said earlier in his first answer that, when legislation is receiving such good support, sometimes it is better to see it pass so we can get to other subject matters on which there might be more division, which would allow for additional debate, given the fact, and this is the big issue, that there is a finite amount of time.

Hon. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, it will come as no surprise that I agree entirely with my hon. colleague who has posed the question.

The reality is that I have to come to understand over my now nearly eight years in this institution, that the greatest currency that any of us have in Parliament is time. There are a finite number of legislative days in which we have to advance laws that will improve the quality of life that Canadians get to enjoy. This particular idea is one that will render inadmissible some of the people who are responsible for the greatest sins committed globally in recent history. Those people should be inadmissible to Canada.

Where there is widespread agreement, particularly where this builds upon a bipartisan committee report and builds upon bipartisan support for the Magnitsky act sanctions that were put in place to begin with, we have an opportunity to quickly agree, do the right thing and then have serious debates on other issues that matter to Canadians. My constituents sent me because they wanted me to focus on things like making sure communities have access to primary care, making sure we protect our environment, making sure that we create jobs for people in our community and that life is more affordable for others.

Government Orders

It is important that we get to these issues where there may be constructive debates and differing ideologies, but on the things where we truly agree, where debate has been exhausted, it is important we make a decision to improve the quality of the laws that exist in Canada so that we can focus on improving the quality of life Canadians get to enjoy.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my concern around this legislation is not so much with the text of the bill as with the way that the government uses the sanctions tools that are available to it. Parliament gives the government sanctions tools, and then it is up to the government to determine how to use them. The government has been relatively limited and ineffective in its use of sanctions tools. There are also, I think, significant gaps in enforcement.

I want to ask the government a particular question about their sanctions regime and I hope we will hear an answer. Why has the government stopped using the Magnitsky act to sanction human rights abusers? It has been a number of years since that particular legislative tool has been used.

● (1240)

Hon. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy questions from the hon. member. I find them to be thoughtful, even though we often find ourselves in disagreement. I think to have respectful engagement on issues that matter is very important.

With respect, there are a number of different kinds of sanctions that may be most appropriate for different kinds of scenarios. In fact, before the changes to Bill S-8, there are certain kinds, including for human rights abuses, that could be launched more through our sanctions regime. We also had the opportunity to sanction individuals for significant acts of corruption, both of which could have rendered a person inadmissible. Going forward, we will be able to render people inadmissible as well for violations that cause interruptions to global peace and security. For what it is worth, there is another expansion that will ensure that we are not just dealing with acts committed by countries but also substate actors and terror organizations.

I think, going forward, when the facts justify it, it may be most appropriate to use sanctions for human rights abuses, but in the present instance we have seen a significant increase, as a result, in particular, of Russia's latest invasion into Ukraine, of bad actors who I think are complicit in those kinds of actions that have interrupted global peace and security. Whether it is for gross and systematic human rights violations, whether it is for significant acts of corruption or whether it is for this new power that will be rendering people inadmissible based on their erosion of international peace and security, I think all of those groups deserve to be sanctioned with inadmissibility, not just the pre-existing consequences that were available under the particular piece of legislation that is at issue in this particular debate.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I recall a very dismal decade of the Harper regime where time allocation was used all the time, but always to eliminate or push down rights or strip away things from people. We saw time allocation used to strip away pensions, forcing seniors to work longer years of their lives, often in physical labour. I spoke on the floor of the House of Commons, members will recall, about the damage that

the Harper regime was doing. They forced that through. They stripped away environmental protections. They covered up their myriad scandals over the period of a decade, all using time allocation, 150 times.

Now, in this Parliament, we see time allocation having to be used because of the Conservatives blocking things such as a sanctions list or an improved sanctions regime. It just does not seem to make sense.

I wanted to ask my colleague what the logic is around this, when Conservatives block important legislation that will actually benefit the country. What does my colleague think is behind that approach of blocking every single piece of legislation?

Hon. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, to respond to my hon. colleague, it is important that we understand that time allocation is not inherently a good nor a bad thing. The appropriateness of its use depends on how it is implemented in a given set of circumstances. To one extreme, if the government is using time allocation to stifle debate or avoid accountability, I think most people would agree that is a bad thing, but on the other side of the equation, it is possible that time allocation can be used to get things done, particularly in an instance such as this, where there is widespread agreement on an issue and where there has been debate.

To answer the member's question specifically, my belief is that the opposition by the Conservatives to the use of time allocation in this instance is driven by a desire to eat up some of the legislative time that remains to avoid having the government accomplish other things it has committed to doing to improve the quality of life of Canadians.

Of course, when we go home in the summer, having completed debates and passed good laws, it is something we will want to talk to people about in our communities. To the extent that Conservatives see government members or other members of this House talking about the good they have done for Canadians, there may be a partisan disadvantage to having had Parliament accomplish more things.

My view is that we should spend less time thinking about the partisan advantage we may gain and more time trying to get things done, so we can serve the people who have sent us here from our communities right across Canada.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can recall the days when I was in opposition, and I spent a good number of days in opposition. Even back then I would articulate as to why time allocation can be an effective tool in getting legislation through. Opposition at times can, in fact, cause a great deal of frustration of the legislative process, because it does not take much to prevent legislation from being passed. All it needs is putting up speakers or possibly moving an amendment. A classroom of grade 12 students from any high school in Winnipeg North, I can assure members, would be able to prevent any legislation from ultimately being passed or force the government to bring in time allocation. It does not take much.

The issue is having an adequate amount of debate, and looking for that support, as the minister says, such as with Bill C-35, on the national child care program. Everyone was supporting it. Everyone said they were going to be voting in favour of it. We can look at the amount of debate. Without time allocation, we never would have gotten it passed earlier.

I have a question for the member, and he has already spoken to a good part of it already. There is a need. It can be a useful tool, and I think we have been able to demonstrate good decision-making in terms of when we need to bring in time allocation.

That is more of a comment than a question, but the member can feel free to provide other thoughts.

• (1245)

Hon. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I often try to put myself in the shoes of a non-partisan observer, thinking about what debates may transpire in this chamber, in order to determine what may be appropriate, in terms of both the substance and the procedure of our debates.

My sense is that people who come from my community would like to see that we give an opportunity for parliamentarians who have a particular point of view to put that view forward in the House of Commons and to have people who come from different communities and different walks of life and have different lived experiences do the same. At the end of that reasonable debate, there should be a vote to determine whether the proposal should be adopted by the House of Commons and adopted into Canadian law, should the other chamber in Parliament also agree on the same form of that legislation.

This particular instance provides an excellent example of when time allocation is perfectly appropriate. There has been significant debate; the other chamber has adopted the law, and we are now dealing with the final stage of proceedings when it comes to doing something I think all members in this chamber will eventually support, which is to render inadmissible people who have been sanctioned for egregious conduct of the highest order.

When we have widespread agreement and when we have had significant debate, I think Canadians expect us to put it to a vote and move on to things that will allow us to deliver additional supports to their families, improve the quality of the services they enjoy and protect our natural environment.

I think the debate has been exhausted. I think time allocation is appropriate, and we will be able to get this done to improve the quality of laws we have on the books in this country.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, using time allocation seems to be a tradition the government has been doing for the last eight years. Because of that, the first impression comes to mind that it is an inability to deliver on time, to be able to manage properly and to have run the operation as smoothly as it should be run. That has to do—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: I am not addressing the NDP member there, if he can give me some quiet time.

Government Orders

Time allocation has been used more widely than ever, and it is a sign of the inability to manage properly. The assumption that it is always the official opposition that pushes the government toward that is not entirely correct.

Why is the government selective on using time allocation? On good things, it does not, but on certain other things it goes all the way.

Hon. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, with enormous respect for my colleague, it is revisionist history to suggest time allocation is being used more now than ever in history. I would point him to the many instances when the former House leader of the Conservative government, when it was in power before October 2015, implemented time allocation measures on hundreds of occasions in order to stifle debate.

The reality is, we use it sometimes and not others because it makes sense sometimes but not others. When there has not been sufficient debate to bring forward the best ideas from parliamentarians who represent communities across Canada, then I do not think we should be moving forward with time allocation.

It is the same when there is not an opportunity for people to have put their voices on the record in an attempt to further the debate and potentially change the legislation for the better. Those are opportunities where we should give space for people to contribute their ideas further.

When there is such widespread agreement, when people have had the opportunity to put their voices on the record and when there is not a lineup of speakers who are still trying to improve the quality of the laws we are debating, it is entirely appropriate to use time allocation to prevent opposition parties from using procedural delay tactics designed to prevent the government from implementing the agenda it has committed to Canadians that it would implement.

This is a perfect example of when time allocation is appropriate. There is widespread agreement, and there has been sufficient debate. We can all move forward knowing that this is going to improve the quality of our sanctions laws and inadmissibility regime in Canada, and I think it is appropriate that we wrap this debate up and continue to work on the things that matter most to Canadians.

• (1250)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to share my opinion on the gag orders, because judging by what the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader and the minister are saying, one would have to wonder whether gag orders are not the best thing since sliced bread. I consider gag orders to be a technique used to systematically muzzle the elected members of the House, which is unacceptable.

I believe that when the government invokes closure, it is because the government House leader has mismanaged the time spent on House business. All parties support Bill S-8. We are now at third reading, the committee did a good job, everything is going well, and I do not think that there were many members who wanted to speak at this stage.

Government Orders

I will give an example. Last night, until midnight, we discussed Bill C-9. We have discussed this several times before, even before the last election. Why has the government House leader not been able to say that this is important, that it enjoys a fairly broad consensus and that it will be implemented quickly? Instead, it takes years to be adopted and implemented.

I have two other examples. Closure was also invoked for Bill C-47, the budget implementation bill. It is hundreds of pages long and all the organizations that wanted to delve into it would have needed time to do so. Imposing closure on such a bill limits the amount of time available to go through it and the ability to correct the flaws in committee.

One last and extreme example dates back to the pandemic, when the government was not taking action. At one point, it came up with a bill that was to go through all stages immediately. We asked for a few weeks to study it. We wanted it to be introduced so that people could go through it and improve it. However, the government did not want to do that and said that everything had to be passed as soon as possible, without any study or review. Well, it then had to present other bills to fix the first one. That is an unacceptable and absolutely amateurish way of doing things.

[English]

Hon. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague has included a number of aspects in his question. I will do my best to address them in the time provided for in this particular instance.

I think it is important to recognize that, in any given instance, reasonable people can disagree on the appropriateness of a procedural measure used in the House of Commons. In this particular instance, where there is widespread agreement and where there has been sufficient debate, I think it is entirely appropriate.

The member cited Bill C-47, the budget implementation act. With enormous respect to all members of this House, I did not hear a novel argument put forward in that debate. We had an opportunity to debate the measures that were included in the budget. We had an opportunity to further debate some of the measures that were being implemented in Bill C-47.

My view is that with the supports that were going to be delivered to Canadians, including tax breaks for skilled tradespeople, advancing child care, other pieces of law that were dealt with previously and getting grocery rebates to people, there was an opportunity for us to deliver the supports that people had counted upon expeditiously. In my view, having not heard novel arguments being presented in the House of Commons, and needing to get supports to people in a timely manner at a time when those supports were most needed, it was also appropriate.

The wonderful thing about our democracy is that this decision is not made by any one individual, even by the cabinet. It is made by a majority of members who are elected to the House of Commons by the communities who sent them here. In each instance, time allocation has been supported by a majority of members.

I think that is the appropriate way to deal with the present issue, particularly given the widespread agreement and significant debate that have already taken place.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I would like to thank the member for his informed responses to all of our questions.

I still feel quite new as an MP, with this being my first term, so sometimes it feels like it takes me a while to learn some of these procedures, and time allocation is something that I am still getting myself familiar with. When I think about the last two years that we have sat here, with all the filibustering that we have seen and all the opportunities when we could have had more informed debates on important issues like addressing indigenous housing, indigenous poverty and the justice system that is very unfair to indigenous people, I wonder if the minister can explain, especially with Bill S-8, why time allocation is so important and what led up to this debate today.

• (1255)

Hon. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, though my colleague may be a new member, I can say she provides immense value to the debates that take place in this chamber, and I thank her for her presence here and the representation of her community. The member has learned a lesson, though she may be in her first term, far more quickly than I did when I was in my first term.

When I was first elected, I wanted to chase every car, make every argument and take part in every single debate. What I came to understand was that the greatest currency we have as parliamentarians is the time during which we can put forward the arguments that support our communities. Every minute that we spend on one issue is a minute we do not spend on another.

When we are dealing with an issue such as in Bill S-8, something as simple as rendering inadmissible some of the worst criminals who are responsible, in this case, for the latest invasion into Ukraine by Russia, and when we are dealing with the people who are responsible for the persecution of innocent people in Iran, following the death of Mahsa Amini, because they had the audacity to protest this egregious behaviour by their government, I think we can agree that we have had the debate we needed to have and that now we have the ability to move on to deal with other pressing issues, such as those the member referenced in her question. I look forward to hearing her perspective on those important debates as soon as we are able to wrap up this measure as quickly as possible.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have just two points to add to this debate.

The first point is that the government has used time allocation and closure at the same rate as the previous government did. CBC did an analysis of the two-year period of this government and found that the government managed to get 23 bills passed through the House of Commons and used time allocation and closure 23 times.

The previous government used time allocation double the number of times that the current government has done, but the previous government had double the number of bills that the current government has introduced into the House and adopted in the House. Therefore, if the government has used time allocation to a lesser extent in terms of absolute numbers than did the previous government, it is only because it has had a much lighter legislative agenda.

Government Orders

The second point I would make is that back in 2015, the Prime Minister and his party promised to do politics differently and promised to limit the use of closure and time allocation. Clearly, that has not happened.

Hon. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy the opportunity to engage with my hon. colleague. He is one of the most articulate members in the House of Commons.

With enormous respect, it is important that we not adjudicate the ability of a government to make a difference in people's lives by the number of bills that a government has adopted. It may be that there are bills that have an enormous impact that will take longer to debate. I think, for example, about Bill C-35, the opportunity to put an affordable early learning and child care strategy in place in this country, which has now received a significant amount of debate and will be implemented over time.

To the extent that our use of time allocation reflects the same number of instances per bill, I have no reason to doubt the figure that the member is citing. However, what is important is not just the number of times that it has been used, but the context in which it has been used. If we look at this present piece of legislation that is being debated on the floor of the House of Commons, we can see that there is widespread agreement, and we can see that there has been significant debate.

This is a sea change in the appropriateness when I look at some of the instances where it was used before I was a member of Parliament; in particular when omnibus budget legislation was used, not for relatively uncontroversial measures but for things that would significantly erode the environmental assessment process that we use for waterways and our oceans. These are the kinds of things that I know attracted a lot of controversy at the time, not just because time allocation was being used, but because of the widely divergent views on important issues that were existential to the debates that we have in these chambers.

My view is that this is an appropriate time to use time allocation. It does not reflect anything other than an attempt to get something done that, I think all members will agree, is the right path forward. I look forward to having debates where appropriate and moving forward expeditiously with legislation when we are able to find common ground and agree, after a healthy debate has taken place.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, time allocation and closure are two ways to kill democracy.

I would just like to give some advice to the party opposite. According to Shakespeare, the proud leave no glory behind them. That is something to think about.

[*English*]

Hon. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, Shakespeare also said this:

And do as adversaries do in law,
Strive mightily, but eat and drink as friends.

Although we disagree on the appropriateness of time allocation, I will continue to conduct myself respectfully in this debate.

The reality is that this is not an erosion of democracy. It is important that we have the opportunity to debate legislation. That has taken place, both in the other chamber and in this chamber.

We now have the opportunity to move forward with an important change that will render inadmissible some of the worst criminals and financiers of egregious acts that have threatened international peace and security. I trust that all members will agree that this is a good thing and we can put this to bed to focus on other priorities that are important to the people I represent in Central Nova.

• (1300)

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith the question on the motion now before the House.

[*Translation*]

The question is on the motion.

[*English*]

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.

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1345)

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

(*Division No. 383*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Ali
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bittle
Blaikie	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
Dong	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Garrison

Government Orders

Gazan	Gerretsen	Davidson	DeBellefeuille
Gould	Green	Deltell	Desbiens
Guilbeault	Hajdu	Desilets	Doherty
Hanley	Hardie	Dowdall	Dreeshen
Hepfner	Holland	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Epp
Housefather	Hughes	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Fast
Hussen	Hutchings	Ferreri	Findlay
Iacono	Idlout	Fortin	Gallant
Ien	Jaczek	Garon	Gaudreau
Johns	Joly	Généreux	Genuis
Jones	Jowhari	Gill	Gladu
Julian	Kayabaga	Godin	Goodridge
Kelloway	Khalid	Gourde	Gray
Khera	Koutrakis	Hallan	Jeneroux
Kusmierczyk	Kwan	Kelly	Kitchen
Lalonde	Lambropoulos	Kmiec	Kram
Lametti	Lamoureux	Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Lapointe	Lattanzio	Kusie	Lantsman
Lauzon	LeBlanc	Larouche	Lawrence
Lebouthillier	Lightbound	Lehoux	Lemire
Long	Longfield	Lewis (Essex)	Lloyd
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)	Lobb	Maguire
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor	Martel	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney	Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
Martinez Ferrada	Masse	McLean	Melillo
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)	Michaud	Moore
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty	Morantz	Morrice
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	Morrison	Motz
McLeod	McPherson	Muys	Nater
Mendès	Medicino	Normandin	O'Toole
Miao	Miller	Patzer	Paul-Hus
Morrissey	Murray	Pauzé	Perkins
Ng	Noormohamed	Perron	Plamondon
O'Connell	Oliphant	Poilievre	Rayes
O'Regan	Petitpas Taylor	Redekopp	Rempel Garner
Powlowski	Qualtrough	Richards	Roberts
Robillard	Rodriguez	Rood	Ruff
Rogers	Romanado	Scheer	Schmale
Sahota	Sajjan	Seeback	Shields
Saks	Samson	Shipley	Simard
Sarai	Scarpaleggia	Sinclair-Desgagné	Small
Schiefke	Serré	Soroka	Steinley
Sgro	Shanahan	Ste-Marie	Strahl
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Stubbs	Therrien
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Singh	Thomas	Tochor
Sorbara	Sousa	Tolmie	Uppal
St-Onge	Sudds	Van Popta	Vecchio
Tassi	Taylor Roy	Vidal	Vien
Thompson	Trudeau	Viersen	Vignola
Turnbull	Valdez	Villemure	Vis
Van Bynen	van Koeverden	Vuong	Wagantall
Vandal	Vandenbeld	Warkentin	Waugh
Virani	Weiler	Webber	Williamson
Wilkinson	Zahid	Zimmer— 135	
Zarrillo	Zuberi— 172		

NAYS

Members

Aboultarif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Berthold	Bérubé
Bezan	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Carrie
Chabot	Chambers
Champoux	Chong
Cooper	Dancho

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

CANADA BUSINESS CORPORATIONS ACT

BILL C-42—NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Kamal Khera (Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the report stage and third reading stage of Bill C-42, an act to amend the Canada Business Corporations Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other acts.

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 said bill.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Kamal Khera (Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I request that the ordinary hour of daily adjournment of the June 19, June 20, June 21, June 22 and June 23 sittings be 12 midnight, pursuant to order made Tuesday, November 15, 2022.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from May 2 consideration of the motion that Bill C-321, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (assaults against health care professionals and first responders), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-321 introduced by my colleague from Cariboo—Prince George.

This bill seeks to ensure that for the purposes of sentencing, the court considers the fact that the victim of an assault is a health care professional or a first responder to be an aggravating circumstance.

Before I go on, I would like to thank the health care workers—

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I will ask hon. members who are speaking in the chamber to please take it to the lobby so we can hear the hon. member for Manicouagan.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Manicouagan.

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Madam Speaker, I was saying that I wanted to take a moment, before I began my speech, to thank all the health care workers and first responders who supported the people in my riding and, of course, across Quebec and Canada during COVID-19. They certainly experienced this crisis more intensely than many of us. In a crisis, people are justifiably afraid. Unfortunately, fear can make people behave differently than usual, no matter how stressed they are. Some went through very difficult times and were victims of aggression, or even violence.

The same is true of the wildfires that swept through my riding not too long ago. They are still going on, in fact. We always think the situation is under control, but no. However, the staff at the Côte-Nord integrated health and social services centre managed to maintain health and social services. For instance, they had to get people out of their homes very quickly and evacuate them. In short,

Private Members' Business

these people are there every day, even if we do not see them. These people working behind the scenes deserve our utmost respect and obviously deserve to be able to work without endangering their physical and mental integrity.

Having said that, it will come as no surprise that the Bloc Québécois supports this bill, which responds to a recommendation in a 2019 committee report that called on the government to amend the Criminal Code to require a court “to consider the fact that the victim of an assault is a health care sector worker to be an aggravating circumstance for the purposes of sentencing”.

This measure had been called for by a number of groups representing health care workers. Whether it was the Canadian Medical Association, the Ontario Medical Association or the Canadian Nurses Association, they all supported such a measure. However, nothing was done to implement that recommendation because of the 2019 election. Bill C-321, introduced by my colleague from Cariboo—Prince George, does just that.

The Bloc Québécois is in favour of this bill even though, in a way, it is already covered to some extent by section 718.2 of the Criminal Code, which states that committing a serious crime against a health worker constitutes an aggravating factor. That is already understood. I hope that the intent is to reinforce this principle. However, this has already been taken into consideration. Despite this point that I wanted to emphasize, the Bloc Québécois is in favour of Bill C-321.

We want to point out that, although we agree, the fact that the Criminal Code makes it an aggravating factor for the purposes of sentencing is not a magic bullet. In fact, we must look after our health care workers on a day-to-day basis and we must also take preventive measures. That is also important. It is not one or the other, but both at the same time.

Of course, we believe that funding the health care system properly can help lower the risk of the kinds of aggressive or violent behaviour that we are discussing here. We saw this during the COVID-19 pandemic and in every circumstance. People need services, yet services are dwindling year by year. When I say “services”, I am including the work of nurses and all health care personnel. These people have their own concerns. They may have physical difficulties, plus mental or psychological health issues as well.

● (1350)

It is important to look at the whole picture. The issue of the drastically shrinking health transfers cannot be ignored. We need a health care system that can meet the needs of the people. There is nothing magical about that, either.

Private Members' Business

I am not saying that no one is being aggressive or violent towards health care workers and first responders. I think this is everybody's responsibility, in all cases. The bill introduced by my colleague from Cariboo—Prince George seeks precisely to protect health care workers so that they can do their work, what they were hired to do, what they want to do and what they are called to do. My mom was a nurse for 40 years, and I can say that it is definitely a calling.

That is the basis of the measure. They need free rein. Health transfers are one measure. The Bloc Québécois says it often here in the House, and I am going to remind the House again. It is not just because we believe it. It is not a belief. It is really an established fact. It is an option available to the federal government in light of the fiscal imbalance.

We are dealing with an area of Quebec jurisdiction. The federal government's coffers are overflowing, but year after year, the money given back to Quebec and the provinces for health care has diminished. It is a feasible option. When I talk about responsibility, from where I stand, the federal government also has a responsibility to contribute to health transfers.

I thank my colleague. This has been a recommendation for the government since 2019. The member seized the opportunity and decided to lead the charge for health care workers. I thank him for taking the initiative.

I also encourage everyone in the House and the government to reflect yet again on the issue of health transfers. It is not just through sentencing people who break the law that our health care workers will be protected. It is by giving our health care systems the means that we will be able to protect workers and the public who deserve to have good health care. To be able to live a healthy life, both physically and mentally, we need to have good health care. I really want to expand on that.

I will close by reiterating our responsibility. We need to go further than individual measures. We need to take a holistic approach to protect our health care workers and our first responders.

• (1355)

[*English*]

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, as always, it is an honour to rise in the House and speak on behalf of my community of Peterborough—Kawartha.

The helpers need help from Bill C-321. That is why we are here today. I think it would be a real miss if I did not start this speech by addressing the horrible tragedy that happened yesterday in Manitoba, which involved first responders and health care providers. That is what we are here to talk about with this bill.

There was a horrific crash, and 15 people are gone. The first responders who answered that call are forever transformed because of what they saw. That is the work of a first responder or health care worker. Their eyes cannot unsee the tragedies that most of us will only ever see in movies. I thank everyone who arrived at the scene and served in such an unbelievable time of chaos and tragedy. The entire House is thinking of them, our thoughts are with them and with everyone impacted by that tragedy and in that community.

I worked in the media for almost 13 years, and I was often on the scene of horrific crashes first, with first responders. I can tell members that what they manage is very hard to describe. PTS, or post-traumatic stress, and PTSD, or post-traumatic stress disorder, are very real consequences in this job.

Answering a call when the victim is the same age as one's partner or child causes extensive mental distress. Many would say that it is part of the job and that this is what one signs up for. The reality is that, as life has gotten harder for people, as addictions and mental disorders have increased and there are not as many facilities or treatment or recovery centres to go to, the incidence of violence against our protectors is increasing. This is another layer that is too much to handle.

Workplace violence is a rising problem in health care settings across Canada. Health care workers have a fourfold higher rate of workplace violence than any other profession. Because of a culture of acceptance, most workplace violence goes unreported. This was found in a report that was done in 2019 through the health committee, and recommendations have been put forth to the government, yet we have not seen any action. Today, we have something here on the floor of the House of Commons that will give action and help to our helpers.

It would be pretty difficult to debate the strong correlation between the increase in violence to first responders and health care workers and the decrease in recruitment and retention in these jobs. We have a shortage of health care workers at a time when we have a health care crisis. Recruitment and retention concerns are reported in all provinces. By approving and passing this bill, we will send a clear message that the government and Canadians value their work, and we need and want them. Their work saves lives, and their safety matters.

The member from Cariboo—Prince George, who put this bill forward, is a fierce advocate and fighter for mental health and equity, and this bill speaks to that from a Criminal Code perspective. Bill C-321 seeks to amend the Criminal Code by making assaults against health care professionals and first responders an aggravating circumstance for the purpose of sentencing.

I am going to read the specific wording into the record:

When a court imposes a sentence for an offence referred to in paragraph 264.1(1)(a) or any of sections 266 to 269, it shall consider as an aggravating circumstance the fact that the victim of the offence was, at the time of the commission of the offence, a health care professional or a first responder engaged in the performance of their duty.

I think most of us in the House, including me, have a personal connection to first responders and health care workers. Many in my family serve in this industry, and they have told me story after story of horrific incidents. There is also a video that I would strongly encourage people to watch online. I know the member, my colleague, has shared it, and the chief in my community, Randy Mellow, has shared it on Twitter. I strongly encourage people to watch this video and understand this.

Paul Hills is a paramedic who came to my office in Ottawa to talk to me about this bill. He has been a paramedic for 24 years, and he serves in Saskatoon. I think what left me most shocked was his telling me that he now has to wear a bulletproof vest to work.

● (1400)

These are the people who show up in the time of extreme chaos, the time when our lives are on the line, and now their lives are on the line. They are supposed to be the calm, but how are they supposed to self-regulate? How are they supposed to be calm when their own life is in danger? They do not know, when they show up, whether they are going to be stabbed, punched or kicked.

We have a duty and a responsibility in the House to pass legislation that not only says they matter, but that also actually puts the need to protect them into law.

Paul Hills is a fierce advocate, and his mental health has been transformed. He speaks really publicly about it, and I think that is really courageous of him. He was wearing certain socks when he came to my office. After we had our conversation, I asked him who was on his socks. He said it was Fred Rogers. I said, “Oh my gosh, Fred Rogers is my favourite.” He said, “My favourite saying is ‘Anything mentionable is manageable.’” That is my favourite saying too.

That is the reality of what we are dealing with: the most volatile culture and society we have ever had, probably in my history at least. We have nowhere for people with mental health problems and addictions to go. The people who have to deal with that, who are at the forefront, are our health care professionals, our paramedics, our firefighters, our police officers and our correctional officers. During my campaign when I ran to be a member of Parliament, I worked in an area of town where a lot of people who were struggling with homelessness were outside of my office. It was nothing out of the ordinary for first responders to be called five or six times in a day to a scene, after 911 had been called, and to be berated, yelled at, attacked and screamed at. Is that what they signed up for, to be abused, or was it to save lives?

This bill would do something we can be so proud of in the House, in a time when victims are being failed in this country and in a time when victims' families are being failed in this country. This is not just about the health care professionals and the first responders; it is also about their families. When health care professionals go home and are carrying this burden, their children are impacted; their wives, their partners, their spouses, their moms and their dads are impacted, and they are not the best partner and not the best parent. That is deeply impacting every interaction that happens. Our society is a spiderweb, and if the people who are here to protect us are not protected, what will happen to our society?

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I want to read what Paul Hills, the paramedic from Saskatoon, wrote to me last night, when he knew I was speaking today: “It's proven that prosecutors and courts don't have a proper mechanism to hold assailants or perpetrators accountable because it's seen as part of our job to deal with or lessen the situation because of mental health, addictions, but what about the medics mental health. I have to take that black eye home, I may not be able to use my wrist or hand again after the tendon was torn from being kicked, I have to worry about the threats that gang member made to me and my family when I am not allowed anonymity and they can find out my name just by calling the office and look me up or follow me home in my small city. We have been told by prosecutors that they won't pursue charges because ‘they won't stick or it won't make a difference if you were a paramedic.’”

The reality is that this is a no-brainer bill. In a time when victims and victims' families are being failed in this country, the House could send a message today and follow up with concrete action that would protect our protectors. The helpers need help. Do members know how hard it is for them to ask for help? They did the hard part; now, let us do the rest of our part. This is our responsibility, so let us all vote in favour of Bill C-321. Let us go. Let us get this bill passed.

● (1405)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, like my colleague before me, I also want to pay my respects to all those who have been impacted by the terrible bus crash in the Prairies, and their family members. I thank all the first responders and everybody in our health care system especially. It is a traumatic experience for them and for everybody in those communities.

We are in the middle of a crisis in my riding. There are wildfires that have cut my riding right in half. Over 30,000 of my constituents are cut off from the rest of Canada. Many of them are struggling. I have to give a shout-out to all those people who are fighting the wildfires, all the first responders and the people in our community who are stepping up, like those who work at the food banks. We are looking out for each other. It is what we do in Canada and across this country, especially in rural Canada; we look out for each other.

It is a tremendous privilege to rise to speak to this bill. I have worked with my colleague from Cariboo—Prince George since we both got elected in 2015. He brought forward a bill for a PTSD strategy. He has experience in this area, or at least knowledge of it. He has been a strong advocate for first responders and people working in health care since I have gotten to know him, and I do appreciate his bringing forward this bill. We are both from rural B.C., and we understand the importance of looking out for our health care workers, especially in rural Canada.

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We know this bill would amend the Criminal Code to require a court to consider the fact that the victim of an assault was, at the time of the commission of the offence, a health care professional or first responder engaged in the performance of their duties, and that that would be an aggravating circumstance.

The main thing that we, members of the NDP, want to say is that, clearly, no health care worker or first responder should ever be subjected to violence in the workplace. Bullying, abuse, racial or sexual harassment and physical assault should never be considered part of the job. Health care workers take care of us at our most vulnerable times; they look out for us. We rely on them. We have a responsibility to take care of them in return. That has not been happening. I am going to speak to that in depth.

Violence against health care workers is a pervasive and growing problem in the Canadian health care system. Both the number and the intensity of attacks are increasing at an alarming rate. Assaulting a health care worker not only harms the individual person but also puts our entire health care system at risk. I am going to speak to that in more depth. Workplace violence is a major factor driving Canada's dire health care staffing shortage. We know that workplace violence is a pervasive problem in health care settings across the country. However, prior to COVID-19, health care workers already had a fourfold higher rate of workplace violence than people in any other profession. We know it has gotten worse since then. Incidents of violence against health care workers have escalated dramatically during the pandemic and postpandemic.

We were already in a crisis, like I said, prepandemic. We have seen that there is a labour market shortage in the health care system. We have seen the increased demands on the health care system. In 2017, a survey cited that 68% of registered practical nurses and personal support workers experienced violence on the job at least once that year. Imagine someone going to work and that, at least once a year, there will be a violent attack committed against them. Who wants to work in that environment? It is just terrible to hear these stories. Nearly one in five of the RPNs and PSWs surveyed said they had been assaulted nine or more times in that year alone. We have heard, from the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, that violence-related incidents and claims for frontline health care workers have increased by almost 66% over the past decade, which is three times the rate of the increase for police and correctional service officers combined, who are also facing an increase.

We really need to step back and look at how, over the last couple of decades, we have seen a huge erosion of our health care system. I am going to speak a bit more about that.

● (1410)

If we look at Canada's ratio of nurses to patients, we have one of the worst in the world. In universal health care, we are at the bottom. We are just above the U.S. That is just a terrible stat on its own. Nurses know this full well. Their patients see them running from patient to patient and the stress this creates.

Nurses are really the victims of the failure of consecutive federal and provincial governments to stabilize and strengthen our health care system. They have been dealing with the huge erosion of cuts. They are dealing with the people at the front line. When there is a

wait at an ER or a wait to get the services people so desperately need in their vulnerable state, it is the frontline health care workers who are dealing with a political problem. The cuts from all levels of government are falling on the people on the front line, and that is creating a huge strain on the patients and on their families, as we know. It is slowly eroding staff levels as well because people are having to make difficult choices.

The long-term health care system is now over 50% privatized. Privatization has a huge impact on the health care system as well, as there is a lack of protection for workers, inadequate wages and staffing levels that are quite low. The health care system is in deep trouble, and staffing is a major issue. There is frustration in the lack of care, like I said earlier, and the burnout it is causing people on the front line. This is a crisis, and it is propelling these terrible statistics.

One thing I wanted to highlight is that we need to do a few things to help fix that. We need to invest in our health care system, stop for-profit health care and ensure that we are supporting the staff. The bill before us is a really important start to that, but there is also the burnout.

We are hearing from nurses, and they are saying they have three options. The first is to leave the field. The second is to get burnt out and make a mistake while practising their care. This is falling on them. The overburdening of our health care system is falling on them. Can members imagine going to work, worried they would make a mistake while trying to take care of somebody? The third option nurses have is to reduce to part-time hours, but that creates even further erosion of the health care system.

There is a lot of compassion fatigue happening as well. I really appreciate my colleague before me talking about the lack of mental health support. We now have a two-tiered health care system. Our mental health care system is a two-tiered health care system. There are people who need care. We are hearing from people who cannot get access to that care. They have to get arrested just to get the care they need. That is absolutely ridiculous. They have to get arrested. What kind of state are they in at that point?

When they go to the ER and they are in that kind of state, it is health care workers who are dealing with them. This is not acceptable. We need to ensure that we create parity with physical and mental health, and that we are not reactionary. Right now our health care system is reactionary instead of preventative, and we need to get to a preventative state.

It is an uphill battle, and it is exhausting everybody in this country.

I do want to highlight that our critic from Vancouver Kingsway tabled a very similar bill, Bill C-434, to ensure that we are on this path, and I believe my friend from Cariboo—Prince George tabled a very similar bill.

We want to make sure that we get the definition of health care professional or first responder right, so we are supportive, obviously of this legislation, and we can work on that with our colleague at committee. I am sure we can find a pathway to doing that. This legislation is an important legislation that we have heard support for from the Paramedic Association of Canada, the Paramedic Chiefs of Canada and all important stakeholders.

I have to highlight something before I finish. The majority of health care workers who experience workplace violence are women, and this violence is often connected to gender-based discrimination and harassment. This needs to stop. According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information's 2019 report on health workplace statistics, women account for approximately 82% of Canada's regulated health professionals, which includes nurses, midwives, physicians, dentists, pharmacists and other health professionals.

We have lots of work to do. We are very supportive and appreciative of this bill and legislation.

● (1415)

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise today to speak to Bill C-321, which was introduced by our hon. colleague from Cariboo—Prince George. Before I proceed further, I would like, on behalf of 838,000 Hindu Canadians, to again acknowledge and thank the hon. member for his support for my private member's motion, which enabled November every year to be recognized as Hindu Heritage Month across Canada.

Bill C-321 seeks to denounce and deter violence against nurses, paramedics, firefighters, police officers, including transit officers or special constables, and other frontline health care staff. It would amend the Criminal Code to require a court to consider as an aggravating factor for sentencing purposes the fact that the victim is a health care professional or first responder who was acting in the performance of their duties.

As highlighted in the 2019 report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health, entitled "Violence Facing Health Care Workers in Canada", health care workers have a four-times higher rate of workplace violence than any other profession, despite most of this violence being unreported. The report also noted that 61% of nurses who participated in a cross-country survey reported experiencing abuse, harassment or assault in the previous year, and 74% of the paramedics reported experiencing multiple forms of violence annually.

The men and women who serve as health care professionals and first responders play an invaluable role in our society. They are the heroes who rush toward danger while others flee, the ones who provide critical medical care in times of crisis and the ones who maintain law and order to keep our communities safe. They face countless challenges and risks, working tirelessly to protect and preserve life, often at the expense of their own well-being. It is deeply troubling to witness an alarming increase in assaults against these dedicated individuals. They are subjected to physical violence, verbal

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abuse and threats while carrying out their duties. These attacks not only pose a direct threat to their safety, but also undermine the integrity of our health care system and emergency services.

It is essential that we take a strong stand against such heinous acts and provide a higher level of protection for those who selflessly dedicated their lives to serving others. By amending the Criminal Code, we would send a resounding message that assaults on health care professionals and first responders will not be tolerated. We are acknowledging the unique challenges they face and recognizing the importance of their contributions to society. When passed, the bill would serve as a deterrent, discouraging potential perpetrators from engaging in acts of violence against these essential workers.

Furthermore, by considering assaults against health care professionals and first responders as an aggravating factor during sentencing, we would acknowledge the broader implications of such attacks. These assaults not only cause physical harm to individuals, but also have far-reaching consequences for public safety and the provision of essential services. By recognizing this as an aggravating factor, we would ensure that those who commit these crimes face more significant penalties, reflecting the gravity of their actions and the impact on society as a whole.

Some may suggest that existing laws already provide adequate protection for health care professionals and first responders. However, the stark reality is that assaults against these individuals are on the rise and we must respond with targeted measures that explicitly recognize the unique vulnerabilities they face. By enshrining their protection within the Criminal Code, we would send a clear and unequivocal message that their safety and well-being are of paramount importance.

● (1420)

Moreover, this bill reflects our commitment to creating a safe and supportive environment for health care professionals and first responders. It demonstrates that we value their selfless dedication and are committed to ensuring they can perform their duties without fear of violence or aggression. By enacting this bill, we are standing in solidarity with those who risk their lives to protect ours.

In addition to deterrence and enhanced protection, this bill has the potential to foster cultural change. It sends a powerful message to society, urging us to reflect on the value and respect we afford to those on the front lines of service. It encourages a broader shift in attitudes, promoting a collective sense of responsibility to safeguard those who dedicate their lives to safeguarding us.

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The amendment proposed in Bill C-321 is similar to Bill C-3, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Canada Labour Code, which included as an aggravating factor evidence that the offence was committed against a person who was providing health services. Bill C-3 received royal assent on December 17, 2021. Our government continues to show support to first responders, including with the recent passage of a private member's bill, Bill C-224, the national framework on cancers linked to firefighting act, which passed on March 8, 2023, at third reading.

Bill C-321 applies to the performance of any duty by a first responder or health care worker, not just to cases where the victim was providing health services at the time of the offence. Amendments will make the legislation consistent with the terminology used elsewhere and will provide broad protection so that it does not apply only to health care professionals. As citizens, it is our duty to advocate for the safety and well-being of those who dedicate their lives to caring for us in times of need.

In conclusion, the proposed amendment to the Criminal Code represents a significant step forward in ensuring the safety and well-being of our health care professionals and first responders. By recognizing assaults against them as aggravated offences, we are reaffirming our commitment to protecting those who selflessly serve our communities.

Let us come together as a nation to support this legislation, sending a strong message that we stand united against violence and aggression toward those who sacrifice so much to protect us.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George has the floor for his right of reply.

• (1425)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, before I get started with my speech on Bill C-321, I hope you will indulge me for about 30 seconds. All colleagues know that we were supposed to have a late-night sitting tonight. I was supposed to travel home tonight to speak at my best friend's niece's wedding. I cancelled the flight and cannot get home, so I would love to say a few words. To Chunpreet and Jushin, there is only one happiness in life, and that is to love and to be loved. On my behalf and on behalf of my wife, Kelly, I say congratulations to them.

I thank my colleagues for all their heartfelt interventions in this debate. It is a pleasure to rise today on Bill C-321. We have had an opportunity to hear from all sides of the House, and I thank each and every one for their thoughtful interactions. I thank my colleague from Vancouver Kingsway for the work that he has done on previous iterations of this bill.

I am glad there seems to be consensus that violence against those on the front lines should not go unchecked. It is imperative that we get the bill passed as soon as possible. If anyone here today needs an example of why it is so important that we get this bill passed, we need look no further than London, Ontario. Just a few short days ago, while responding to an apartment fire, a London Fire Department captain was brutally assaulted while trying to save someone.

The reality is that these incidents are taking place each and every day, whether in our health care facilities or on the front lines with

paramedics, firefighters, police officers or correctional officers. We need to do more. We need to be better. By doing nothing, what message are we sending to those who serve our country and our communities?

This bill is supported by all associations and unions across this country that look after our health care workers, first responders and public safety personnel. Obviously, my bill is not perfect. In a perfect world, we would not need the Criminal Code. We would not need to deter acts of violence against a nurse or health care worker just simply trying to heal people. We would not need to amend the Criminal Code against acts of violence to help protect a paramedic or firefighter who is only trying to save people. However, we do not live in a perfect world, do we?

The drafting of this legislation came from my heart. I truly believe that we need to do more to help those who help us. In my seven-plus years as an MP, I have shied away from the angry partisan side of politics, or tried to. I have attempted to build consensus. I have worked hard to establish a reputation as someone who fights for the little guy, who fights for those who protect us. I have done everything in my power to break the stigma and fear of those who are suffering with mental illness or addiction.

This legislation is a tangible way that we, as parliamentarians, can show those on the front lines that we care, that we respect them and that we do not condone violence in their workplace. We need them to know that we have their backs. We need to let them know that we are listening, that bullying, abuse, racial or sexual harassment and physical assault should never and can never be considered just part of the job. These workers care for us at our most vulnerable times, and we have a responsibility to care for them in return. We need to send a message that violence is unacceptable.

I listened to the speech from the member for Vancouver Kingsway. In it, he rightly noted that Bill C-321 does not specifically define the term "health care professionals". In his comments, he worried that some would be excluded. I agree, and that is why I suggested to the member that we change the term to "health care worker". My intent was never to exclude anyone. I look forward to working with him on the committee.

I really hope we can get the bill passed as soon as possible. There does not need to be an extensive study at committee. In fact, if the member for Vancouver Kingsway or any of the members on the government side wanted to move a friendly amendment right now to open the definition, I would be happy to accept it and pass this bill at all stages today. We could even use the wording provided by my hon. colleague from Richmond Hill, replacing the reference to “health care professional” with “a person who provides health services”.

• (1430)

This issue was studied extensively at the health committee in 2019, and Bill C-321 is a product of that study. Through its unanimous report, “Violence Facing Health Care Workers in Canada”, the committee suggested making the amendments to the Criminal Code. I know that this is not the be-all and end-all, but it is a start. It sends a message that we are listening. It sends a message to the judiciary that we take violence against first responders very seriously.

I am also worried about the rumours in this place. I am worried that if Parliament dissolves or prorogues, we will be back at square one with no protections for those who protect us. This bill is important because it would act as a deterrent. It is important because it would help protect those on the front lines. It is important because it provides hope. It is important because it would let those who protect us know that we want to protect them. I am tired of providing false hope.

I want to thank all the health care workers, public safety personnel and first responders for all that they do for us. I want to thank those in Manitoba, the emergency service providers and the first responders who responded to that horrific event. I want to thank everyone for listening in today.

Violence is not part of their job description. Three two one, let us get this done.

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]

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to an order made on Thursday, June 23, 2022, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 21, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED BREACH OF MEMBER'S RIGHT TO INFORMATION

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am rising to respond to the question of privilege raised by the mem-

Privilege

ber for Calgary Nose Hill on June 15, respecting the government's response to an Order Paper question, Question No. 974.

I believe the Speaker's ruling of February 2, continues to stand in the case before this House.

The government met the requirements of the Standing Orders by responding to the question within the prescribed time frame. Moreover, I would draw the attention of members to a part of the information the member obtained through her Access to Information Act request but did not reference in her intervention.

Concerning why the government did not respond more comprehensively to the question asked, there are legitimate reasons. I will read from the response released from the access to information request: “The response notes the Government of Canada cannot disclose information on mining company meetings held within the U.S. DPA Title III program: the information involves international affairs and defense, scientific and technical information, commercial sensitivity and ongoing negotiations”.

The government met the requirements of the Standing Orders in tabling its response to the Order Paper question. The response to the access to information request provides a legitimate rationale as to the reasons it was not in a position to include certain information in its response.

The member raised a ruling respecting the RCMP intercepting mail from 1978, which in no way bears any relevance to the matter raised by the member. In that case, it was found that a minister deliberately misled the House and gave information that conflicted with the facts. This is not the case here. The response to the access to information request confirms that there were legitimate reasons not to include sensitive information, which have not been refuted in this House by a minister of the Crown.

There was no valid point of order when this was first raised by the member earlier this year and, equally, there are no valid grounds upon which to determine that this matter constitutes a prima facie question of privilege.

• (1435)

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, when employees from a minister's office or any department devise strategies to avoid answering legitimate questions from members of the House of Commons, it is, for us, a prima facie question of privilege. I therefore wanted to advise you that the member for Calgary Nose Hill wishes to reserve the right to respond to the comments made by the deputy government whip.

*Government Orders***POINTS OF ORDER**

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS NO. 22

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order in connection with Motion No. 22, which was adopted by the House on November 15, 2022.

I was very surprised and deeply appalled when the government announced earlier that we are going to sit until midnight on June 23. I would remind members that the House unanimously adopted a motion recognizing Quebec as a nation. Here in the House, members are well aware that Quebec's national holiday is celebrated on the evening of June 23 in just about every municipality. We were sure that we had an agreement with the Leader of the Government in the House in that regard, but now we have learned that we do not.

I want to read the beginning of Motion No. 22, which states, and I quote:

That, notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House,

(a) until Friday, June 23, 2023, a minister of the Crown may, with the agreement of the House leader of another recognized party, rise from his or her seat at any time during a sitting, but no later than 6:30 p.m., and request that the ordinary hour of daily adjournment for a subsequent sitting be 12:00 a.m.....

What I would like to know is which House leader of another recognized party supported this motion.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member knows that I will not be able to answer that question, because I am not part of the discussions. However, I will take that under advisement and the Chair will follow up if necessary.

[English]

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise on the same point of order.

I want you to be aware that the Conservative Party, the official opposition, wants to ensure that the House recognizes Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day and that there is no sitting or interruption of that observation by the House.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): This is duly noted. It will be considered as soon as the Chair can come back with a resolution.

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Madam Speaker, I believe if you seek it, you will find there is agreement among the parties to see the clock at the beginning of Government Orders.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROTECTION ACT

The House resumed from June 13 consideration of Bill S-8, An Act to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, to make

consequential amendments to other Acts and to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of Motion No. 1.

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am so pleased to rise today to speak to Bill S-8, which seeks to make amendments to consequential acts for the purpose of expanding the Minister of Public Safety's ability to declare people inadmissible to Canada, or to deport people from Canada from groups or countries that have been sanctioned.

I want to say that this is the kind of legislation that I think Canadians are increasingly wanting to see in this country. They want to see the government take strong actions against human rights violators and war criminals, as we are seeing with the illegal war in Ukraine started by the President of Russia. We want to see the government take strong action to hold these criminals accountable. I think, absolutely, that the spirit of the bill is something I would be pleased to support.

However, what I do find somewhat disturbing is that we can write the best legislation that we can in the House, but that the best legislation is nothing unless there is the enforcement behind it to ensure that it is achieving the outcomes it is intended to achieve. I think of the illegal foreign police stations that are currently operating in this country. Surely it is illegal for foreign governments to run police stations in our country for the purpose of coercing citizens, permanent residents or guests in our country. We need to ensure that the enforcement is taking place, in those cases and in the cases under this legislation, to protect Canadians' lives, to protect Canadians and permanent residents from intimidation, and also to send a strong message of Canadian values.

We have seen many reports on this. I think there are a lot of people who have been concerned over the years that Canada is becoming, or has become, somewhat of a haven for foreign criminals or foreign entities that are sanctioned to hide their money here or to come and live here to avoid the consequences of their actions at home. What we want to see is not only strong legislation that sends a message, but also strong enforcement by the government.

With that, I want to say that it is a Friday afternoon. As we go into the weekend, it will be Father's Day. I just want to wish a happy Father's Day to all Canadians and to all members of the House who are fathers. Our children are a blessing. Our thoughts are with those of us who may have lost a parent in the past year; that leaves a huge hole in people's lives. Let us always appreciate the people in our lives, particularly this weekend when we think of the fathers in all our lives.

● (1440)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I appreciated working with the member at the public safety committee.

I am a little confused by the Conservatives' position. Is the Conservatives' position that this bill needs to be adopted, or is the Conservatives' position that they would like to continue stalling on this bill? I would like some clarification from my hon. colleague.

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Madam Speaker, I too have enjoyed my time at the public safety committee with the member.

What one member calls “stalling” is what I call “democracy”, because when the government is doing something that is so offside with what Canadians want, it is the duty of all parliamentarians to use whatever means necessary to ensure either that the legislation is defeated or that it is amended in such way as to remove the offending parts of that legislation. We saw that very clearly with the debate on Bill C-21 and how the strong opposition from Conservative members of Parliament did lead to some significant changes to the legislation by the government. That is democracy in action. What one member calls “stalling”, I would call “democracy in action”.

On this bill in particular, what we support is the spirit of the bill. What I want to make sure is that the government members actually enforce the provisions they are trying to give themselves the power on.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, therein is the confusion. The Conservatives have been stalling on this. Now they are saying they want the government to actually put the provisions into effect. The problem is, of course, that as long as the bill is stalled, the provisions cannot come into effect. It is the same contradiction we saw with Conservatives yesterday, as 66% of the Conservative caucus used the hybrid voting provisions to vote against hybrid Parliament. We are not talking about one or two who did what is very clear that—

• (1445)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give the hon. member for Sturgeon River—Parkland an opportunity to answer.

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Madam Speaker, we are going to look at all legislation—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Madam Speaker, it seems there is a bit of a ruckus in the House.

As I said, I wish all members a very happy Father's Day. What we do here is about standing up for our constituents and standing up for Canadians. I will make no apology for doing what is necessary to stand up for the values and interests of the people who sent me here.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, since we heard that complete non sequitur from the previous intervenor to the member for Sturgeon River—Parkland, I would give him the opportunity to also reflect upon how, in his previous answer, he did offer that Conservatives have used opportunities, as we have in this past session, to improve legislation and stand up for democracy.

We have seen the exact opposite from NDP members, who have sold out their constituents, sold out their voters and thrown their lot in with a government that has been found to be corrupt time and time again, especially by independent officers of Parliament who have seen the Prime Minister found guilty of breaking ethics laws.

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Madam Speaker, it is disappointing. Time and time again, we have seen the NDP sell out its core values on a number of pieces of legislation in order to keep this coalition government going.

Government Orders

I can completely understand why the NDP does not want to face the voters at this time, but the fact is that eventually it is going to be held accountable and the people are going to have to decide whether or not this coalition that the NDP has formed with the Liberal government is something that they will support.

In my constituency, we have been getting calls because people cannot get through to the office of the NDP member for Edmonton Griesbach. The line has been down for over a month now, and they wanted to talk to him about Bill C-21 and about how upset they were about it. They actually had to come to my office to try to get any answers.

Clearly, what we need is a member in Edmonton Griesbach who is going to stand up for their constituents. I know my great friend Kerry Diotte would be a great person for that job.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I will just put aside the character assignment of the very hard-working member for Edmonton Griesbach, one of the best members in the House of Commons, and simply remark that there is not a single Conservative MLA in the entire metropolitan area of Edmonton now, as—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I will have to ask the hon. member for Sturgeon River—Parkland to give a very brief answer.

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Madam Speaker, as an MP who does represent the metropolitan area of Edmonton, I do not have a single NDP MLA in my constituency, so I would say that the member is wrong. We have very strong representation for our region in the legislature, and I look forward to working with Minister Turton; Minister Nally; the whip, Shane Getson; and Andrew Boitchenko to stand up and fulfill the mandate that the Albertan people gave to the UCP government.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The question is on Motion No. 1.

[*English*]

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.

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded vote.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, 2022, the recorded division stands deferred until June 19, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

*Government Orders**[English]*

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Madam Speaker, I believe if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent among the parties to see the clock at midnight.

• (1450)

[Translation]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It being midnight, pursuant to order made Tuesday, November 15, 2022, the House stands adjourned until Monday, June 19, at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:49 p.m.)

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