



HOUSE OF COMMONS
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CANADA

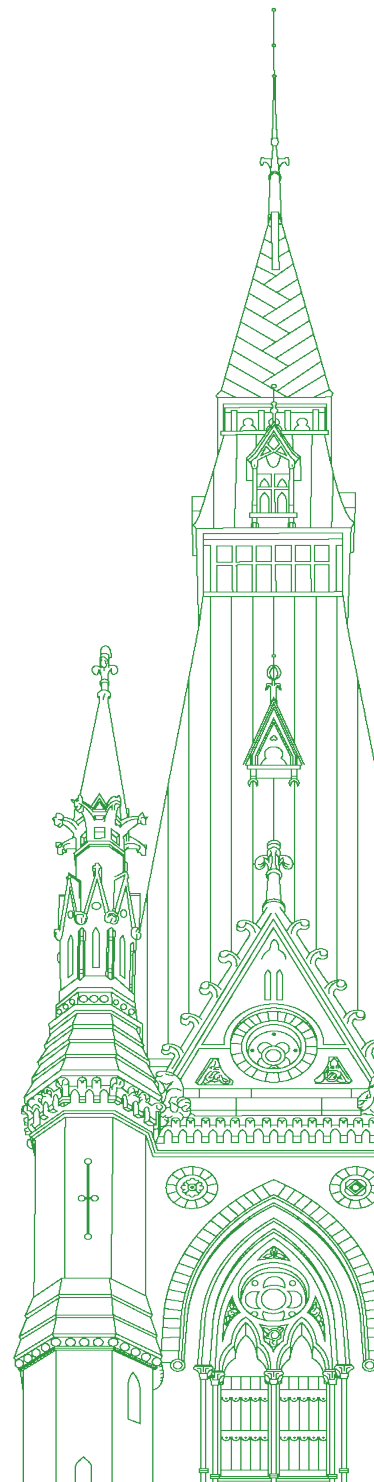
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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, October 16, 2023

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

• (1100)

[*Translation*]

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED MISLEADING RESPONSE TO ORDER PAPER QUESTION

The Speaker: Dear colleagues, on Thursday, October 5, 2023, the member for Calgary Nose Hill raised a question of privilege relating to the response to Order Paper question Q-1417. In her arguments, the member noted that I was one of the three members who signed off on the response, in my previous role as Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister.

[*English*]

In order to avoid any appearance of conflict of interest, I have decided to recuse myself from this matter and have asked the Deputy Speaker to rule on this question of privilege. I believe this to be the appropriate course of action as, according to our rules and practices, the Deputy Speaker, whom this House elects, has the full authority to act on behalf of the Speaker when he or she is not able to do so. I informed the member for Calgary Nose Hill of my decision on the afternoon of Friday, October 6, and I am now putting it officially on the record.

I do not intend to comment further on the matter and instead leave it in the capable hands of the Deputy Speaker.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from June 1 consideration of the motion that Bill C-325, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Corrections and conditional Release Act (conditions of release and conditional sentences), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in the chamber to address important issues. There is no doubt that the issue of crime and safety in our communities is of the greatest concern for all our con-

stituents. It is one of the reasons why we saw the universal support of all political entities in the chamber to pass the bail reform legislation, Bill C-48. It passed relatively quickly because all sides of the House saw that the bill would do a good service for our judicial system. That is not necessarily the case with respect to the private member's bill before us.

I have found over the years that members of the Conservative Party talk a very tough line. In reality, it is quite different. I have had the experience of serving on committees such as the Keewatin youth justice committee. When I was a member of the Manitoba legislature, I had the opportunity to be a justice critic. I have recognized how important it is that when we propose changes to the Criminal Code, we work with the many different stakeholders out there.

The private member's bill, as proposed, is taking some aim at legislation we had previously passed, in particular Bill C-5. There has been misinformation coming from the Conservatives with respect to Bill C-5. This misinformation tries to imply that our communities are not as safe as a direct result of the passage of Bill C-5, which is not the case. Bill C-5 was, in fact, progressive legislation that was supported by a majority of members, not only the Liberals, in the House of Commons. At the end of the day, Bill C-5 did not take away authority from judges.

There is a big difference between the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party. Liberals understand the importance of judicial independence. We understand the importance of the rule of law, and the actions we have taken clearly demonstrate that. I would challenge the Conservatives with regard to their respect for judicial independence. That is why I hope this legislation does not pass and go to the committee stage.

• (1105)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the Bloc Québécois to speak to Bill C-325. I would like to say from the outset that we will be voting in favour of the bill so that it can be studied in committee. I am confident that my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord will make a constructive contribution. I will begin my speech with a summary of the bill. I will then go over Quebec's requests. Lastly, I will briefly go over some highly publicized cases, such as the one involving Marylène Levesque.

Private Members' Business

First, the bill would create a new offence for the breach of conditions of conditional release for certain serious offences with a maximum sentence of two years, or at least in relation to a summary conviction. It would require the reporting of the breach of conditions to the authorities, and it would amend the Criminal Code to preclude persons convicted of certain offences from serving their sentence in the community.

The reality is that judges have the discretion to impose a community-based sentence, but are not obligated to do so. Judges must weigh a series of factors before handing down a sentence. Crown prosecutors could also agree with the defence on a community-based sentence if they felt that the circumstances warranted it.

The bill is short. It contains only three clauses and amends two acts, namely the Criminal Code and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act.

Clause 1 of Bill C-325 adds a subsection to section 145 of the Criminal Code. It adds a criminal offence after subsection 5 for the breach of conditions of conditional release; for the breach of a condition of parole; and for breach of a condition of a release on reconnaissance. As mentioned in Bill C-325, schedules I and II of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act include a wide range of offences, from child pornography to attempted murder. The intention is to tighten up the legislation for breaches of conditions of parole or statutory release, which is the almost automatic release after completion of two-thirds of a sentence. However, there is no evidence that Bill C-325 is necessary, since the Parole Board of Canada, or PBC, already has the power to revoke parole. For example, a sexual predator in Montreal recently had his parole revoked by the PBC for breach of his conditions.

Subclause 2(1) of Bill C-325 replaces paragraph 742.1(c) of the Criminal Code, which specifies that a sentence may be served at home for certain offences, to simply disqualify a sentence from being served in the community for any offence that carries a maximum sentence of 14 years or more. The current paragraph 742.1(c) of the Criminal Code states that a community-based sentence cannot be handed down for the following offences: attempt to commit murder, torture, or advocating genocide. Bill C-325 is therefore much broader than paragraph 742.1(c), since many offences now carry a maximum sentence of 14 years, such as altering a firearm magazine once Bill C-21 receives royal assent.

Subclause 2(2) adds two new paragraphs after paragraph 742.1(d) to specify that a conditional sentence, that is, a sentence to be served in the community, cannot be imposed for an offence that resulted in bodily harm, that involved drug trafficking, or that involved the use of a weapon. In addition, a community-based sentence cannot be imposed for the following offences: prison breach, criminal harassment, sexual assault, kidnapping, trafficking, abduction of a person under the age of 14, motor vehicle theft, theft over \$5,000, breaking and entering, being unlawfully in a dwelling-house, and arson for a fraudulent purpose. That is a pretty broad list, and we will have to see in committee whether certain offences need to be added or removed.

Clause 3 amends the Corrections and Conditional Release Act. It states that, if a parole supervisor discovers that an offender on conditional release has breached their parole conditions, they must in-

form the Parole Board, the Attorney General and the police force with jurisdiction where the breach occurred of the breach and the circumstances surrounding the breach.

It is important to note that, contrary to what the Conservatives suggest, judges have discretionary power to give individuals community-based sentences. It is not automatic, and judges must factor in the risk of reoffending and the consequences of a sentence served at home.

Second, the Bloc Québécois intends to introduce a bill that addresses problems with Bill C-5. The member for Rivière-du-Nord talked about the upcoming introduction of a bill to close some of the gaps in Bill C-5. According to my colleague, conditional sentences should not be allowed for most sexual assault cases and gun crimes, and he will be introducing a bill in the coming weeks to reinstate minimum sentences for those crimes. While Bill C-5 was up for debate, the National Assembly unanimously passed a motion condemning its controversial provisions. My colleague's bill is based on that motion.

• (1110)

The motion accused Ottawa of setting back the fight against sexual assault. The member for Rivière-du-Nord had already moved an amendment to the bill that would have retained minimum sentences while giving judges discretion to depart from them in exceptional cases, with justification. This amendment was defeated, but the Bloc Québécois ended up voting for Bill C-5 anyway, since it also provided for diversion for simple drug possession offences. As justice critic, the member for Rivière-du-Nord intends to call for the government to go back to the drawing board and come up with a new bill that, in his opinion, could satisfy both the Liberals and the Conservatives. I know that he has spoken about this a few times.

Third, I will talk about a few cases to provide some food for thought in this debate. A man who assaulted a sleeping woman benefited from the leniency of a judge who sentenced him to serve his sentence in the community, even though he himself was prepared to go to jail.

On Monday, a Crown prosecutor expressed outrage that, after eight years of legal proceedings, a sex offender was let off with a 20-month sentence to be served in the community. In his words, the federal Liberals "have a lot to answer for to victims". Since the passage of Bill C-5 in June, it is once again possible to impose a conditional sentence, or a sentence to be served in the community, for the crime of sexual assault, which had not been allowed since 2007. The Crown prosecutor blames Parliament for passing Bill C-5, which reintroduced conditional sentences.

Private Members' Business

The other highly publicized case is that of Marylène Levesque. Coroner Stéphanie Gamache determined that an electronic bracelet with geolocation could have prevented Ms. Levesque's murder in January 2020 in a Quebec City hotel room. The coroner recommended that all offenders convicted of homicide tied to domestic violence should be required to wear the device upon release as part of their correctional plan. As a result of pressure from Quebec, the matter has now made its way to Ottawa. I even had an opportunity to study the bill on the device at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women following pressure from Quebec. It was a recommendation in the report entitled "Rebâtir la confiance", on rebuilding trust in the justice system. Some progress has been made on advancing the issue in Ottawa through the work of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

Following Marylène Levesque's murder, Correctional Service Canada and the Parole Board of Canada reviewed their practices and adopted a series of measures to ensure better monitoring of offenders. However, the coroner ruled that this is not enough. It is not just a question of electronic bracelets, either. According to the coroner, the correctional plan of the murderer, Eustachio Gallese, should also be reviewed in order to identify what elements may have led to his lack of accountability.

This could help prevent another similar tragedy. In her report, coroner Gamache wrote that the comprehensive correctional intervention plan prepared for this offender was a resounding failure. Marylène Levesque's murder occurred less than a year after he was granted parole. At the time, Eustachio Gallese was on day parole for the 2004 murder of his ex-wife. His parole officer had given him permission to visit erotic massage parlours once a month, but in reality, according to the police investigation, he was going up to three times a week. In short, an electronic bracelet with geolocation would at least have made it possible to detect these lies and subterfuges and to take action before it was too late. That is what the coroner argued. This bracelet allows for better monitoring, but that is not all.

In conclusion, for all these reasons, this bill must be referred to committee. We need to go back to the drawing board and rise above partisanship. The Bloc Québécois intends to make a constructive contribution to this debate.

We have made a lot of progress in Quebec, and we have done a lot of thinking. I hope to have the opportunity to come back to this, but on Thursday evening, I celebrated the 50th anniversary of the community organization Joins-toi, which works to help people who have committed crimes re-enter society. Working to reintegrate people and offering them alternatives to the criminal lifestyle is an intrinsic value that we cherish in Quebec. At the event, we heard about all the progress that has been made thanks to the community and to dedicated stakeholders who believe in restorative justice. This is a model that Quebec has done a lot to develop. I would like to pay tribute to the entire Maison Joins-toi team. I hope that I will have another opportunity to commend its members and highlight their work, as I was able to do on Thursday on the occasion of this milestone anniversary.

• (1115)

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in this debate on Bill C-325 today, and I am going to be brutally honest: It is disappointing to see the Conservatives bring forward a private member's bill that builds on their campaign to exploit public fears about crime and public safety by emphasizing tragic incidents and tragic impacts on victims and continuing to ignore the evidence about what actually works in criminal justice. Of course, members of the House will know that I spent 20 years working in the criminal justice field before I came here. We know what reduces crime and what improves public safety, but the Conservatives seem to have no interest in any of those measures.

They repeatedly refer to the opinions of victims. I will, of course, agree with them that some victims are looking for harsh punishment for the perpetrators of crimes, but it is not all victims. The one thing that all victims of crime are looking for is that what happened to them does not happen to anyone else. If we look at all the scientific studies and academic studies of victims, we see that this is the one thing that all victims share in common. This means that instead of harsher measures, we need more effective measures to make sure that we do not have additional victims of crime in the future.

The main impact of Bill C-325 is to undo the reforms that were made in Bill C-5. Those were aimed at squarely attacking the problem of high rates of incarceration among indigenous and racialized people, those living in poverty and those living with mental health and addiction issues in Canadian prisons. The overincarceration of marginalized Canadians is not only unjust but also ineffective at improving public safety. Even short periods of incarceration cause major disruptions in people's lives when it comes to loss of employment, loss of housing, loss of custody of children and stigma, all of which make involvement in anti-social and criminal behaviour more likely in the future, not less likely.

The New Democrats have always supported measures that will be effective in improving public safety. This was true when we were talking about bail reform, which, again, is not the subject of Bill C-325, even though people would be surprised to find that out when listening to some of the Conservative rhetoric around it. We supported adding a reverse onus for bail in crimes involving handguns. We supported making community-based bail supervision programs more widely available in all communities, including in rural, remote and northern communities.

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Community-based bail supervision will require upfront expenditures, and we have been calling on the Liberals to fund those programs. The John Howard Society runs three of those programs now in Ontario, and they have a 90% success rate. What does that 90% success rate mean? It means 90% of people in community-based bail supervision programs showed up in court when they were supposed to, and 90% did not reoffend in the period before they appeared in court. Why is that the case? It is because they had support and supervision. This is in the bill the Conservatives voted for, and now the Liberals need to come forward with the funding.

Community-based bail supervision programs are not the subject of Bill C-325, but I have to address them because Conservatives continue to act like they are. They save money in the long run because they are far cheaper: Putting people into community-based bail supervision programs is one-tenth the cost of putting them in incarceration. The problem in our federal system is that the federal government would bear the costs upfront of starting these programs, while the provinces would benefit from the savings in provincial correction systems.

Again, Bill C-325 is trying to undo the reforms that were in Bill C-5. What Bill C-5 did was to eliminate mandatory minimum sentences for all drug offences and for certain tobacco and firearms offences, none of which are classified as violent crimes in the Criminal Code. Also, Bill C-5 widened the sentencing options available to judges by allowing them to use diversion programs and house arrest as penalties for a wider number of crimes. Why is this important? It is because there are direct victims of crime, but there are also the families of the perpetrators of crime. What we are talking about there is often spouses and children. The importance of diversion programs and house arrest means that oftentimes families are not deprived of the sole income earner in the family, or they are not deprived of the person who can provide supervision for children.

• (1120)

By using diversion programs and house arrest in additional offences, we can help keep families together and prevent crime in the future by keeping people's ties to the community and the wider family active and alive. This is particularly important in rural, remote and northern communities, where the sentence to incarceration means not only serving time in an institution but serving it in an institution many hundreds of kilometres away from the family and supports people need to prevent them from falling back into the problems that caused them to end up as convicted criminals.

According to the Conservatives' press release, Bill C-325 would "put a stop to the alarming number of convicted violent criminals and sex offenders who are serving their sentences in their homes." This assertion is false. Even with the reforms in Bill C-5, judges are not allowed to sentence those who present any kind of risk to the public to serve sentences in the community. The statement that the many people who are convicted of the long list of offences the Conservatives like to cite are getting house arrest is not true. Judges are not allowed to grant diversion programs and sentences served in the community to those who present a risk to the public. That is very clear in our systems.

The Conservatives also claim that Bill C-325 would go after offenders who repeatedly violate conditional release orders. It is im-

portant to note that the provisions in Bill C-325 are about parole violations, not conditional release orders. There is nothing about bail conditions in this bill despite the Conservatives continually mixing the rhetoric about catch-and-release bail provisions with the provisions of Bill C-325. What Bill C-325 would do is make all parole violations a new criminal offence and require parole officers to report all parole violations, no matter how minor, to the police and the Parole Board. This would only result in the early termination of parole.

What does that mean? People say it is a good idea because people broke the rules and their parole should be revoked. With the revocation of parole, people end up back in institutions, and at the end of their sentences, they go into the community unsupervised. Therefore, by ending parole early, we end the period during which we supervise people's behaviour, which is to make sure they present less of a threat to the public, and let them out at the end of a sentence with no incentive to complete any of the rehabilitation programs, any of the mental health and addiction programs or any of the things that would keep them from being further involved in criminal activity.

Let me conclude my remarks today by reminding people that what we need to do is support measures that are effective at reducing crime and reducing the number of victims in the future. Bill C-325 would do nothing to advance those goals and instead would further contribute to the overincarceration of racialized and indigenous people and those living in poverty in this country. The New Democrats were proud to support Bill C-5 to try to make sure that we do what is effective when fighting crime and reducing the number of victims in this country.

• (1125)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity today to speak today to private member's Bill C-325, and especially to hear from colleagues who agree with me in opposing this bill. I had the pleasure of attending some of the meetings of the Standing Committee on Justice on Bill C-5, and I heard some arguments there that are very important for understanding what is going on here.

[*English*]

Bill C-325 was introduced by the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

Private Members' Business

[*Translation*]

The sponsor said that the purpose of the bill is to strengthen the parole system and ensure that violent offenders can never receive a conditional sentence.

[*English*]

I cannot support Bill C-325. It would undo some of the important work of Bill C-5, which I was proud to support. The objective of Bill C-5 was to amend sentencing laws that exacerbated underlying social, economic, institutional and historical disadvantages, which not only contributed to systemic inequalities in the criminal justice system, but also made Canadians less safe. It was intended to address the reality that increased justice system involvement, including through overreliance on incarceration of low-risk offenders, can increase the risk of recidivism and undermine the reintegration of offenders, especially among indigenous people, Black persons and members of marginalized or racialized communities, who already experience incarceration at higher rates.

Issues of systemic racism and discrimination in Canada's criminal justice system are real. They have been confirmed by commissions of inquiry such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and the Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System.

A higher number of indigenous offenders are sentenced to custody than non-indigenous offenders. In 2017-18, indigenous people accounted for 30% of adult admissions to provincial or territorial custody and 29% to federal custody, while representing 4% of the adult population. Reinstating measures to constrain judicial discretion, as proposed by Bill C-325, would reverse reforms made to counter systemic discrimination. Mandatory sentencing policies such as restrictions on the ability to impose conditional sentences have worsened Canada's overrepresentation problem by limiting the circumstances where a judge can exercise restraint in the use of imprisonment.

Some hon. members, including the bill's sponsor, may highlight outlier cases to justify the reforms proposed in Bill C-325. It is important to understand that the current framework is intended to allow conditional sentence orders only for offenders facing short terms of imprisonment and only where it is determined that serving their sentence in the community does not pose a risk to public safety. When imposed, conditional sentences include strict conditions, such as non-contact orders with victims, house arrest and mandatory counselling or treatment for substance abuse. Judges are the best actors to decide on punishments that are appropriate to crimes, not my Conservative colleagues.

In 2021, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security undertook a study of the circumstances that led to the tragic murder of a young woman by an offender on day parole. None of the recommendations formulated by that committee proposed the creation of an offence like in Bill C-325. Rather, the five recommendations related to the promotion of information sharing, better case management and additional resources for effective community supervision and improved training.

Tough-on-crime approaches, including restrictions on judicial discretion and the availability of conditional sentencing orders, made our criminal justice system less effective. Bill C-325 would send many lower-risk and first-time offenders, including a disproportionate number of indigenous people and Black persons, to prison without deterring crime or helping to keep our communities safe.

Bill C-325 wants to pull us back in the wrong direction by needlessly increasing the use of imprisonment for offenders deserving of less than two years' imprisonment and by criminalizing non-criminal behaviours, like breaching a curfew. Creating a new offence for breaching conditional release flies in the face of conscious efforts made by Parliament to reduce delays by ensuring that the valuable time of judges and court resources is not being spent on dealing with the administration of justice offences, such as a failure to comply with a court order or terms of a conditional release.

This bill would increase contact with law enforcement and the stigma associated with criminal justice system contact, which would undermine offender reintegration. It would interrupt support and reintegration services and have adverse resource implications, without added public safety benefits. Bill C-325 rejects advice from experts. We need policies that will keep Canadians safe while prioritizing long-term community prosperity.

• (1130)

[*Translation*]

It has been established that greater justice system involvement can increase the risk of recidivism and undermine reintegration of offenders, especially among indigenous people, members of marginalized or racialized communities, and individuals suffering from mental illness, because those groups already experience incarceration at higher rates.

[*English*]

The government is determined to prevent violent crime, which includes gender-based violence and all forms of sexual violence, through investments and concerted efforts. This is why, in June 2017, we announced *It's Time: Canada's Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence*. Following its launch, the Government of Canada worked with provincial and territorial partners to develop the national action plan to end gender-based violence.

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Budget 2021 announced over \$600 million in additional funding to build on work addressing gender-based violence in Canada. Of this amount, Justice Canada was allocated \$112 million over five years for initiatives that work to assist victims and survivors of sexual assault and intimate partner violence in making informed decisions about their particular circumstances, to reduce retraumatization, to increase confidence in the justice system's response to gender-based violence and to improve support and access to justice.

[*Translation*]

The reforms included in Bill C-325 would also go against the key pillars of the federal framework to reduce recidivism, which focuses on factors such as housing, education, employment, health and positive support networks. These pillars help offenders meet the objectives of rehabilitation and reintegration instead of increasing the use of imprisonment for low-risk offenders.

[*English*]

It is imperative that we do not scale back important reforms intended to root out systemic racism and to ensure a more effective justice system for all.

For all these reasons, I would urge all the hon. members to oppose Bill C-325.

* * *

SITUATION IN ISRAEL, GAZA AND THE WEST BANK

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion:

That a take-note debate on the situation in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank be held later today, pursuant to Standing Order 53.1, and that, notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House: a) members rising to speak during the debate may indicate to the Chair that they will be dividing their time with another member; b) the time provided for the debate be extended beyond four hours as needed to include a minimum of 12 periods of 20 minutes each; and c) no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair.

• (1135)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those opposed to the hon. parliamentary secretary's moving the motion will please say nay.

It is agreed.

[*English*]

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

It is carried.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-325, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Corrections and Con-

ditional Release Act (conditions of release and conditional sentences), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill C-325, an act to amend the Criminal Code with respect to the conditional release system. This is the private member's bill of my friend and colleague, the member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, and I am happy to support it for the few reasons I will detail in these remarks.

The main reason is that our criminal justice system needs a serious overhaul to prevent violent offenders from committing further violent crimes, and this bill would work to combat that societal harm. One of our Conservative Party pillars is to bring home safe streets. To do this, we need to take serious action to reverse the precipitous rise in violent crime that has transpired over the last eight years with the Liberal government.

Data from Statistics Canada in August indicated that the national homicide rate has risen for the fourth consecutive year and is now at its highest level since 1992. This is largely due to gang violence. Violent crime is up for the eighth year in a row. The per capita victims of violent crime have increased 60% since 2013. Fraud is twice as prevalent as it was 10 years ago, and extortion is five times higher. It is a country-wide problem, not restricted just to our biggest cities. As an example, an article from the National Post from the past summer stated, "Reports from Newfoundland—which experienced one of the steepest rises in crime last year—reveal a growing sense of fear and abandonment among those living in St. John's downtown core." Our communities feel less safe. Crime, chaos, drugs and disorder are common, and the Liberal government is responsible for making the situation worse.

The common denominator here is the Prime Minister and his lenient approach to violent crime. The measures to reverse this trend in Bill C-48, which the House passed unanimously on September 18, were but a start to the serious overhaul necessary to create real change, to borrow a phrase from the Prime Minister, who used it eight years ago.

Bill C-48 does not go far enough to reverse the damage that the Liberals have done with their catch-and-release laws that let repeat offenders back onto our streets to cause more crime and chaos. It started with Bill C-75 and continued with Bill C-5, which had a soft-on-crime approach. That is why I am here to support Bill C-325, as it would take further measures to combat the violent crime waves.

Bill C-325's summary states:

This enactment amends the Criminal Code and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to create a new offence for the breach of conditions of conditional release imposed in relation to certain serious offences and to require the reporting of those breaches to the appropriate authorities.

It also amends the Criminal Code to preclude persons convicted of certain offences from serving their sentence in the community.

Namely, Bill C-325 would strengthen the conditional release regime by creating a breach-of-condition offence in the Criminal Code at section 145, for breaches of condition on parole or statutory release. It would be an indictable offence and would be liable to imprisonment for a maximum of two years, or an offence punishable on summary conviction.

The bill would also amend the 1992 Corrections and Conditional Release Act to require parole supervisors to report breaches of conditions. It states that if a breach exists, parole supervisors must inform the Parole Board of Canada, the Attorney General and appropriate officials of the breach and the circumstances surrounding it. It is currently not the case that probation officers are required to report breached conditions. This provision would go a long way in reducing recidivism among violent criminals.

Bill C-325 would also restore the former version of section 742.1 of the Criminal Code, which was repealed in 2022 by the Liberals' Bill C-5. This would reintroduce a list of serious offences for which a shorter sentence of less than two years cannot be served in the community via house arrest. This includes kidnapping, sexual assault and some firearms offences. Bill C-5 should never have been allowed to pass, as it puts communities at risk with violent offenders serving sentences for serious crimes in the comfort of their own homes while watching Netflix. This includes, for example, drug traffickers serving their sentences at home. How convenient is that? This also includes sexual assault offenders who are serving their sentences in their homes in the communities where they have victimized and can now revictimize.

• (1140)

To avoid an argument from my opponents off the bat, I will say that this bill would not bring out stronger sentences or raise rates of incarceration for the sake of it. Breaches of conditions imposed during conditional release, which is after sentencing, are often committed by a minority of offenders. However, when parole conditions are breached, it can be frustrating and damaging to the victims of the crimes committed, not to mention to the community at large in which they live.

The Canadian Police Association said that it is important to effectively target repeat offenders because, as frontline law enforcement officers know all too well, a defining reality of our justice system is that a disproportionately small number of offenders are responsible for a disproportionately large number of offences. In fact, our leader, the member for Carleton, often cites the example of Vancouver, where 40 criminals were arrested a total of 6,000 times in a year.

It is important to note as well that offenders designated as long-term offenders would not be covered in this bill. They are already covered by breach-of-condition language in the Criminal Code.

We need this bill because of offenders like Myles Sanderson. He had been granted statutory release in August 2021, after serving a five-year sentence for assault, robbery, mischief and making threats. He had 59 previous convictions, one of which included assaulting a police officer. He had been charged for 125 crimes, with

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47 cases filed against him in the province's criminal courts. He violated his parole conditions 28 times. In February 2022, following a hearing, the Parole Board did not revoke his statutory release despite these violations. He stopped meeting with his case worker in May 2022, which led the police to look for him. Unfortunately, they did not find him before he and his brother murdered 11 people and injured 18 others in a mass stabbing spree on the James Smith Cree Nation and in Weldon, Saskatchewan in September 2022. This horrific tragedy broke the heart of the nation and devastated these communities. It would have been utterly preventable had Bill C-325 been in place and Sanderson had been indicted for violating the conditions of his parole.

While it is important to minimize the potential harm to our communities, we must still respect the rights of those involved. The law currently provides that federal offenders sentenced to a fixed term of imprisonment be released under supervision when they have served two-thirds of their sentence. Statutory release is a statutory right and not within the Parole Board of Canada's decision-making authority. The conditions on parole that may be violated include a prohibition on communicating with a person, often a victim; being in a specific place; observing a curfew; not possessing a weapon; and not drinking alcohol, among others that may apply to the specific case at hand. Sanderson's parole conditions included a ban on weapons and a ban on alcohol and drugs. As records indicate, he had a history of drug use since the age of 14 and a history of rage and violence against his partner.

Tragedies like this can be prevented. Our justice system should not allow violent offenders to serve their sentences at home. This view is shared by several organizations, all of which support Bill C-325. The president of the Canadian Police Association, the *Fraternité des policiers et policières de Montréal*, the founder of *Montréal's Maison des guerrières*, the *Fédération des maisons d'hébergement pour femmes*, the *Murdered or Missing Persons' Families' Association*, the *Communauté de citoyens et citoyennes en action contre les criminels violents* and others have all expressed their support for Bill C-325. Tom Stamatakis, president of the CPA, says, "The Canadian Police Association has long advocated for statutory consequences for offenders who commit new offences while on conditional release, and this proposed legislation is a common-sense solution that effectively targets those very specific offenders."

The bottom line is that we absolutely need to be doing more to protect our communities and increase public safety. This is not an issue of partisanship, but a shared need for action on a common goal: a safer and better Canada. We were elected here to uphold the principles of peace, order and good government, but we cannot claim that we are doing so if Canadians do not feel safe in their homes and communities. We have a responsibility to our constituents and the regions we serve. They deserve to be safe and protected. We need to bring home safe streets, and this bill would be an excellent stepping stone on the way to doing so.

Private Members' Business

I hope all my colleagues share this goal of increased public safety and that they vote to support Bill C-325 on its way to committee.

• (1145)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, I address the House today as an MP, but also as a trained criminologist. We are talking about Bill C-325, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act. I will skip ahead and confirm that the Bloc Québécois and I, obviously, will vote in favour of Bill C-325 so it can be studied in parliamentary committee.

Now, let us have a closer look at the bill.

As currently written, the bill contains only three provisions, but it will still amend two extremely important laws. We are not talking about minor laws here, but about the Criminal Code and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act. I would say that we need to be careful. I always find it worrisome to base a bill that would have such a major impact on our criminal justice system on just one particular case. Obviously, we need to avoid that dangerous pitfall. I am not trying to minimize the tragic death of 23-year-old Marylène Levesque, who was murdered by Eustachio Gallese while he was out on day parole for the October 2004 murder of his wife. What happened to Marylène Levesque is terrible and unfair. It never should have happened. I think we all agree on that. There is no need to discuss it.

Bill C-325, which was introduced by the Conservatives, would create a new offence for the breach of conditions of conditional release imposed in relation to certain serious offences, with a maximum sentence of two years or at least punishable on summary conviction. This bill would also amend the Criminal Code to preclude persons convicted of certain offences from serving their sentence in the community. Finally, this bill would also require the reporting of such breaches to the appropriate authorities. Those are good things.

The Bloc Québécois generally supports this bill and would like to see it studied in detail and improved in committee. Let me explain why. The Conservatives think that this bill will fill the gaps resulting from the passage of Bill C-5, which allows offenders who commit certain crimes to serve their sentences in the community. However, that is not the whole truth. Some details have been left out. In our society, judges have the discretion to sentence offenders to serve their sentences in the community. Contrary to what the Conservatives would have us believe, judges do take their jobs very seriously. They make their decisions thoughtfully and meticulously, taking a multitude of factors into account. Furthermore, the Parole Board of Canada has the power to revoke parole at any time, and its decisions are not political. The Parole Board is entirely independent.

In Mr. Gallese's case, his release conditions had been breached on several occasions prior to Ms. Levesque's murder, and unfortunately, his parole officer knew that. Worse still, we later learned that she allegedly encouraged him to visit sexual massage parlours, which, I am sure everyone would agree, is totally unacceptable. The Parole Board of Canada could have and should have revoked Mr. Gallese's parole long before this tragedy.

How did we get here? Should we amend the Criminal Code and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act based almost entirely on the circumstances surrounding the murder of Marylène Levesque, as the Conservative Party is eager to do? Obviously, I do not think so. Doing so could prove perilous for our justice system.

In short, Bill C-325 is commendable but flawed in several respects, for example when it comes to the offences set out in sub-clause 2(2) that would prevent offenders from serving their sentences in the community.

• (1150)

The range of listed offences is far too broad and is worth scrutinizing and debating in committee, as is paragraph 742.1(c), which seeks to make it impossible to serve a sentence in the community for any offence that carries a maximum sentence of 14 years or more, including altering a firearm magazine.

The issue is not whether the legislation resulting from Bill C-5 is flawed, because it is, indeed. However, the solutions in Bill C-325 are not entirely appropriate and may well call into question the integrity of our judges.

The Conservatives' presentation on Bill C-325 specifically refers to the case of Eustachio Gallese and Marylène Levesque. As a criminologist, I have a lot of problems with this. We do not have the luxury of quickly pushing through words and clauses that have the power to upend the lives of thousands of people.

When we are responsible for the public's safety and well-being, our decisions should be based on verified, empirical data and on as many cases as possible, not on individual cases.

What about all the other inmates with release conditions similar to those of Mr. Gallese who will never commit another crime? Let us consider that very large group of inmates.

Who are we to dictate how they will serve their sentences based solely on one case, on one individual? That is not what our justice system is based on.

Quebeckers and Canadians obviously deserve to have peace of mind, to feel safe as they go about their daily lives. They also deserve to be treated equally in the eyes of law. That is why I urge my esteemed colleagues to vote in favour of Bill C-325, so that it can be carefully studied at committee and no comma, no inference, no legislative gap will be left to chance. The consequences would simply be too dire.

I would also like to take this opportunity to inform the House that my colleague, the member for Rivière-du-Nord, will soon be introducing a bill to once and for all close the loopholes in the legislation resulting from Bill C-5.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles has five minutes for his right of reply.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Madam Speaker, the debates on Bill C-325, which I introduced last spring, are drawing to a close today.

I am pleased to see that, following the tragic events that have taken place and the serious cases brought to our attention, the Bloc Québécois has finally decided to support Bill C-325, even though it voted in favour of Bill C-5 at the time. I agree that amendments to the bill in committee are necessary. In fact, committees are specifically mandated to improve bills and make them fairer for all Canadians. Unfortunately, the Liberals and their NDP colleagues are clinging to a short-sighted position that makes no sense.

I have done my job with Bill C-325. Moreover, all the parties in Quebec's National Assembly—including the more right-wing parties, the centrist parties and the left-wing parties like Québec solidaire—have asked that Bill C-5 be amended because it just does not work. No one in the House would characterize the Bloc as a right-wing party. Bloc members are not nasty right wingers; they lean more to the left than to the right. However, they thought things through, saw that there is a problem and acknowledged that changes need to be made. That is why they are willing to help me move Bill C-325 forward. However, the Liberals and NDP are stubborn. There is nothing we can do.

During debate, we talked a lot about Marylène Levesque's murder. At the time, I was the one who moved the motion in the House that launched the investigation by the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, of which I was a member. We investigated everything surrounding Marylène's murder, the work of the Parole Board of Canada and the flaws in how the entire situation was managed.

With Bill C-325, I am proposing common-sense improvements. For example, right now, there are no consequences for offenders who fail to abide by the conditions of their release when on parole for serious crimes. When we ask people on the street about this, they say that people who do not abide by the conditions of their release should be arrested, but that consequence does not exist. Everyone thinks it only natural to create a new offence to cover such situations. That is just common sense, and it is what I am proposing in Bill C-325.

Some are saying that professionals found that the law put in place by Bill C-5 was good. I took the time to meet with many groups, and I can say that police officers are calling for improvements. I am thinking, in particular, of the Canadian Police Association, the Fraternité des policiers et policières de Montréal and the Fraternité des policiers et policières de la Ville de Québec.

Victims groups are also calling for improvements. Here, I am thinking of REAL Women of Canada, Fédération des maisons d'hébergement pour femmes, Maison des guerrières, Communauté de citoyens en action contre les criminels violents and the Murdered or Missing Persons' Families' Association. No one can say that these are nasty right-wing groups that just want tough laws. These are groups of people who represent victims. When I showed them my bill, they told me that it was just common sense and that

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that is what needed to be done. Victims are afraid because offenders on parole do not abide by the conditions of their release and people are not incarcerated, as they should be. Bill C-325 seeks to resolve this problem, and I will never understand why the Liberals and the NDP do not get that.

From what I have heard in the first hour of debate today, the rhetoric has changed a bit. What I understand is that people here cannot allow a Conservative bill to go any further. That is what I understood, because people do not want to support it. I thank the Bloc Québécois for agreeing to go further. When we can agree on issues everyone benefits, and I am grateful to the Bloc Québécois for doing that today.

I also understand that Canadians are fed up with this government, because for the past eight years we have seen the result: a 32% increase in violent crime. When Bill C-5 was introduced, criminals thanked the government, telling themselves that they could continue to commit crimes without fear of going to prison, thanks to the Liberals who protected them. Is this the justice we expect to have in Canada? Do the victims of these criminals expect something else from a federal government? Yes.

There is still time for members to change their minds, since the vote will take place on Wednesday. That leaves two days, or 48 hours. I urge my colleagues to think about Canadians, about people who are afraid, and to stop thinking that the goal is simply to create tough measures. As I said, the Bloc Québécois supports us, and the bill can be amended. I see no problem with that. The goal is to protect people, and that is what I wanted to do with Bill C-325. I hope the two parties opposite will change their minds by Wednesday afternoon.

• (1155)

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

Some hon. members: Question.

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

[*English*]

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

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would request a recorded division.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, October 18, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

*Government Orders**[English]*

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I would suggest that we suspend until Government Orders.

[Translation]

SITTING SUSPENDED

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The sitting is suspended to the call of the Chair.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:59 a.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 12:03 p.m.)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1200)

[English]

CANADA—NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR ATLANTIC ACCORD IMPLEMENTATION ACT

BILL C-49—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

That, in relation to Bill C-49, An Act to amend the Canada—Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Canada-Nova Scotia Off-shore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of the Bill; and

That, 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on the day allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of 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 shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question-and-answer period.

[English]

I invite hon. members who wish to ask questions to rise in their places or use the “raise hand” function so the Chair has an idea of the number of members who wish to participate in this question period.

We will continue with questions and comments.

The hon. member for La Prairie.

• (1205)

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Madam Speaker, the government, which already has a rather light legislative agenda, is once again showing a complete lack of respect for democracy by imposing time allocation. This bill has been debated for only eight hours, last Tuesday and Friday. There has been eight hours of debate. Where is the urgency?

Clearly, the NDP is going to support the time allocation for the 32nd time. Why is the NDP supporting the Liberals so strongly? It

is for an extremely flawed dental insurance program—probably the most flawed in history—and a very dubious promise for pharmaceutical.

The NDP is being submissive to the Liberals. It is being submissive to the party that subsidizes fossil fuel energy. Polls show that the NDP is paying dearly for being so submissive.

My question is simple: Are the Liberals pleased to have a friend as docile as the NDP?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have discussed this bill at length. We want to ensure that the Standing Committee on Natural Resources can have the necessary conversations. It is important to refer this bill to the committee.

[English]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, once again we are seeing the Liberals shutting down debate, something they said they would never do. Here, they are doing it again and on a bill that is worth debating.

They are talking about taking the oil and gas board in the Atlantic area and making it responsible as a regulatory board for all electric and other technologies, which it has no experience in. Really, this is something we cannot leave to committee.

We need to have voices heard up front so that we can get a fulsome debate on it, but once again, they are ramming things through the House with the help from the NDP. I am not sure why NDP members are still supporting the Liberals. They have gotten nothing they asked for, and they had an opportunity at their convention to say that they did not get pharmacare and dental care is a vague promise for 2025, after the next election. They should just give it up and quit propping up a government that continually shuts down debate.

Can the member opposite explain why they do not want to hear fulsome debate?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, we have debated this bill on a number of occasions at second reading, and we will debate it again this afternoon. It is important that this bill move to committee where it can be thoroughly examined and MPs can hear from experts on this bill. It is extremely important that we move expeditiously to capitalize on the enormous economic opportunities that are associated with offshore wind.

Public Policy Forum released a report yesterday that showed just how important this is for the provinces of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador. I would encourage my hon. colleague to perhaps have a conversation with the Conservative premier of Nova Scotia, who has worked collaboratively on this and wants to see it move quickly.

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Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, right now, we are facing a huge climate crisis, and we need to move quickly. This is about moving the bill onto committee. We know that the Conservative leadership of Nova Scotia wants to move aggressively in having more of a power supply from offshore wind power. I would ask the member why he thinks the Conservatives are blocking this.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, the hon. member has a very good question.

I have to say that I was astonished the Conservative opposition would be in opposition to a bill that was developed with the Province of Nova Scotia and the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

It is about enabling new economic opportunities and good jobs for the people who live in those provinces. It is part of the ongoing transition with respect to energy around the world. It is an opportunity not just about electricity, but also about hydrogen and helping our friends in Europe. It is astonishing to me that the MPs who come from Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador, in particular, are opposing this bill.

• (1210)

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very glad to see that there is a motion for closure today because we are in a global race to help drive Canada's offshore future and Canada's clean energy future. I have chastised some of my Conservative colleagues for not getting on board.

Ultimately, we will have a vote on this, and they will be able to lay out their position and rationale on why they are against it, but we are in a global race right now. Every day matters. If we had not moved for closure, the Conservatives would still be here trying to debate the talking points from the leader of the official opposition's office. This is the challenge.

Can the minister highlight to the House how important this bill is for the premiers of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as the clean energy industry?

The fact of the matter is, notwithstanding the Supreme Court decision, this legislation can move forward because it is a joint agreement between federal and provincial authorities. Notwithstanding what the member for Sarnia—Lambton said, which was that there is no experience, this is exactly how the Atlantic accords have operated for almost 40 years now.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, this is an extremely positive and constructive example of collaborative federalism. This bill was developed in concert with the provinces of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador. It is something they will be putting in place in their own legislation as this bill moves through Canada's Parliament. It is extremely important for enabling the economic future of those two provinces. It would create good jobs and economic opportunity.

Again, it astonishes me that members of Parliament from Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia are opposing what is one of the great economic opportunities going forward. It is truly astonishing. They are standing against the premiers of their respective provinces, including the Conservative Premier of Nova Scotia.

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Madam Speaker, the hon. minister knows the debate that took place on Bill C-69. Where is it today? How fulsome have those consultations been with the provinces?

I am looking at the proposed change to subsection 56(1), which basically says that, if there is going to be a future oil development and there is a possibility that it could be turned into a future marine protected area, the Governor in Council could then pull the permit. That is the Prime Minister and the federal cabinet. The industry has said to me, "Cliff, this puts in black and white what we feared all along."

If Bill C-69 could not do the job on Newfoundland and Labrador's offshore, this bill here will not do the job. Bill C-49 needs to be amended.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, I would say a few things.

The first is that the legislation was developed in concert with the governments of Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia. The mechanisms under that are joint mechanisms that would require the federal government and the province to agree on a range of different things moving forward. That is the essence of collaborative, co-operative federalism. That is the essence of how the offshore accord acts have worked for a long time.

I would say to my hon. colleague that it is amazing to me that he would oppose something that is so important for the economic future of Newfoundland and Labrador. Also, if he is interested in discussing amendments, he should let this go to committee to have that conversation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, we all know that we are in the middle of a global crisis. We are seeing more and more extreme weather events and natural disasters. We are also seeing a government that continues to argue otherwise, but agrees with the Conservatives that Canada should keep sinking deeper into oil and gas. Anyway, that seems to be the direction the government is taking for now when we look at its public policies.

I would like to ask the minister opposite a simple question because it would be really enlightening for us to understand how he sees things. Does he consider oil and gas to be clean energy?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, I find my colleague's speech a bit odd. This bill provides for an offshore wind farm, a clean energy source that will, of course, be very important for the future of Nova Scotia's and Newfoundland and Labrador's economy.

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• (1215)

[*English*]

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, this is a debate about time allocation. Ironically, the minister used to be a senior aide for the NDP premier in Saskatchewan, so the tie that binds is pretty deep for him.

In 17 parliaments, from Tommy Douglas to Tom Mulcair, the NDP only supported time allocation 14 times. The current iteration of the NDP has supported time allocation 35 times in this Parliament. As a former senior aide to Premier Roy Romanow, would the minister advise the current NDP government partner to continue to support a government that is falling in the polls? With all his experience with the NDP, would the member counsel the current government to perhaps try to stand on its own two feet?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, I will start by saying I am very proud to have worked for a distinguished premier such as Premier Romanow, who was somebody who did enormously positive things for the Province of Saskatchewan after the previous Conservative premier, Grant Devine, virtually bankrupted the province.

However, I would also say that it is extremely important that we are moving forward rapidly to fight carbon emissions and to build an economy that can be strong and create good jobs and economic opportunities for Canada and for Canadians from coast to coast to coast. This bill is about creating such opportunity in the provinces of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador. It is important that we have a plan to fight climate change and that we have a plan for the economy; the Conservative Party has neither.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to build on my colleague's question around the marine protected areas. I am hearing concerns about the lack of clarity around what this means in marine protected areas. Could the minister provide some clarification for those who are concerned about next steps, moving forward?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, in terms of protected spaces, Canada committed to protecting 30% of lands and waters by 2030. When the government came to power in 2015, below 1% of marine areas were protected. Now it is close to 15%, and we are on a pathway to protect 30%.

The hon. member will know that there are different types of protection, including marine protected areas, marine refuges and other effective area-based measures. There are different rules that apply to each one of those. Canada follows all the international guidelines and, in fact, is a leader in protection around the world.

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Madam Speaker, this is a debate on the motion for closure. Just this last week, we saw that Bill C-69 was deemed unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada. On June 13, 2019, that bill was also subject to a motion of closure. If only we had a couple more hours of debate to really look at the subject, maybe we would not find that there are bills at the Supreme Court that are deemed unconstitutional. I can understand that from the Liberal government, but what happened to the NDP?

There were House leaders of old, such as Stanley Knowles, who was quoted as saying in 1967:

I submit, therefore, that you do not have full political democracy let alone the economic as well as political democracy unless you include a full and unquestioned recognition of the rights and functions of the opposition to the government of the day. Only in this way can you protect the rights of minorities. Only in this way can you make sure that the force of public opinion will be brought to bear on the legislative process.

Forcing closure on debate on a bill as important as this to Atlantic Canadians, as well as all Canadians, is just a blight on this democratic process. What has happened to the NDP of old? Is this the new NDP?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, I would say that unlike the Conservative Party, the NDP and the Liberal Party are standing up for jobs and economic opportunities for Canadians in the context of a world that is going to look different as we fight—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I would remind members that, if it is not time for them to ask questions, they should wait until I ask for questions and comments.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, as we fight the existential threat that is climate change, we must have an economic plan for the future that is going to create good jobs and economic opportunity in every province of this country. This bill is an important part of doing that, particularly with respect to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador.

I would suggest to the hon. member that perhaps he sit down and have a conversation with the Conservative premier of Nova Scotia about those issues.

• (1220)

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

I am very much struck by the fact that we are here on what the Liberals would characterize as a bill of critical importance, and yet we are again ramming it through Parliament. On Bill C-69, time allocation was invoked, and here we are again. There was a time when the New Democratic Party stood for something, which was to be the conscience of Parliament; it would not shut this down. Now it has become the NDP of no democratic principles; it is now prepared to ram everything through that the Liberals ask of it.

From Tommy Douglas to Tom Mulcair, time allocation was invoked an average of 1.2 times per Parliament. Here we are with time allocation for the 35th time. The government says it cares about jobs. Does it care about democracy, or is that just inconvenient for it?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, I was speaking with the hon. member for Kings—Hants, who has sat in this chamber and listened to the debate on this bill over the course of the past number of days. No real suggestions have come from the opposition as to things it would like to see changed. If it does, it will have that opportunity at committee, where it can have a fulsome discussion and hear from witnesses.

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We certainly think it is important to have that kind of transparency, but it is also important for us to seize the economic opportunity. Canada is not the only country that is focused on it. This is a global race. We must move quickly. I would again suggest that the opposition have a chat with the Conservative premier of Nova Scotia.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is a little ironic to hear the government, and even the NDP in its questions, boasting about the much-vaunted 30% protected areas when the Liberal government itself authorized exploratory drilling in a marine refuge it created.

How credible is the government when it comes to protecting and conserving oceans and endangered species? I have my doubts.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, we have put in place protections and requirements for marine refuges and protected areas in line with international best practices. This will go a long way towards helping us achieve our marine conservation goals. This bill advances Canada's climate goals and provides joint management tools to better protect the environment.

[*English*]

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Madam Speaker, the minister likes to talk about listening and consulting with Atlantic Canadians, and he has talked about the premier of Nova Scotia. I would add the premiers of New Brunswick, P.E.I. and Newfoundland and Labrador when it comes to the carbon tax and the opposition that the government faces.

Just last week, the Supreme Court of Canada found its legislation, Bill C-69, to be unconstitutional. I would think this would give the government and the minister pause when it comes to invoking closure. We should look at these bills properly as parliamentarians and debate them, so the government does not make the same mistake and ram another bill through Parliament that is poorly written and will face challenges down the road.

Your record is awful on bills such as this one. The Supreme Court of Canada just ruled that you rushed it. Why are you now rushing it again?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sure the hon. member was not directing his question to me. I would remind him that he is to ask questions and make comments through the Chair and not directly to members.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, last week, the Supreme Court confirmed that Parliament can enact environmental assessment legislation focused on environmental effects that fall within federal jurisdiction. The offshore area is an area of federal responsibility that we jointly manage with the provinces of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador under the accord acts. This is a great example of co-operative federalism that we have managed jointly for over 35 years.

We certainly work very collaboratively with all the provinces in Atlantic Canada that he cited. In fact, later today, the premier of New Brunswick and the premier of Nova Scotia will be sitting down with me to talk about exactly those issues.

• (1225)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I too have listened to the debate and to many Conservatives standing up and speaking to it. I think we need to be really clear on this. The reality is that the Conservative Party of Canada has no intention whatsoever of seeing this bill pass. The reason we need to bring in time allocation, as before, is that the Conservative Party of Canada plays a role as a destructive force on the floor of the House of Commons. Its idea of success is causing the frustration of legislation, preventing legislation from passing.

If we did not bring in time allocation, let there be no doubt that the Conservative Party would be very happy; it would continue to talk and debate indefinitely.

This legislation is an economic tool that would make a very real difference for Atlantic Canada; by filibustering this legislation, the Conservative Party is doing a disservice to the Atlantic region of our country. Could the member provide his thoughts in regard to that?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, this is a global race. The Public Policy Forum document that was published just yesterday or today shows the magnitude of the opportunity that is here. It is a very significant economic opportunity for Nova Scotia and for Newfoundland and Labrador.

As I said before, I am astounded that the Conservative Party is actively campaigning against the economic future of Atlantic Canada. It is astonishing to me that it will sit in this chamber and, simply for the purpose of opposing this government, act against the interests of Atlantic Canadians.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Speaker, we know that there is enormous potential for a thriving offshore renewable energy industry in Atlantic Canada and that we need to make sure that those benefits are felt by local communities and local fishers.

Will the government guarantee that the benefits from offshore wind projects will flow directly to local workers and that the local fishing communities will be supported?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, certainly, provisions are in place to ensure that there are conversations with fishers and fish harvesters. There are a lot of examples around the world of how a thriving fish industry can coexist with an offshore wind industry, for example, in the United Kingdom.

Government Orders

The whole point of this exercise, in terms of economic development, is to ensure that long-term, sustainable benefits flow to communities in Nova Scotia and in Newfoundland and Labrador. This is exactly why the premiers of both of those provinces are extremely anxious to see this move through Parliament, so they can move it through their legislatures and we can get going with respect to having a regulatory structure in place that will enable projects to move forward.

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, I will ask the minister again.

I will read clause (g) from the summary. The enactment would amend the Atlantic accord to, among other things:

provide that the Governor in Council may make regulations to prohibit the commencement or continuation of petroleum resource or renewable energy activities, or the issuance of interests, in respect of any portion of the offshore area that is located in an area that has been or may be identified as an area for environmental or wildlife conservation or protection...

This is otherwise known as a future MPA. The oil industry in Newfoundland and Labrador has come to me; these stakeholders have said that clause 56 in this legislation would put in black and white what they have long feared.

Would the minister be willing to delete clause 56 from this legislation?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, as I said, this legislation was developed collaboratively with the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and with the Province of Nova Scotia. The actions taken under the accord acts will actually be done jointly between Canada and each of those respective provinces.

I would suggest to my hon. colleague that he may want to have a conversation with his premier about all these issues.

To be honest, it is exactly the fact that they are not even willing to engage in a conversation about how the environment fits relative to economic development that shows the problem with the Conservative Party. It is willing to simply throw out the environment, to trample on the environment, in pursuit of only the economic opportunities. There has to be a balance. Economic opportunities have to be pursued in a manner that is environmentally sustainable.

Canadians simply cannot trust the Conservative Party on the environment.

• (1230)

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, the minister must have been a heck of a dodge ball player in his day, because he totally dodged that question about time allocation and his deep NDP roots.

I wonder if the member would advise former premier Romanow to actually do time allocation 35 times in one Parliament, if he was still the premier in Saskatchewan. However, that is beside the point.

When the member talks about “no plan for the environment”, I would invite him to come to the PTRC in Regina, where they have a number that says that Saskatchewan has lowered the emissions, per capita, more than any other province in the country, and has the highest GDP increase over the last year. That is combining the environment and economic growth. Why can the Liberals not do that?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, as I said, it is important to move this legislation to committee expeditiously and eventually out of Parliament in order to seize the economic opportunities that are there but will not be there forever. There are other countries that are looking at seizing those.

I would say to my hon. colleague that, in terms of climate change, absolute emissions in Saskatchewan have gone up. They have not gone down. Saskatchewan is one of the few provinces in this country that has no climate target, in terms of actually reducing emissions by 2030. We would love to see Saskatchewan join the ranks of many provinces and territories in this country that have a fulsome climate plan that includes a climate target.

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

This minister keeps on talking about how, perhaps, the member opposite, should have a conversation with the provincial premier, and speaks about climate plans. Let us face the facts here. If we want to talk in facts, this is a government that has missed every single climate projection possible.

The minister talks about the fact that we need to think about the environment. The world's biggest polluter is China, and his colleague, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change went to China. What did we hear about the environment? We get lectured domestically, constantly. What did we hear about their interactions? Crickets.

How can the minister stand here today and say that we need to start talking about this with everybody, when his own government does not have the guts to take a stand against large-scale emitters?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, I would say that folks in this chamber are certainly entitled to their own opinions, but they are not entitled to their own facts.

The only climate target that the government has ever had was a 2030 target. We actually moved to upgrade that target from a 30% below 2005, to 40% to 45%. It is a target that we will achieve. It is the only target that we have ever had.

When Conservatives stand up and talk about the fact that the Liberal government has missed a target, they are simply saying things that are not true.

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, I want to give a tip of the cap to the member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame. He is the first member of the Conservative Party in almost three full days of debate who has actually pulled out and referenced one provision.

I may not agree with what he is raising, but could the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources at least reassure all parliamentarians in this House of two things. First, we have to move quickly to be able to drive the initiatives that have been discussed today in Atlantic Canada's offshore. Second, if there are helpful suggestions, those could be litigated and discussed at committee. There is no reason why any member of this House should not be willing to get this good initiative to committee. Hopefully that vote will take place tomorrow, and we will see where the Conservatives stand on it.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, we need to move quickly on this bill. We are in a global race. It is important that Canada seize the economic opportunities and move to ensure that we are actually creating good jobs.

It is certainly very important that we move it to committee to have a robust conservation and hear from witnesses. That is essentially what we are trying to do today. Once again, this is an enormous opportunity for Atlantic Canada.

It is astounding to me that the Conservative Party is opposing this. I do suggest that they talk to their respective premiers, who support this bill and want to see it move forward.

● (1235)

[*Translation*]

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

[*English*]

The question is on the motion.

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

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: I request a recorded vote, please.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Call in the members.

And the bells having rung:

● (1305)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: The question is as follows.

Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of motion to House*]

● (1320)

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

(*Division No. 418*)

YEAS

Members

Aldag

Alghabra

Government Orders

Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blaney
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Cannings
Carr	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	Fillmore
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Gainey	Garrison
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lattanzio
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	McDonald (Avalon)
McGuinty	McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod
McPherson	Mendès
Mendicino	Miao
Miller	Morrissey
Murray	Naqvi
Ng	Noormohamed
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Petipas Taylor
Powlowski	Qualtrough
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Rota	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sarai

Privilege

Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
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Taylor Roy
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Yip
Zarrillo

Richards
Rood
Savard-Tremblay
Schmale
Shields
Simard
Small
Steinley
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Vien
Vignola
Vis
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams

NAYS

Members

Aboultarif
Albas
Arnold
Barlow
Barsalou-Duval
Berthold
Bezan
Blanchette-Joncas
Bragdon
Brock
Calkins
Carrie
Chambers
Chong
Dalton
Davidson
Deltell
Desbiens
Doherty
Dreeschen
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Fortin
Garon
Généreux
Gill
Godin
Gourde
Hallan
Jeneroux
Khanna
Kmicc
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Lantsman
Lawrence
Lemire
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lobb
Majumdar
May (Saanic—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Melillo
Moore
Morrice
Motz
Nater
Patzner
Pauzé
Perron
Rayes
Reid

Aitchison
Allison
Baldinelli
Barrett
Beaulieu
Bérubé
Blanchet
Block
Brassard
Brunelle-Duceppe
Caputo
Chabot
Champoux
Cooper
Dancho
DeBellefeuille
d'Entremont
Desilets
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Ferrerri
Gallant
Gaudreau
Genuis
Gladu
Goodridge
Gray
Hoback
Kelly
Kitchen
Kram
Kurek
Lake
Larouche
Lehoux
Leslie
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd
Maguire
Martel
Mazier
McLean
Michaud
Morantz
Morrison
Muys
Normandin
Paul-Hus
Perkins
Poilievre
Redekopp
Rempel Garner

PAIRED

Members

Bergeron
Sorbara
Jones
Zimmer— 4

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

The Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the proceedings on the time allocation motion, Government Orders will be extended by 30 minutes.

The member for Salaberry—Suroît is rising on a point of order.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, the member for Thérèse-De Blainville experienced a problem. She would like to reverse her vote. She cast her vote in favour, but she is against.

I would like unanimous consent to change her vote.

The Deputy Speaker: Do we have unanimous consent to change the vote of the member for Thérèse-De Blainville?

[*English*]

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED MISLEADING RESPONSE TO ORDER PAPER QUESTION

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are learning to work together in the House of Commons and it is in that spirit I am rising today to discuss not only the matter of privilege raised by the member for Calgary Nose Hill on Thursday, October 5, but also to raise concerns about how the matter has been handled since it was originally raised.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the member's question of privilege was on the subject of responses to written questions provided to her by the government. This is an area of jurisprudence that has often been raised by members and has been ruled on by many previous Speakers. What made this situation unique was the fact the responses were signed off by the Speaker in the Speaker's previous role as parliamentary secretary.

[*Translation*]

It is not uncommon for unusual or complex questions to require additional resources. The House may recall that, at the time, I indicated that I wanted an opportunity to intervene at a later date. The member for Winnipeg North did exactly the same thing. We intervened in the House to say that we wanted to intervene once the research had been done. It is essential that such interventions take place before a decision is made. That is the tradition here in the House. The next day, my office confirmed that my intervention would take place after the break week, which just ended. At no time were we informed that a decision might be imminent.

• (1325)

[*English*]

However, during the break week, I was informed, by way of a CC in an email from the member for Calgary Nose Hill, and subsequently confirmed by the Speaker's office, that the Speaker had made a decision to recuse himself from deliberating on this matter. This decision was confirmed in the ruling this morning.

I do believe this recusal was the right decision, but I was nonetheless very surprised to hear that a decision was made without waiting for input that had been very clearly indicated from at least two parties in the House.

When important precedent-setting decisions on how the House operates are made, they are traditionally made following interventions from interested parties. That could not take place here.

[*Translation*]

I was also surprised at the way in which the decision was made public. Communicating a decision directly to the member involved amounts to saying that the Speaker's responsibility is to that member rather than to the House as a whole.

The fact that a member of the media, in this case an unverified blogger, received confirmation of the decision before the House or even the House leaders were informed is even more frustrating.

[*English*]

As House of Commons Procedure and Practice states:

The Speaker is the servant, neither of any part of the House nor of any majority in the House, but of the entire institution....

The responsibility of the Speaker is to the institution of Parliament and to the House of Commons as a whole, not to an individual member who raises a point and not to reporters who may be interested in the decisions taken by the Speaker. Providing more information to the media than to Parliament on matters that are fundamentally parliamentary in nature is really not acceptable.

In discussing how Speakers' rulings are delivered, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, our bible, further states:

Sometimes, a ruling is delivered quickly and with a minimum of explanation. At other times, circumstances do not permit an immediate ruling. The Speaker may allow discussion of the point of order before he or she comes to a decision. The Speaker might also reserve his or her decision on a matter, returning to the House at a later time to deliver the ruling

Government Orders

It is clear that rulings are meant to be made in the House. There is no precedent for a Speaker doing otherwise, and the rule book does not contemplate otherwise.

[*Translation*]

I humbly request that, in future, these matters be treated appropriately and in accordance with House practices.

[*English*]

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for the intervention. Of course, no decision has been made on this matter. We are continuing to look at it and taking the information in. It has been passed on to the Deputy Speaker, myself, at this point. It was the decision of the Speaker to do that. I would be more than happy to listen to any further information to come before us as well.

* * *

CANADA—NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR ATLANTIC ACCORD IMPLEMENTATION ACT

The House resumed from October 6 consideration of the motion that Bill C-49, An Act to amend the Canada—Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my opening remarks a couple of days ago, Bill C-49, an act to amend the Atlantic accord, desperately needs amendments. As with all Liberal legislation, the devil is in the details, or, in this case, the lack thereof.

Bill C-49, as it stands, would end all future expansion of the Newfoundland and Labrador offshore oil and gas industry. In addition, the entire fishing industry in Atlantic Canada is fearful of the mass installation of wind turbines on its fishing grounds.

The fishing industry is not against the development of offshore wind energy; however, Bill C-49 pays lip service to consultations, from its point of view. That industry has a history of a lack of meaningful consultation with the Liberal government, especially when it comes to the setting up of marine protected areas, otherwise known as MPAs. MPAs have been arbitrarily created, oftentimes on prime fishing grounds, even though objections have been raised by fishermen. Their concerns are never taken into account, but the Liberal government goes ahead and forces fishers off their lucrative fishing grounds, endangering their livelihoods.

Government Orders

Why am I talking so much about fishermen and their experience with MPAs? It is because they fear that the exact same thing will happen in the designation and development of offshore wind farms. Bill C-49 is far too inadequate in relieving those fears. The process of consultation, negotiation and, in some cases, compensation needs to be clearly defined in this legislation. Fishermen are sick and tired of attacks by the Liberal government on their livelihoods, and they tell me that it is time for them to have an effective seat at the table. The bill before us needs to address this.

The fishing industry is not the only industry concerned with the arbitrary implementation of MPAs. The oil and gas industry has similar concerns. Bill C-49 would effectively kill all offshore oil and gas exploration and development in the future in Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia. Any significant petroleum discovery or renewable energy project not yet developed would be governed by amendments to the Atlantic accord.

I see my hon. colleague, the member for Avalon, looking across at me. I am sure he has read the bill inside and out. However, I will read from the summary of the bill. It says:

the Governor in Council may make regulations to prohibit the commencement or continuation of petroleum resource or renewable energy activities, or the issuance of interests, in respect of any portion of the offshore area that is located in an area that has been or may be identified as an area for environmental or wildlife conservation or protection

That is an area that may be identified as an MPA. Also, item (h) would give out the power to decide whether or not to compensate for the cancellation of such projects.

We all know that the Liberal government and its extreme environmental restraints have one goal in mind when it comes to Newfoundland and Labrador's offshore oil and gas industry, and that is to shut it down. The stakeholders I have talked to say that Bill C-49 puts the long-held fears of their industry on paper in black and white.

The Liberal government destroyed the Bay du Nord project by delaying approval after the longest environmental assessment in Canadian history. It used Bill C-69 as its tool to do that, and it can still do that in the future because that part of the bill was not destroyed by the court, unfortunately. Bill C-49 would be another tool in the anti-oil tool box, and Liberal MPs from Atlantic Canada, especially those from Newfoundland and Labrador, should be ashamed to support the bill as it stands.

What oil and gas company would want to spend hundreds of millions of dollars to explore the offshore in Atlantic Canada and have a significant find, only to be told that it cannot develop because the area may become a future MPA? The answer is none. This bill would drive much-needed investment dollars out of our offshore, which is already protected by the most stringent environmental regulations in the world, and would send that investment into jurisdictions with not only a poor environmental record but also a poor human rights record.

● (1330)

I cannot, as the lone supporter of Newfoundland and Labrador's oil and gas industry in the House of Commons, vote for a bill aimed at killing that industry. Liberal MPs from Atlantic Canada should feel the same way, but they do not. They tell me that I need to vote

with them to support this bill for the good of my province. I ask if they are cracked. How can a bill that has the potential to kill all new oil and gas production off our shores be good for my province? This bill was created to wedge Conservatives in Atlantic Canada, and our propaganda machine, the CBC, even said it itself.

The member for St. John's South—Mount Pearl said that the Conservatives should not be meddling in the Atlantic accord, that we should support their amendments. If he is in this place, where he should be, he can get on his feet when I am done speaking and explain how members on my side of the House are meddling in the Atlantic accord when it is his party, under his ineffective guidance, that brought these amendments forward. How can Conservatives be meddling when we did not bring these amendments forward?

Then there is the Liberal member from Nova Scotia, whom I chatted with not that long ago. He said that consulting with non-indigenous fishermen was looking for trouble. It is unbelievable. If he wants to stand and clarify what he said when I am finished, he can do so as well. The fishing industry is all ears.

Trying to use this Liberal legislation to wedge Conservatives, the only party in this House that supports the oil and gas industry in Canada, is just a distraction. It is a distraction from the eight-year record of the current NDP-Liberal government, which sees Canadians reeling from the effects of the carbon tax on everything they buy and from food bank usage at the highest rate in 42 years. However, we will not be distracted. Not only do we support the oil and gas industry, but we support the mining industry.

Guess what else supports the mining industry. It is the wind power industry. To produce a single gigawatt of wind power, it takes 44 million pounds of copper, 150,000 tonnes of steel, 24,000 tonnes of iron, 1,000 tonnes of aluminum, 700,000 tonnes of concrete and a whopping 12,000 tonnes of fibreglass. That is what is required to produce one gigawatt. Where does fibreglass come from? It will not come from oil produced on the Grand Banks if the Liberals have their way; I can say that.

● (1335)

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it was quite remarkable to sit in this place for that, and it is fortunate for the member opposite that we are protected by parliamentary privilege because of the level of misinformation that his speech contained and the level of fearmongering. This is the government that approved Bay du Nord and this is the government that supports energy in Newfoundland and Labrador and indeed across Atlantic Canada.

Government Orders

The member talks about his stakeholders. Is Energy NL against this? I do not think so. Is the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador against this? I do not think so. Are the proponents of the projects being contemplated in Atlantic Canada against this? Absolutely not. Is the Premier of Nova Scotia?

Who is he talking to? He is not talking to everyday Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, who want to see this. Clip this to the voice of the common people and let him tell them why he is against progress in Atlantic Canada. It is simply astonishing. I cannot believe it sitting here in this place.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I hear voices on both sides other than those of the hon. members I have recognized, and I would ask members to please wait until it is their time and they are recognized.

The hon. member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame.

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, I challenge the member for Kings—Hants. He knows that what I said earlier today when debating closure on this bill was that there are real deficiencies in it. He heard me read proposed section 56, and he even complimented me on studying the bill and knowing what is in it.

I sat next to a former political figure in Newfoundland and Labrador, who all members have lots of respect for today. I showed him that and he was shocked. Many are shocked in the oil and gas industry. I have spoken to many fishing organizations from Nova Scotia that are now banding together to make sure they are adequately consulted and not steamrolled in this process, as they were when MPAs were thrown on their fishing grounds.

An hon. member: Table them.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the hon. member that he had an opportunity to ask a question, and he should take the time to listen to the answer. If he has further questions, he should wait until he is recognized during questions and comments.

The hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Supreme Court recently ruled that Bill C-69 is unconstitutional. Since Bill C-69 is embedded in the bill we are discussing, Bill C-49, it would also make this bill unconstitutional. What does the member think the proper response should be?

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, I wish the member for Kings—Hants were as familiar as my hon. colleague about what is going on with the gatekeeping in our offshore oil and gas industry.

In response to the member's question, anything that is related to Bill C-69 in Bill C-49 needs to be scrapped, given how the court just ruled and how Bill C-69 is now in total jeopardy.

• (1340)

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member spoke quite a bit about people and organizations who are concerned about this bill. I am always open to hearing about critiques and the best way to move forward. I wonder if the member could please clarify exactly which organizations and

people he is referencing who are expressing concerns about the bill. Perhaps he could be a bit more specific as to what the exact concerns are.

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, I can start with the FFAW, the Coldwater Lobster Association, the Brazil Rock Lobster Association and the Maritime Fishermen's Union. There are loads and loads. In fact, the Fisheries Council of Canada was in Ottawa a couple of weeks ago, and it is expecting a whole-of-industry approach to seek proper explanation for this bill and to lay out what a real consultation process looks like and make sure it is adhered to so that the council is not steamrolled in the way that it was when marine protected areas were jammed down its throat.

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, I am thankful for being recognized again for an opportunity to re-engage with my colleague here today.

My question is very simple. He obviously suggested that this bill has flaws. I did not hear much about it, but I think he also recognizes that there are offshore energy opportunities. We have stakeholders across the region who are talking about this bill as being extremely important. Will the member vote for it tomorrow to at least get it to committee so he can raise the supposed concerns that many stakeholders and he share? Will we get this bill to committee so we can move it forward? Will he vote tomorrow in favour of getting the bill to committee?

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, if the NDP-Liberal government is willing to amend this bill and lay out amendments tomorrow to remove proposed section 56 and outline a meaningful consultation process for the fishing industry stakeholders, I would be willing to vote for it. Otherwise, we have loads of them to invite to committee, and they can ask for the amendments they want.

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in the House on behalf of the folks from Cumberland—Colchester, especially when it is to speak to a bill that would negatively affect potential development in Nova Scotia. We have heard from many people in the House, Atlantic members of Parliament specifically, wanting to now portray themselves as the saviours of Nova Scotia. They are going on, touting how many people really want to be a part of the bill, which we know is utter hogwash.

Government Orders

We know that Bill C-49 would create uncertainty and control. By that, I mean it would create uncertainty and control related to the cabinet members of the NDP-Liberal coalition government. The difficulty we see there is that they are the ones who would assume the ultimate decision-making process when looking at the development of the offshore industries in Nova Scotia. We know very clearly that they would want to stop projects in the ocean to have ultimate control of their fiefdom, as they have had on land now for many years, and to effectively kill the oil and gas industry in Nova Scotia. It is really quite shocking.

We know that representatives from Germany came to specifically Nova Scotia in Canada and said that they would like to have our natural gas. The Prime Minister said that there is no case for natural gas. He asked who would need natural gas and why anyone would want natural gas. We also know that the NDP-Liberal government has killed 17 natural gas projects in this country, which obviously shows its true colours. Those members not only want to control it, but also to control the destiny of people in Atlantic Canada.

We know that the bill is rife with difficulties, red tape, long delays, stifling unproductivity and an unfriendly business environment. That part of this really hearkens to the words of a friend whom I had an opportunity to see during the break week, who said that, for people who build houses, the red tape, delays, bureaucracy and cost that the NDP-Liberal coalition has created really make it absolutely unpleasant, unpalatable, unfair and unpredictable for someone to even want to build simple housing in this country. Going forward, why would Canadians want to continue to have the voice of the NDP-Liberal coalition, and cabinet members in particular, making those decisions?

We know that, as my colleague spoke to before, at the discretion of a cabinet member, it could possibly create marine protected areas for anything that could possibly, at any time in the future, be examined or have difficulties. With any of the ambiguous language put forward, they would create marine protected areas that, of course, would stymie development.

We also know that the track record of the government, when it comes to offshore projects, is absolutely atrocious. We know that Sustainable Marine's tidal energy project, offshore in Nova Scotia, partly in my riding of Cumberland—Colchester, was effectively stopped by the government. We know that Sustainable Marine simply asked for direction going forward from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and it got absolutely nothing from the department.

This was the first time a project in the development of tidal energy had put energy back into the grid, and it was measurable. It also had significant abilities to monitor for fish strikes. Even the government arm of monitoring, called FORCE, on the tidal energy project, readily admitted, when I met with those folks and Sustainable Marine energy, that there were no worrisome signals or fish strikes. There was one fish that swam through one of the turbines, but other than that, no fish were harmed in this process.

The scope of Sustainable Marine's tidal energy project is really related to the fact that, if it were able to harness a significant amount of the energy off the Bay of Fundy, which has the highest tides in the world, there would be potential there to power all of At-

lantic Canada in perpetuity with minimal cost. When we look at that kind of a project, which the Liberal government has absolutely no ability to support or go forward with, then I ask again why Canadians would want to say that we should allow the cabinet minister to have the opportunity to decide when projects should or should not go forward.

● (1345)

The difficulty, and my colleague, the member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame mentioned this, is that there are many sections of overlap from Bill C-69 embedded in Bill C-49. We know that the Supreme Court of Canada has very clearly declared Bill C-69 unconstitutional.

Just a few things, if I may. Clauses 61, 62, 169 and 170 of Bill C-49 invoke section 64 of Bill C-69, the Impact Assessment Act, where the minister finds that a given project's adverse effects within federal jurisdiction and its adverse direct or incidental effects are in public interest, section 64 allows, and in fact requires, the minister to create any conditions which they deem appropriate in relation to those effects and with which the project proponent must comply.

In Bill C-69, the Liberals forced all offshore drilling to be subject to a review panel, increasing the timeline from 300 to 600-plus days for offshore reviews. Conservatives raised this as a major point of concern with Bill C-69. The impact assessment by the agency can take 1,605 days, which, sadly, is four and a half years, if all aspects of the process are followed.

This bill specifies section 64 of IAA, which allows the minister to create any condition they wish, based on an impact assessment report, which could add another 330 days to the process, if it was stated in clause 62 of Bill C-49, required by the regulator or prescribed.

What we are talking about is a country where people cannot afford to feed themselves, to put a roof over their heads and to generally look after their families. When we understand that the NDP-Liberal coalition continues to want to put up red tape, barriers and concerns, then we know what is on the mind of Atlantic Canadians.

Those of us who went back to our ridings last week talked to people, and they talked about the carbon tax and the cost of living. We know that the Atlantic Liberals over on that side of the House have voted 24 times in favour of a carbon tax, over and over again.

There is one person on that side of the House, a Liberal, who has suddenly found religion, or perhaps he has found the Conservative common sense. I cannot exactly explain why, but we do know that he was on TV and was quoted multiple times. I think it is germane to read into the record one of the great quotes:

I believe we have to change the way we're approaching the climate change incentive, whatever you want to call it. I think what we're using right now, at this point in time, is putting a bigger burden on people who are now struggling with an affordability crisis.

Government Orders

A gentleman on the opposite side said that. When we go back to our ridings in Atlantic Canada and hear of the difficulties, we understand very clearly that the Atlantic Liberals continue, over and over, to vote for a punishing carbon tax. What do they want to do now? They want to create further problems for Atlantic Canadians by stopping projects in the ocean.

We already know that they continue to do this on land with the statistics that I quoted previously, the delays of four and a half years on projects. Again, I will tie that to the builders we hear from to understand very clearly that they are giving up on their dreams of building houses and projects for Atlantic Canadians because it is an untenable position.

It is intolerable. It is unacceptable. It is unexplainable why the NDP-Liberal coalition wants to continue to stymie development in Atlantic Canada. That is something, on this side of the House, that we will not stand for.

• (1350)

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would agree with the hon. member that DFO needs reform. I want to clarify the position of Atlantic Liberals, which is that we support the carbon price, but we are calling for amendments and constructive dialogue on being able to ensure that it better resembles the lived realities of the constituencies he and I represent.

I want to tell a little story. In the provincial election of 2021, Premier Tim Houston said that he wanted to be very clear that he is not aligned with the federal Conservative Party of Canada. The member for Cumberland—Colchester really highlighted the difference between progressive conservatism and where the federal Conservatives are today.

Premier Houston is in Ottawa today. He has publicly called on this legislation to be advanced. My question to the hon. member is this: Would he like for me to arrange a meeting with Premier Houston, so that he could have a conversation to better understand why he is standing against the interests of that provincial government and our entire region?

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Madam Speaker, I do not need that Liberal member to get me a meeting with Tim Houston. As a matter of fact, I met him on Saturday, oddly enough.

Do members know what Premier Houston said? He said that the Liberals need to think more clearly about what Bill C-49 means now that we know that Bill C-69 has been declared unconstitutional. He also made reference, very clearly, that they are not taking seriously the problem with the Chignecto Isthmus in Nova Scotia.

He also made it very clear that he knows that Atlantic Canadians, and specifically Nova Scotians, are suffering under this punishing carbon tax. He wonders how, in heaven's name, the Atlantic Liberals could stand up and vote 23 times for a carbon tax, which they continue to want to raise, punishing Atlantic Canadians for living rurally, mainly living in single family dwellings, not having public transit and those kinds of things. When I met with the premier on Saturday, those were the things that were important to him.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Nova Scotia for addressing this legislation and for speaking the truth about the negative impacts it

would have on both offshore petroleum development and the future of renewable offshore development.

I wonder if he would expand on how disastrous it would be to proceed with Bill C-49 now, given that sections from Bill C-69, sections 61, 62 and 64, which are all embedded in Bill C-69, have now been declared by the Supreme Court of Canada, on Friday, to be largely unconstitutional.

I wonder if he would expand on exactly the perils of proceeding with this legislation, which they are rushing through on time allocation, given that we would all know that we were passing a bill with significant clauses that are unconstitutional.

• (1355)

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Madam Speaker, if we look at it from a perspective of medicine, maybe, it would be like saying, wow, I cannot find that large retractor, but I think we should just sew up the patient anyway. Maybe we will find it later. Maybe they will run into a problem, or maybe they will not.

When we look at it like that, we all know what the outcome is going to be. The patient could die. That would be the biggest disaster. Of course, one would have to go in to do another operation at the best of times.

Already knowing that a disaster has already happened once with their frivolous law-making attempts, we know that allowing this bill to proceed, especially using time allocation, is a road that we do not want to go down.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, as a Newfoundlander with roots in Newfoundland and family still in Newfoundland, I am personally very excited to see the potential for a thriving offshore renewable energy industry in Atlantic Canada. I know many Newfoundlanders and east coasters are excited to see good jobs, a lowering of energy bills and the fight to end the climate crisis.

Could the member please share if he supports a thriving renewable energy industry for workers and communities on the east coast, or is he more interested in protecting the interests and profits of rich oil CEOs?

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Madam Speaker, what we know very clearly is that, whether we like it or not, there continues to be a significant appetite for natural gas in the world.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Madam Speaker, when we know that Newfoundland and Labrador have significant reserves of natural gas, it would be folly to continue to allow those things not to develop. It does not stand to reason.

We know that we cannot quickly pivot and allow renewables to be the only source of energy. We know that, whether we like it or not, there is a very good chance that natural gas will continue to be a part of the prosperity of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Statements by Members

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before we continue, I want to remind members of a couple of rules of the House, which are that, if they wish to speak, they should stand to be recognized, and if they wish to ask a question or make comments, they need to be in their seat.

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I would like to seek unanimous consent to table a document from Premier Houston in relation to a comment that he made on calling on—

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It appears that the hon. member did not consult to get unanimous consent. I already hear that there is no unanimous consent.

Mr. Churence Rogers (Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is certainly an honour for me to stand in the House and speak in support of Bill C-49. It has had a great history behind it, with much debate that took place in the 1950s and 1960s about resources off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia. Typically, as we see in Canada, compromises were made, and the Atlantic accords were put in place to deal with the jurisdiction off Newfoundland and Labrador's coast and followed by Nova Scotia a year later.

The original agreement was, as Newfoundland and Labrador's then premier, Brian Peckford, stated, consistent “with a strong and united Canada”. The day the first of the two accords was signed, the agreement between Newfoundland and Labrador and Canada, the prime minister at the time, the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney, said in his speech, “It is unquestionably an historic Accord, probably the most important agreement reached between Ottawa and St. John's since Newfoundland entered Confederation”.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[*English*]

STAN DROMISKY

Mr. Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am sad to be standing and acknowledging the passing of my friend Stan “Staush” Dromisky. He grew up in the east end of what was then Fort William. He first became an elementary school teacher and then went back and got his Ph.D. and ended up teaching at Lakehead University in education.

In 1992, he was elected to Parliament, where he served until 2004. He loved this place. He was a proud parliamentarian. Stan also loved kids. During the House of Commons Christmas toy drive, Stan used to dress up as Santa. Apparently, one night during an evening vote, he came in full Santa regalia in order to vote on behalf of the people of Thunder Bay—Atikokan. That was the quintessential Stan, a guy who always had a glimmer in his eye and a sense of duty for his country, and who always put others before himself.

Stan will be missed by many people, but by none more than his loving wife, Peggy, who was his soulmate; his three daughters; and five grandchildren.

Spochyvay z myrom. Slava Ukraini.

* * *

WORLD EGG DAY

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Madam Speaker, this past Friday was World Egg Day, a day to mark the importance of eggs as the critical protein that they are, while also celebrating the positive impact of our egg farming sector in Canada. For over 50 years, our local egg farmers have supported their rural communities and ensured that Canadians have consistent year-round access to fresh, local, affordable, and high-quality eggs from coast to coast. Egg farmers and farm families serve as a strong, stabilizing economic force within our communities and contribute \$1.3 billion to Canada's GDP annually.

This year, World Egg Day was an opportunity to recognize the role of egg farmers in building strong and vibrant rural communities across Canada, supporting small businesses and investing in their local economies. I ask all members to join me in wishing Canada's egg producers a belated happy World Egg Day.

* * *

14TH LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Ms. Joanne Thompson (St. John's East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Newfoundland and Labrador has a long history of strong women leaders, and Her Honour Judy May Foote clearly sits within this group. After over 20 years in public life, both in the House of Assembly and here as a member of Parliament, she became the 14th Lieutenant-Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador. She was the first woman to hold this post and served in an inclusive, open and caring way. Referencing Government House as “the people's house”, she opened the grounds with yoga on the lawn, horticulture therapy and accessible walking trails. Her Honour also worked to support and expand reconciliation, with the new heart garden serving as a powerful feature. She is a cancer survivor, humanitarian, and a friend.

I am thankful for Her Honour's service to the province and the country. Her care for the common good has transformed how we view the role of a lieutenant-governor. We look forward to her next role in public service.

* * *

FORMER PARLIAMENTARIANS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to take the floor this afternoon to recognize four extraordinary Canadians, all of whom were Parliamentarians and all of whom passed away between when we adjourned in June and resumed in September: the Hon. Stephen Owen, the Hon. Pat Carney, Hugh Segal and the Hon. Monique Bégin.

*Statements by Members***TERRY FOX RUN IN WEYMOUTH**

I particularly want to pay tribute to Pat Carney, who has not had a round of speeches in this place to recognize her roles as an MP, a cabinet member, a senator, a trailblazer for women's rights and a dear friend. She was also my constituent. Her closest home place was always Saturna Island. She contributed to this country in many ways, including being the first MP to put forward a bill to eliminate discrimination based on sexual orientation. She fought for women's rights and opposed legislation that restricted abortion rights. She was an extraordinary woman, a good friend, a great leader and a Canadian who contributed to this country in so many ways.

* * *

• (1405)

[*Translation*]**GUY LATRAVERSE**

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, producer Guy Latraverse, nicknamed the “father of Quebec show business”, passed away last Saturday after a lengthy illness.

The unforgettable *Saint-Jean sur la montagne* in 1975, the legendary *1 fois 5* show, Diane Dufresne's *Magie rose* at the Olympic Stadium, we owe them all to Guy Latraverse. We must also acknowledge the courage he had to speak publicly about mental health issues, having lived with bipolar disorder all his life.

In this, as in so many other areas, he was a trailblazer. As an outspoken separatist, his first passion, as his sister Louise so eloquently pointed out, was Quebec. Propelling our artists a little higher, a little further, was his way of promoting Quebec. As such, his contribution to our national pride is unparalleled.

Our thoughts are with his family and loved ones. Thank you for everything, Mr. Latraverse; Quebec owes you so much.

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[*English*]**WORLD FOOD DAY**

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is World Food Day, a day when we are reminded that we must work together to confront the issue of food insecurity here in Canada and around the world. With the rising cost of living, 24.6% of Ontario kids live in a food-insecure household, a sharp increase from last year. Whether breakfast or lunch, healthy school meals play a vital role in alleviating household food insecurity and providing the essential nourishment for children's growth and development.

Last Wednesday, the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and I held a productive meeting with almost 30 MPs from four political parties. We heard an insightful presentation from the Coalition for Healthy School Food and the Breakfast Club of Canada outlining the importance of a national school food strategy as we ensure that every child in this country receives the food they need to reach their full potential.

I thank all the participants for their continuing support and advocacy.

Mr. Chris d'Entremont (West Nova, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to recognize and commend an outstanding individual in our riding of West Nova, Wayne Bell, who is the sales manager at Belliveau Motors in Church Point. For several months, Wayne has been raising funds for a good friend, Dean Jones, who is battling cancer, and has organized 43 of the Terry Fox runs in Weymouth, Nova Scotia. The most that the Weymouth Terry Fox Run had ever raised was about \$3,300. When Wayne heard that his friend Dean was putting together another fundraiser in this year's run, he wanted to help. Wayne got creative and started an online campaign where he put out a challenge to the entire community that if he raised over \$10,000, he would jump off the wharf at Belliveau Cove in a Speedo. Surprisingly enough, Wayne was able to raise just over \$11,000 for this year's Weymouth Terry Fox Run, and the rest, of course, is history.

No one should ever have to endure cancer alone, and especially to fight against it alone. This is a perfect example of our community coming together to support an important cause to help one another.

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CHINESE FREEMASONS 160TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to recognize the Chinese Freemasons of Canada on its 160th anniversary.

In the 1800s, tens of thousands of Chinese arrived in Canada to work on railroads and in forestry and gold mines. They played a crucial role in Canada's nation building. Separated from their families, they worked under harsh conditions. In 1885, they built the Chee Kung Tong Building, now a Canadian national historic site. The Chinese Freemasons of Canada provided immigrants a support system and allowed them to pay homage to their ancestors. It also mediated disputes.

I wish to recognize and thank the long service of Ottawa residents, 92-year-old Mr. Bing Chan and 91-year-old Mrs. Yim Han-Fong; grandmaster Lap-Chun (Sunny) Law from Toronto; grandmaster Fred Ying Wah Kwok from Vancouver; and the current national chair, Albert Tang.

Statements by Members

● (1410)

LATIN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, October is Latin American Heritage Month, a time to celebrate the vibrant cultures, traditions and contributions of the Hispanic and Latin American communities in Canada. Over one million Hispanic and Latin Americans, coming from more than 20 countries, now call Canada their home. They come from many different countries, but they are one community.

At the beginning of the month, I had the chance to walk in the downtown Toronto Latin Parade and Fall Fiesta, and people could see the rhythm, colours and *alegría*, as well as the diversity of the community out in full force.

This month, I invite everyone to celebrate the music, literature, food and culture of Hispanic and Latin American Canadians. Let us also take a moment to appreciate their extraordinary contributions to our country. We are a better and stronger country because of them.

Viva los latinos y los hispanos en Canada.

* * *

SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, small businesses are the cornerstone of our communities. They are the supporters of local sports teams, small-town fairs and charities. They are the job creators. They provide valuable goods and services to the community every single day. Unfortunately, after eight years of this NDP-Liberal government, it is now harder than ever for hard-working small business owners to stay open. Tax hikes, red tape, crime, quadrupled carbon taxes and inflation are causing significant hardships.

I do not know who is left buying what this government is selling. Most small businesses are barely holding on by their fingernails. They are seeing fewer customers as the cost of living rises. Canadians need more common sense not nonsense from a Prime Minister who is just not worth the cost.

This Small Business Week, know that Conservatives will take care of business by taking care of small businesses. We will bring back hope and get government off their backs.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Alexandre Look, Ben Mizrahi, Adi Vital-Kaploun, Shir Hana Georgy, Netta Epstein and Judith Haggai are six Canadians who were brutally murdered in the war launched by the terrorist group Hamas against our friend and ally, Israel.

There are over 1,400 dead, scenes of sickening brutality, infants slaughtered and elderly survivors of the Holocaust butchered. Innocent civilians, Israelis, Americans and Canadians had their lives ended or forever changed simply because they were Jews.

I feel for the hostages being held in Gaza whose fate is unknown and the innocent Palestinian civilians who suffer because of Hamas.

Yet, there are pro-Hamas demonstrations in our own country celebrating this depravity. I hope the entire House joins me in denouncing those who are celebrating the death of innocent Israelis and those who are inciting violence against Jewish Canadians.

My heart is broken. I am devastated. I stand with our ally Israel. I stand with the people of Israel.

Am Yisrael Chai.

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LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said that he would get groceries prices down before Thanksgiving. Well, the turkey has come and gone, and groceries prices are not down. Another broken promise from a Prime Minister who is not worth the cost. Maybe he was talking about American Thanksgiving.

I can tell members that putting together a committee of Liberals to recommend how to bring prices down is a wasted effort. They have no plan. After eight years of this NDP-Liberal government, Canadians are out of money and this government is out of ideas.

Our Conservative leader would axe the tax, the second carbon tax, the tax on the tax and the tariffs on Canadian farmers, and cut the regulations that are adding cost to the food chain. Conservatives know how to talk turkey and Canadians need the hope that we are bringing.

* * *

[*Translation*]

SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Hamas launched a number of terrorist attacks on Israel last week. Many civilians were killed or taken hostage. The terrorists committed rape, decapitated children and launched numerous rockets, hoping to kill as many Jews as possible. In response to the murders and violence perpetrated by Hamas, the Iranian foreign affairs minister warned Israel to stop defending itself, saying that the war could spread to other parts of the Middle East. In other words, Iran wants Israel to quietly accept the murder of its own citizens and do and say nothing.

Israel has the right to defend itself against the attacks and to respond to the attackers in kind. The Conservatives unequivocally condemn the Hamas terrorists' invasion of Israel. Furthermore, I find it appalling that anyone in Canada or elsewhere would express support for Hamas knowing that at least five Canadians, including Alexandre Look of Montreal, are among the victims. The glorification of terrorism has no place in Canada. In addition, not a single dollar of Canadian taxpayers' money should be used to support terrorism. It is time to bring common sense back to Canada's foreign policy.

• (1415)

ACTION CENTRE

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, I visited an amazing new organization in my community. The work it is doing to meet the needs of Canada's most vulnerable population is incredible.

The Action Centre is addressing a serious shortcoming in our society that definitely deserves more attention. Its mission is to raise general awareness about the needs and rights of adults with physical disabilities.

[English]

They also strive to provide a safe and welcoming environment for adults with physical disabilities, so that they have access to and may participate in a variety of educational, social, cultural and recreational programs in a community setting. This includes field trips, cooking classes, social activities and wellness activities. For only \$25 per year, adults between the ages of 21 and 65 years old living with a physical impairment can become members of the Action Centre and take full advantage of all that it has to offer.

I want to thank all of the members of the Board of Directors and the staff at the Action Centre for the incredible work that they do and the difference they make in the lives of their members.

* * *

WORLD FOOD DAY

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today is World Food Day and we must turn our attention to the food insecurity and hunger that is plaguing our country. We have nothing to celebrate here in Canada. Food bank use is at its highest level in Canadian history, with more working families relying on food banks just to get by. Every week, Canadians are making difficult choices when they visit the grocery store.

The food crisis in Canada did not happen overnight. We got here because it is the natural conclusion of decades of corporate-friendly neo-liberal economic policies that both the Liberals and Conservatives have championed. When corporate greed gouges the farmer who grows the food, gouges the trucker who ships the food and then gouges everyone who is trying to buy the food, we get the out-of-control food-price inflation that is hurting Canadian families.

On this World Food Day, the entire NDP caucus and I renew our pledges to fight corporate greed, so that Canadians are no longer struggling to feed themselves.

* * *

[Translation]

HUBERT REEVES

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if we listen closely, we will hear the footsteps of a titan climbing his way to the stars. That would be Hubert Reeves, who left us on Friday at the age of 91.

An astrophysicist and an outstanding communicator, Hubert Reeves left his mark on Quebecers as a teacher, a researcher, as well as a man who deeply loved science.

Statements by Members

In a career spanning from 1960 to the turn of the millennium, Dr. Reeves taught at the most prestigious universities in Quebec, Europe and the United States. He was an adviser to NASA and headed France's National Centre for Scientific Research. He was also a published author, notably in the 1980s, penning such must-reads as *Atoms of Silence*. Most importantly, he passed on his wonder of space to many Quebecers, including yours truly.

I was very young when Hubert Reeves inspired in me a passion for science magazines, which I accumulate despite my inability to read them all, let alone understand them. I also became fascinated by astrophysics.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I offer my most sincere condolences to his family, his loved ones and all Quebecers. Quebec as a whole is in mourning for a genius who has gone to join the other stars.

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Hamas's atrocities against Israeli civilians have been unimaginably horrific, and the sadistic crimes continue. In the carnage, five Canadians were murdered and they are not just numbers. Alexandre Look from Montreal and Ben Mizrahi of Vancouver were both murdered when Hamas opened fire on a music festival. Shir Georgy was also killed there. Adi Vital-Kaploun of Ottawa was murdered in her kibbutz; and Netta Epstein was murdered as he sheltered his girlfriend from a grenade launched at them. They are now in our memory forever and may their memory be a blessing.

Canadian citizens missing are believed to be held hostage among the 199 others by Hamas terrorists who hold their own people under siege in the gruesome grip serving as a proxy for the regime in Iran, imposing maximum terror on everyone in their path of destruction.

Among the missing believed to be held are Vivian Silver, Judih Weinstein and Tiferet Lapidot, daughters of our own citizens. Their fate is unknown. Canada could do more and it must do more and demand their release again and again. We pray for their fate and their safe return.

* * *

• (1420)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the tragic loss of life at the hands of Hamas's evil has made us angry, sad and filled with unimaginable grief as we are left trying to comprehend the incomprehensible.

These terror attacks are the cruellest against the Jewish people, my people, since the Holocaust.

Oral Questions

It is possible to live in a world where we strive for peace in the Middle East while at the same time being able to state in no uncertain terms that we condemn the rape, murder and kidnapping of innocent women, children and the elderly. We must be able to say this without the word “but” inserted to serve as the catalyst for some moral justification. There is no morality to be found in what it has done.

Even the lives of people whose interests Hamas claims to represent mean nothing in its pursuit of hatred and the eradication of the Jewish people. There is no question that we must uphold the value of all human life and extend to one another a sense of kindness and dignity as we struggle together in the days ahead.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the aftermath of the attacks perpetrated by Hamas nearly two weeks ago, many Canadians remain at risk. Some 4,000 Canadians have requested federal assistance to get out of Israel. Nearly 300 Canadians are trying to get out of Gaza, and there are between 40,000 and 70,000 Canadians in Lebanon.

What is the government doing to protect Canadians at risk and keep them safe?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, given that this is the first time we are all present in this House since these horrific terrorist attacks by Hamas, let me begin by saying that Canada stands in solidarity with the State of Israel and the Israeli people, and that Canada stands shoulder to shoulder with Israel and the Israeli people. They can count on Canada's continued support.

We call for the immediate release of all hostages and unequivocally condemn Hamas' terrorist attacks.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, innocent lives, be they Palestinian, Israeli, Jewish, Muslim, Christian or otherwise, are all equally precious. Countless innocent lives have been lost or put in danger as a direct result of the sadistic attacks of Hamas. That was the purpose of those attacks: to exact maximum damage on both Israelis and Palestinians and to thwart any attempt for peace. We know that the regime in Iran was behind these attacks, and we know that the most powerful organizer of terrorism in the world is the IRGC, which operates legally in Canada today.

Will the government accept the common-sense Conservative bill to criminalize the IRGC in Canada?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is the first time we have all been present in this House since these horrific terrorist attacks by Hamas on the state of Israel and the Israeli people, so I would like to begin by being very clear: Canada stands with the State of Israel and with the Israeli people. Israel can count on Canada's support.

Canada unequivocally condemns Hamas' terrorist attacks, and we call for the immediate release of all hostages.

* * *

● (1425)

FINANCE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last fall, the finance minister promised a balanced budget within six years. Last spring, she broke that promise and said that we would never have a balanced budget. Last week, the Parliamentary Budget Officer revealed that her deficit is now 15% bigger than she said it was only six months ago.

Has the government totally lost control of our debt? How much is this inflationary spending going to add to the interest rates Canadians pay on their mega mortgages?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government will be providing an update on our debt and deficit figures and on our revenues in the fall economic statement in due course.

When it comes to Canada's fiscal position, let me be very clear: Canadians should listen to the independent ratings agencies whose job it is to evaluate Canada's position and not the partisan talking-Canada-down attacks of the opposition. Canada's AAA rating has been reaffirmed by ratings agencies since the budget. We are fiscally strong.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, apparently former Liberal finance minister John Manley is just a partisan using talking points when he says that the government's inflationary deficits are like pressing on the inflationary gas pedal and forcing the Bank of Canada to press on the brakes with higher interest rates. Canadian families have the highest debt load of families from any country in the G7, and those debts are colliding with the rates the government is driving up.

Will the finance minister cancel the inflationary deficits and balance the budget to bring down interest rates and inflation, or will she admit that she is just not worth the cost?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me again bring some independent, non-partisan facts to this conversation. It is the job of the ratings agencies to determine the sustainability of every country's fiscal position, and ratings agencies have reaffirmed Canada's AAA rating. Why did they do that? It is because we have the lowest deficit and the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7.

We believe in fiscal responsibility, and the numbers show it.

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the independent, non-partisan voice that I am interested in is that of the shipyard worker in Vancouver, who told me that his mortgage payment has now risen to \$7,500 a month. That is for a shipyard worker and a middle-class family. That proves that the Prime Minister, after eight years, is not worth the cost of mortgage payments. According to John Manley, former Liberal finance minister, the Liberals' deficits are driving up interest rates on the backs of mortgage holders.

Will the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance reverse these deficits so that we can bring down inflation and interest rates before this shipyard worker and millions of Canadians lose their homes?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, talk is cheap, but actions speak louder than words. If the Conservatives actually believed in supporting Canadians during the housing crisis, they would be supporting Bill C-56. It includes the critical measure of lifting the GST on all new rental construction, which would get more homes built faster.

The Conservatives should actually act in the interests of Canadians and not continue to parrot their talking points.

* * *

● (1430)

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to congratulate you.

The United States joined forces with four other western powers—Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and France—to speak as a single strong voice in response to the crisis centred in Gaza that has rocked the whole world. Canada was not invited to participate, despite having a sizable Jewish community. I am not criticizing, but I am disappointed.

Did the government ask to join that group of western powers and take steps to be invited?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is one of the most important and powerful members of the western world. We are a member of NATO and the G7. Last week, I was in Morocco with the G7 finance ministers. It was the first in-person meeting of G7 ministers. I expressed our support for the State of Israel and the Israeli people, and we all condemned Hamas's terrorist attacks.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the U.S. Department of State obviously does not see it that way because it simply did not invite Canada. That is deplorable because it prevents the government from doing its job for its own communities and citizens properly. To ensure that everyone here speaks with a common voice on behalf of members of Canada's Jewish community and peaceful Muslims, this morning I suggested it would be appropriate for all the leaders to meet and discuss the issues in private.

Oral Questions

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the fact that all members of the House, members of the Liberal Party, members of the Conservative Party, members of the Bloc Québécois and members of the NDP are prepared to show that, for us, condemning Hamas' terrorist attacks and supporting the State of Israel is not a partisan issue, it is a Canadian issue. That is the reality, and it is very important to point that out.

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are all shocked by the brutality, the kidnappings and the targeting of civilians, including the elderly and children, by Hamas militants.

Now the region is spiralling. Thousands of innocent Palestinians and Israelis have been killed in a conflict that they are not responsible for. Today, we learned that a fifth Canadian was murdered, and we know more Canadians are among the captives.

What is the government doing to ensure the hostages are protected and returned to safety?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear the hon. colleague from the NDP also be clear in her condemnation of these terrorist attacks. It is very important to show that this is not a partisan issue for Canada. Clearly, I share, and our government shares, her concern for the hostages. We call for their immediate release.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are profoundly alarmed by what we are witnessing in Gaza.

The UN has said that nearly half of Gaza's people have been forced to flee from their homes and that morgues are overflowing. This is a humanitarian crisis of extreme proportions.

It took almost a week for the minister to start paying attention to the impact of this war on Palestinians, even though thousands of people have been killed. Israelis and Palestinians have the right to live in peace.

Why will the Liberal government not stand up for international law and call for a ceasefire?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is very clear that we support the State of Israel and recognize Israel's right to defend itself within international law.

As the Prime Minister has said, we are deeply concerned by the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza. International law must be respected. Canada will continue to support civilians of Gaza with urgent humanitarian needs. That is why we announced an initial commitment of \$10 million in humanitarian assistance to trusted partners.

Oral Questions

• (1435)

FINANCE

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of failed Liberal-NDP policies, the finance minister experiences inflation much differently than everyday Canadians.

Her enormous inflationary deficits led to 40-year highs in inflation that caused the Bank of Canada interest rates to go up, more than ever in history. They are just not worth the cost.

After promising to balance the budget, her own budget watchdog called her out, proving Liberal deficits could reach almost \$50 billion this year. I guess budgets do not balance themselves after all.

Could the finance minister tell Canadians how much she is adding to the federal debt this year, or are we asking for too much?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in due course, our government will provide an update on the fiscal picture, both expenses and revenues, in the fall economic update.

Let me be clear, because I do not want Canadians to be misled by alarmist, partisan talking points from the opposition. The reality is that Canada's position is fiscally responsible. We have the lowest debt and deficit in the G7. Our AAA credit rating has been reaffirmed by our ratings agencies.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister is known for speeding up, just for the wrong reasons.

By adding more debt than every government before them combined, she put the pedal to the metal on her deficits and revved up inflation. Unlike on an Alberta highway, the consequence of her spending is not just a speeding ticket; it is a bigger deficit, as well as higher inflation. These things have led to higher interest rates, putting Canada most at risk in the G7 for a mortgage default crisis.

After eight years, the Liberals are definitely not worth the cost. Is the finance minister going to blow through her budget deficit projections, again, by more than \$6 billion, yes or no?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government will provide an update on our fiscal position, expenses and revenues in due course, in this fall's economic update.

I want to be very clear on Canada's fiscal position. I was at the IMF World Bank finance ministers meeting just last week. That is where it was so clear that Canada has the lowest deficit, the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. Our position is enviable.

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is nice to welcome back the finance minister. I was beginning to think she had forgotten the address of this location.

After eight years, Canadians are realizing that the government is not worth the cost. Canadians are struggling and the government continues to increase its deficits and inflation. Everyone now agrees that deficits increase interest rates.

Will the finance minister finally confirm for Canadians that she will balance the budget so that interest rates can come down and Canadians can keep their homes?

The Speaker: I would like to remind members that we are not to make an indirect or direct reference to the presence or absence of members in the House. As members know, according to the rules, members have responsibilities that sometimes take them out of this place. I will have more to say on that later this week.

The hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to confirm that I was not in the House of Commons last week. In fact, none of us were, because—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The Deputy Prime Minister has 20 seconds left on her clock.

• (1440)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, last week was, of course, a constituency week, and I was proud to be able to do my job at the IMF-World Bank finance ministers' meeting, in particular because the G7 finance ministers affirmed our shared condemnation of Hamas and shared support for the state of Israel. The first time G7 ministers had met in person, Canada was at the table that—

The Speaker: Again, I would like to remind members that I am well aware of the time members have to ask and to answer questions.

The hon. member for Simcoe North.

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while households are dealing with higher interest rates, taxpayers are now on a bigger hook. That is because interest on the debt is going up. The government projected just a few months ago that it would spend \$44 billion on debt-servicing costs this year, but that assumed that interest rates would go down. Instead, interest rates have gone up.

Will the Minister of Finance finally tell Canadians how much they are now on the hook for with higher debt-servicing costs, because interest rates have not come down?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government will state Canada's fiscal position, revenues and costs clearly in the fall economic statement in due course this fall.

What the opposition clearly does not want to admit is that Canada's fiscal position is responsible. Indeed, it is enviable compared to our peer countries. This was reaffirmed by the independent ratings agency, DBRS Morningstar, which recently reaffirmed our AAA rating, and by S&P, which reaffirmed it after the budget.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer expects the federal deficit to reach \$46.5 billion next year. That is 16% more than the Liberal government had initially projected.

That being the case, he does not expect interest rates to drop until April 2024. Given the ongoing housing crisis, that is truly a disaster.

Will the Minister of Finance confirm that the deficit will really be \$6 billion higher next year?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government will confirm the budget figures in the November economic statement.

Today, however, I can point out a very important reality, a reality that should be reassuring for all Canadians: Canada's fiscal position is very strong. We have the lowest deficit and debt-to-GDP ratio in the entire G7, and our AAA credit rating has been reconfirmed by credit agencies.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, is the minister aware that about 20% of mortgages are now in negative amortization? The monthly payment does not even cover the principal and interest.

Our leader has repeatedly warned about the inevitable outcome of rising inflationary spending. No one listened, not the Bloc Québécois nor the Liberals.

After eight years of disastrous management, will the Liberals stop their inflationary spending to bring mortgage rates down so that Canadians can keep their homes?

[*English*]

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is confusing to me that the hon. member would pose such a question when he has a plan that is actually going to increase the cost of building homes and increase the cost to Canadians for living in them. His plan literally is to add taxes to home building and to cut funding that will build more homes for Canadians.

Over the course of our time in the House over the last number of years, we have repeatedly put measures on the floor that are going to help improve the affordability of housing in our country. Time and time again, that member has voted against them.

Oral Questions

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if Canada were a part of the group of five countries formed by the United States to address the conflict between Israel and Gaza, then Canada would be helping to make decisions and would have first-hand information.

Let us see. Can the government and the Deputy Prime Minister tell us whether humanitarian corridors will be opened in Gaza starting today and whether civilians will be able to cross over into Egypt?

● (1445)

[*English*]

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the hon. member that Canada was the first western country to announce humanitarian assistance to civilians in Israel and Gaza. Not only that, by announcing it so early and so quickly, we have actually incentivized other partners to move forward.

We are working with partners in the region and our trusted international organizations to ensure we have access to civilians both in Gaza and Israel. We are working diligently, and as events move forward, we will continue to insist on international humanitarian access to civilians in Gaza.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we want to reiterate that the Bloc Québécois strongly and unequivocally condemns the Hamas terrorist attacks. We reiterate that Israel has a right to defend itself against Hamas.

However, we need to distinguish between Hamas and the people of Gaza and Palestine. As early as last Tuesday, the UN was calling for a humanitarian corridor into Gaza for medical reasons. That is the very basis of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons, which states in article 3, and I quote, "The wounded and sick shall be collected and cared for."

What concrete efforts is Canada making to obtain such assurances from Israel?

[*English*]

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are continuing with our long-standing position that in conflict areas humanitarian access must be provided to civilians to ensure there is access to life-saving food, medicine and water. I spoke yesterday with our trusted international partners as well as organizations on the ground, both international and Canadian. They have pre-positioned supplies.

We are the first country that has moved forward to provide much-needed humanitarian assistance, and we are insisting on that access so we can deliver medical supplies to civilians who need them.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in order to send aid, there first needs to be a humanitarian corridor.

We are pushing hard, because lately Canada has been losing ground on the international scene. Once again, Canada is on the sidelines while the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Italy work together. That is unacceptable.

When it comes to human rights, Canada has a contribution to make and it must insist on making it.

Has the Prime Minister spoken directly with Israel about setting up a humanitarian corridor in Gaza?

[English]

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation in Gaza. A civilian is a civilian, and any loss of civilian life is deeply troubling.

We continue to call for international law to be respected. The minister has been engaging directly with her counterparts in the region about the need for a humanitarian corridor to provide rapid and unimpeded access for relief, and she will continue to do so.

* * *

HOUSING

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the NDP-Liberal government's wasteful inflationary spending is keeping inflation high and causing interest rates to be the highest in a generation.

Canadians are facing tough choices, including whether they have no option other than to sell the family home. A Credit Canada representative told Bloomberg, "selling the house might end up being the only option for some homeowners." Last week, I heard of a nurse living in her car in the Okanagan.

The Prime Minister is just not worth the cost. When will the Prime Minister finally stop his inflationary spending so Canadians can keep a roof over their head?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is fair to ask a question of the Conservatives. When they talk about inflationary spending, are they talking about the programs they are actually going to cut, which are supporting people right now?

Let us look at the measures that they are going to cut, that they have already voted against. The question was about homelessness. When we put \$1.3 billion on the table, the Conservatives voted against it. Are they are going to cut supports for the homeless? When we are talking about removing the GST so we can build more homes for middle-class families in our country, they intend to vote against it. Are they going to cut that too? When we put money on the table for affordable housing, time and time they vote against it. Are they going to cut that too?

The Conservatives are reckless. They are not worth the risk. We are here to support the middle class.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is from the same government that declared victory on inflation only to see it skyrocket.

James from Langley, B.C. told Global News that he and his husband were selling his home as a result of their mortgage payments and were returning to the rental market.

Mortgage defaults are climbing, with forced sales events up 10%, as just reported by the Toronto real estate board.

After eight years with this NDP-Liberal government, people are being forced to sell their homes. The Prime Minister is just not worth the cost.

Will the Prime Minister finally stop his inflationary spending so Canadians can keep a roof over their head?

● (1450)

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to share with my hon. colleague that I recently had a chance to sit down with the mayor of the township of Langley to discuss their application to the housing accelerator fund, which that member and her party are promising to get rid of.

We want to be there for the cities to help the very kind of people she is asking about in her question, who she promises to cut the support out from under should the Conservatives form government.

If the hon. member is serious about building houses, I would invite her to support Bill C-56, which would remove the tax on the construction of new homes. I cannot understand why those members oppose it.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this Liberal government, what has Canada witnessed? Chronic deficits and out-of-control inflationary spending. The result is a direct impact on inflation and interest rates, which are currently climbing.

According to the Institut national de la recherche scientifique, one in five Quebeckers are having a hard time repaying their debt and are at risk of losing their home.

After eight years of this Liberal government, will the government finally understand that reckless management is costly for all Quebeckers and Canadians?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all we are doing is increasing partisan bickering. Now I will give the facts.

The facts are that Canada is fiscally responsible. Our AAA credit rating has been reconfirmed by the agencies, and we have the lowest debt and deficit in the G7.

If the Conservatives want to help us with the housing crisis, they need to support our Bill C-56. That is the reality.

* * *

[English]

PHARMACARE

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, millions of Canadians are going without their prescription medications because they cannot afford them. Thousands die as a result. Universal public pharmacare will cover everyone and save us billions of dollars. This weekend, NDP members sent a clear message to deliver it.

The Liberals themselves promised public pharmacare 26 years ago, and their own convention delegates voted for it in 2016, 2018 and 2021.

Will the Liberals keep their word and finally deliver the public pharmacare that Canadians need and want?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have enormous regard for my colleague. I know his commitment and passion to help reduce costs for Canadians is there.

He would know, therefore, that the work we have taken jointly with provinces and territories on bulk purchasing, to see \$3.5 billion in savings by working together to reduce costs for Canadians, has happened. He knows that we have taken critical action on rare diseases and drugs for rare diseases. He knows we have taken critical action on patented drugs.

Yes, we are having a discussion on pharmacare legislation. I look forward to a continued productive conversation as we look at all the health care priorities in keeping Canadians safe and healthy.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, not only will it save lives, but a universal public pharmacare program would save the sick, workers, hospitals and employers billions of dollars.

The Liberals need to make that happen. It is not just NDP supporters who are saying this. All the studies and reports show that. Even the Liberal Party delegates voted for universal pharmacare at three straight conventions.

When will this government stop dragging its feet and offer a real universal pharmacare program for people?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we definitely need to reduce the cost of prescription drugs across the country. Thanks to our government's efforts, we have been able to reduce the cost of prescription drugs by nearly \$3.5 billion by buying prescription drugs with the provinces and territories. We also worked with all our partners to find a way forward for the future. We certainly worked with all members here in the House to reduce the cost of prescription drugs.

Oral Questions

• (1455)

[English]

HOUSING

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Leader of the Opposition continues to blame municipal mayors and councillors for our housing challenges, we have decided to work in collaboration with other levels of government, including our municipal partners. Our housing programs, including the housing accelerator fund, incentivize municipalities, non-profits and the private sector to build more affordable homes, including purpose-built rentals.

Can the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities please share with the House the importance of working in partnership with other levels of government and other housing stakeholders?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me take this opportunity to thank my hon. colleague for his advocacy as the chair of our housing caucus for policies that will help change the way cities in this country build homes.

What is more, my hon. colleague made an announcement last week on behalf of the federal government that we will be announcing more than \$93 million in his city. That is going to lead, over the next three years, to the construction of more than 2,600 homes, and nearly 9,000 over the next decade. We are going to require that cities build homes closer to transit and closer to post-secondary institutions, and I look forward to continuing my co-operation with the member so we see more homes built in the city of Hamilton.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians and Conservatives all know that after eight years of the Prime Minister, he is just not worth the cost, but the Liberals and the NDP are still not receiving this message. For those who do not believe me, take a look at the headlines: "Average rent went up another 11% in past year—and even getting a roommate doesn't help much".

"Canada's rental crisis is getting worse, according to a new report that found the average asking price for rent in September was \$2,149—up by more than 11 per cent compared with a year ago."

It is enough. When will the Prime Minister stop his inflationary spending so Canadians can actually afford housing?

Oral Questions

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would point out that over the course of the past week, the member attended the opening of a new affordable housing project that we funded in her own community, taking credit for a program that she in fact voted against.

The reality is that when it comes to housing, we have a plan to change the math so that it works for builders. We have a plan to change the way cities build homes. We have a plan to continue to invest in affordable housing and grow the productive capacity of the workforce. The opposition's plan is to raise taxes on homebuilding and to cut funding that is going to build those homes.

We are going to continue to build more houses to make sure that everyone in this country can afford a roof over their head.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Prime Minister, Canadians cannot afford a house. That is the reality, and we will continue to vote against inflationary spending that is driving up household debt.

Canadians are paying more on the interest on their debt. They cannot afford a home. This is from Vicky: “My single 30-plus daughter and two grandkids just moved in because she could no longer afford her \$2,500-plus rent. She had to give up her job to move back into town with me, so I'm basically supporting all three.”

When will the Liberals learn how to manage money, decide about monetary policy and actually build homes, not bureaucracy?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I assure members that I am not making this up. The member is talking about a lack of affordable housing in her community. We are literally discussing an affordable housing project funded by our government in Peterborough, and she voted against that particular policy.

She says she is going to continue to vote against these kinds of policies, which are literally putting a roof over the heads of some of the most vulnerable constituents in her community. The hon. member has an opportunity to get more homes built in her community. She can support Bill C-56, remove the tax on new-home construction and invite some of her colleagues to do it with her.

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, a half a billion dollars in inflationary deficits has fuelled 40-year inflation highs, causing the Bank of Canada to raise interest rates. In the midst of a housing crisis, mortgage defaults and forced home sales are on the rise. People are losing their homes.

This Prime Minister is just not worth the cost. Will the Prime Minister finally put an end to his inflationary spending so that Canadians can keep a roof over their heads?

• (1500)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me share some facts. Canada has the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio and the lowest deficit in the G7. That is a fact. Canada has an AAA rating. That is also a fact. Do members know what else is a fact? The opposition, which

claims to care about the housing challenges Canadians face, is blocking Bill C-56, which experts across the country say is essential to getting more rental homes built. That is sheer, utter hypocrisy.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government's policies have forced the Bank of Canada to increase the interest rate 10 times, with devastating effects. Here is the latest example. Approximately 20% of mortgages at the country's big banks are in negative amortization. What does that mean? It means that people's monthly payments are not enough to cover the interest. The unpaid interest is growing and being added to the balance. These loans will never be paid off.

When will the Liberals put an end to their inflationary deficits so that interest rates will drop and Canadians are able to stay in their homes?

Hon. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I look forward to the day when the Conservative Party will finally vote for measures that put a roof over the heads of people who really need it. I hope the Conservatives will vote in favour of eliminating the GST on new housing, a measure welcomed by the Association des professionnels de la construction de l'habitation du Québec and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. That is going to help us put a roof over people's heads.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the federal government is pushing aside the Quebec winners of a competition for designing the monument to commemorate the mission in Afghanistan. It is relying on public consultation. In fact, the experts at Léger studied that consultation. According to them, it in no way respects the scientific process. According to Léger, the results cannot be interpreted as the opinion of armed forces members. It is wrong to use these data as though they represent the general population.

The government's efforts to push Quebec aside are also wrong. Will it award the contract to Daoust?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his question.

I think that we agree on the importance of listening to our veterans. That is why Veterans Affairs conducted a survey. More than 10,000 Canadians responded to the survey. The majority of them were veterans. The design that was chosen is the one from the Stimson team since, to them, it best represented the bravery, sacrifice and loss of veterans.

We are always here to support our veterans. That is why we chose that design.

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it was Leger that said that. Leger is the leading polling firm, and its experts are saying that the federal government's survey was unscientific and that the results are unusable. Even Louise Arbour, a former Supreme Court justice, had to intervene last Thursday to ask the federal government to abide by its own rules. The situation has reached that point. I know the government is desperate to shove Quebec aside at any cost, but for God's sake, there has to be a limit.

Will the government abide by its own rules, listen to Justice Arbour and award the contract to the Daoust team?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, I would like to thank my colleague for his question. I look forward to working with him on the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs.

I think all members of the House recognize the importance of listening to our veterans. That is why we conducted this survey. The vast majority of survey respondents were veterans or family members. They felt that Adrian Stimson's design best represented the bravery, sacrifice and loss of veterans. We appreciate the work our artists do day in and day out.

I have a question for my hon. colleague. Would he prefer that we ignore the wishes of veterans?

* * *

● (1505)

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of inflationary spending and carbon taxes, food prices have skyrocketed, and many Canadians had empty tables at Thanksgiving. That was because of broken Liberal promises and a Liberal-made financial crisis.

Canadian grocery CEOs did not commit to meeting the Liberals' lower food prices by Thanksgiving. As a result, many Canadians cannot afford to feed their families, a quarter are skipping meals and millions of Canadians had to rely on food banks for their Thanksgiving dinner. The Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

Will the Prime Minister end his inflationary spending so Canadians can afford to feed their families?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Conservative leader was having a self-aggrandizing, goodwill-hunting delusion in an apple orchard, our government was focused on stabilizing food prices for middle-class Canadians by calling on

the five grocery chain CEOs to produce action plans that would make a difference for Canadians. Our government is now tracking and monitoring the grocery chains and holding them accountable.

While the Conservatives talk turkey, we will talk results for Canadians.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Colleagues, I saw that the member for Foothills had difficulty hearing the answer to the question he had asked. I ask that we try to keep it down. I also ask that all members please use comments that will not cause a disturbance in the House.

The hon. member for Foothills.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, broken Liberal promises and Liberals making light of the food crisis do not put food on the table. Many Canadians are starving because of the Liberals' broken promise to lower food prices by Thanksgiving. That is not what happened. Food prices are up 7% over last year.

The Prime Minister promised to lower food prices by Thanksgiving dinner. He failed and it is another broken promise.

Will the Prime Minister promise to lower his out-of-control spending so that Canadians can afford a Christmas dinner, or will that be another promise broken?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Colleagues, we were doing so well on a day with a very sensitive international issue. I ask that you please continue with your good behaviour for the day.

I ask in particular that the member from Grande Prairie please keep his comments to the time during which he is asking questions.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Jenna Sudds (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we continue to do the hard work to ensure that Canadian families are supported. Just look to our investment to create a nationwide system of early learning and child care, or look to our Canada child benefit.

On this side of the House, we are making investments to make sure that families can buy the food and get the school supplies and sneakers their kids need.

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, they must have a very different definition of hard work than Conservatives, because after eight years of the Liberal government, we know that food prices are out of control. I went to the grocery store in Orangeville this past weekend for Thanksgiving. A loaf of Wonder bread was \$4.40. That is the definition of Liberal hard work. How did we get there? It was with massive inflationary deficits and a carbon tax that is driving up the cost of everything.

Oral Questions

The fake photo ops of the Prime Minister are not going to fix anything. Will they cut the carbon tax and balance the budget so that Canadians can pay for food?

• (1510)

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is fighting for Canadians on affordability every step of the way. We are fully seized with addressing the affordability challenges that Canadians are facing, like calling in the top five grocery CEOs to work with us to stabilize food prices.

Conservatives can call this a photo-op. I think calling decisive action for Canadians on affordability a photo-op says more about them than it does about us. Regardless of the Conservatives' attacks, we will stay focused on the pressing needs of Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

SMALL BUSINESS

Mrs. Sophie Chatel (Pontiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, SMEs and in my riding and across Quebec are a real economic driver. That is why it is so important for the government to support them at key moments in their economic development. I would appreciate it if the Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec could tell us how the government is supporting SMEs, including those founded by women and also by indigenous women.

Hon. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is right. Our government knows that supporting SMEs led by women and indigenous people promotes inclusive regional growth. In June, we announced \$100,000 in funding for Mini Tipi, a Gatineau company that has been nominated for Gatineau SME of the year.

Founded by two brilliant women, Trisha and Mélanie, the company celebrates the diversity and richness of indigenous cultures through the production of high-quality accessories. We are proud of our entrepreneurs, and we are here to help them. I wish everyone a happy Small Business Week.

* * *

[English]

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Prime Minister's gatekeeping, anti-pipeline, anti-resource development policies, hundreds of billions of dollars of project investments have fled Canada, taking countless powerful paycheques away from Canadian workers.

The Liberals are just not worth the cost. Conservatives warned the Liberals that their plans to steamroll provinces by giving themselves unprecedented powers over provincial infrastructure, industry and natural resources through their no-more-pipelines bill, Bill C-69, was unconstitutional.

Will the Liberals repeal Bill C-69 now that the Supreme Court has ruled it unconstitutional? Yes or no?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct my colleague on the fact that the Supreme Court, last week, issued an opinion; it was not a decision. If members want a briefing by the justice department on the difference, we would be happy to provide that to them.

Let me quote what the Supreme Court said, "This appeal is not about whether Parliament can enact legislation to protect the environment. It is clear that Parliament can do so under the heads of power assigned to it in the Constitution Act, 1867."

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the government's ongoing corruption, we have yet another scandal. We have had conflicts of interest, nepotism and abuse of power. Now we have allegations of criminality around the contracting practices in the top offices of the government.

The \$54-million price tag for the arrive scam app is just the tip of the iceberg. Last week, the NDP-Liberal coalition voted to shut down the testimony of the Auditor General's review of this scandal.

Why?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague knows very well that committees make their own decisions in terms of the work they want to do. What we have said is that, at all times, we expect people to comply with the contracting policies of the Government of Canada, and those that decide to do something that is worthy of a criminal investigation will obviously be investigated by the appropriate authorities. We do not comment on investigations that the RCMP might decide to do on any of these issues.

• (1515)

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the past eight years of Liberal management have been nothing but one scandal after another.

We just found out that the RCMP has launched a criminal investigation into ArriveCAN, which cost Canadians \$54 million for nothing. Botler, a Montreal company, was the one that blew the whistle. A senior Liberal government official strongly advised Botler to work closely on an IT contract with the same company that worked on the ArriveCAN app. That company was GC Strategies, a two-person concern with no office and no IT skills. What Botler uncovered is similar to something seen in Quebec before.

After eight years of sticking their heads in the sand, are the Liberals going to tell us who exactly is getting richer every time they award a contract?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I told my colleague, we expect everyone who works for the Government of Canada to comply with the Treasury Board's contracting rules and any other rules that apply.

If any allegations involve criminal activity, we expect the appropriate authorities to investigate. This is exactly what our government is going to let them do.

* * *

[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in communities across Canada and in my riding of Scarborough Centre, many Canadians are finding it difficult to find an affordable place to call home. Rather than scapegoating newcomers, we must work to ensure that they be a part of the solution to the housing crisis.

Can the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship inform the House of our government's plan to tackle the labour shortage in the construction sector and build more homes for Canadians?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, immigration is key to our economic growth and now more than ever we need skilled trades in this country. That is why this summer we launched the global express entry system into this country to make sure that skilled labour workers could get in here at a faster pace; simply put, more workers at a faster pace to get all those homes built. We need those workers. We need them from abroad. We need them here. They will get the homes built.

* * *

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the planet is on fire and we just had Suncor CEO Rich Kruger tell us how he is going to maximize profits for big oil while the rest of us suffer a climate catastrophe. In a year of record profits, it fired 1,500 workers. In a year of unprecedented climate fires, its climate solution is to massively increase fossil fuel burning. Big oil is laughing at the government.

The Speaker: I hate to interrupt members, but I am having trouble hearing the member.

Would the member please continue.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, the truth certainly hurts the Conservative Party as the planet burns and Conservatives are supporting the massive increase in fossil fuel burning, which is why they backed Rich Kruger, CEO.

What concrete steps will the government take to hold big oil to account to protect Alberta jobs, Canadian communities and our planet from the fires that are happening from the climate crisis?

Oral Questions

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in fact, our government has taken and is taking a number of measures to ensure that big oil companies do their fair share when it comes to fighting climate change. We are the first G7 country to have limited fossil fuel subsidies two years ahead of schedule, which is something that the Conservative Party of Canada would never do. The Conservatives want to make pollution free.

We have also implemented measures to reduce methane emissions by at least 40% by 2025 and 75% by 2030, which will make it one of the most ambitious measures in the world to reduce methane emissions from the oil and gas sector. We have many more things coming, including a cap on emissions of the oil and gas sector.

* * *

[Translation]

FINANCE

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, on top of the Governor General's obscene expenses related to international travel, now we have learned that her office has spent over \$117,000 on dry cleaning since 2018. That is an average of \$1,800 a month.

I thought it would be fun to do the math, after looking at the rates among various suppliers in the region. For the amount she spent, that works out to an average of three outfits a day, 365 days a year.

When will the government trim her \$33-million budget? Clearly, the Governor General is incapable of managing taxpayers' money seriously and responsibly.

• (1520)

Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Governor General has done important work for Canada. Obviously, we expect every dollar to be spent conscientiously and rigorously.

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. In light of recent events, we have sought agreement from other parties, and I hope you will find unanimous consent for the following motion: That, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, Bill C-350, the combatting torture and terrorism act, be deemed read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

*Routine Proceedings**[Translation]*

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Simcoe North on a point of order.

[English]

Mr. Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, I very much look forward to some of the guidance you have for members when you come out with that later this week. I hope you will also consider how members can hold government ministers accountable for their willingness to show up for question period when you provide your guidance.

The Speaker: I thank the member for his suggestion. It is not a point of order, but I will take it into consideration.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

*[English]***SITUATION IN ISRAEL, GAZA AND THE WEST BANK**

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak about the conflict in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank. Over a week ago, Canadians awoke to horrifying images coming out of Israel after the terrorist organization Hamas launched an attack of unspeakable brutality.

[Translation]

I would like to update the House on the measures our government is taking to help and protect affected Canadians. I would then like to talk about the real concerns that this situation is causing here at home for Jewish and Muslim Canadians, for Arab Canadians and for all Canadians.

Among the thousands of people affected by this violence, five Canadians have been murdered by Hamas terrorists and three Canadians are missing and possibly being held hostage. I know that the thoughts of all parliamentarians and all Canadians are with them and their loved ones. Canada is calling on Hamas to release all the hostages immediately.

[English]

Ten Canadian Armed Forces flights have departed Tel Aviv so far, with approximately 1,300 passengers on board. In addition, the first bus has departed the West Bank and brought Canadians to safety in Jordan.

[Translation]

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and our embassies in the region are working tirelessly to help them. They are working hard to contact affected Canadians and help them. We are working closely with our allies and our partners to help people get out of Gaza, the West Bank and Israel as safely and as soon as possible.

● (1525)

[English]

We are also deeply concerned by the dire and worsening humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Canada is calling for unimpeded humanitarian access and a humanitarian corridor so that essential aid, including food, fuel and water, can be delivered to civilians in Gaza. It is imperative that this happen.

[Translation]

Since last weekend, I have spoken with leaders from across the region, including Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, King Abdullah II of Jordan, the President of the United Arab Emirates and, today, Egyptian President Al-Sis and the Emir of Qatar. I spoke with them about the release of Canadian hostages and all other hostages, the delivery of humanitarian aid, the assistance needed to ensure the safety of Canadians, and peace and stability in the region.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs was on site this weekend. She is leading our diplomatic efforts by working day and night. She is also meeting with Israelis, Palestinians and other partners in the region.

[English]

Minister Blair is working tirelessly to ensure CAF evacuation flights are getting as many Canadians out of the region as possible, and Minister Hussen is leading conversations with his international counterparts—

The Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the right hon. Prime Minister, but remember that we are to refer to members by their titles or as members of Parliament, but not by their names.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I apologize.

The Minister of National Defence is working tirelessly to ensure that CAF evacuation flights are getting as many Canadians out of the region as possible, and the Minister of International Development is leading conversations with his international counterparts and with aid organizations, making sure essential support is getting to affected people.

Canada has committed an initial \$10 million in humanitarian assistance to provide essentials such as food, water, emergency medical aid and protection assistance to those affected by the crisis in Gaza, the West Bank and Israel. I want to be clear: None of this aid is going to Hamas.

Hamas is a terrorist organization that slaughtered and brutalized innocent people. Hamas continues to commit unspeakable atrocities and is trying to instigate further acts of violence against Jewish people. Let me be clear about Hamas: Its members are not freedom fighters. They are not a resistance. They are terrorists. Terrorism is always indefensible, and nothing can justify Hamas's acts of terror or the killing, maiming and abduction of civilians.

Routine Proceedings

Let me also be extremely clear that Hamas does not represent the Palestinian people or their legitimate aspirations. It does not speak for Muslim or Arab communities. It does not represent the better future that Palestinians and their children deserve. The only thing it stands for is more suffering for Israeli and Palestinian civilians.

Canada fully supports Israel's right to defend itself in accordance with international law. In Gaza, as elsewhere, international law must be upheld by all; this includes humanitarian law. Even wars have rules. Canada is always steadfast in our commitment to the rule of law. The rule of law is what we stand up for here in Parliament, what we advocate through diplomacy and what we will always fight for no matter the circumstance.

[*Translation*]

Emotions are running high in this country, in part because many of those stories are also Canadian stories. Because we are so diverse, many of us know someone who was affected or know someone who knows someone. I met with members of the Jewish community who are in mourning because of this tragedy. I heard about young people slain during a musical festival, about elderly people, women and children murdered and kidnapped. Members of the Jewish community told me about friends who died too young and their fear that loved ones have perhaps been taken hostage.

• (1530)

[*English*]

I met with leaders from the Muslim and Palestinian community. They told me about how families in Gaza are spreading themselves between homes to prevent the possibility that they could all be lost in a single moment. They told me that, from Canada, they worry desperately about their loved ones, but because electricity has been cut off, they have to rely on sporadic 15-second phone calls to know who is safe.

Their worries are not only for people overseas but also people here at home. Across our country, both Jewish parents and Muslim parents wonder whether their kids are safe at school. Families are worried about going to places of worship. Jewish people are wondering if they should not wear their Star of David or kippah in public. Muslim and Arab people are worried about being thought of as terrorists, once again. The list of worries is endless and the fear is real.

There are rising instances of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. We saw the reports of hate crimes against a Muslim woman in Montreal and at a Hebrew school in Toronto, and our hearts break at the horrifying news that came out of Illinois yesterday.

There are so many people in Canada who are afraid of the escalating tension here at home. They are scared as they watch horrible things happen to people in places that they love in the Middle East, and who, for years, have lived somewhere between fear and hope: fear that escalation will tear them further apart and hope that, one day, peace could finally take root.

[*Translation*]

We must never forget that diversity is our strength. Canada welcomes people from all walks of life expressing identities of all kinds. We are a nation of neighbours, colleagues, friends and fami-

lies who embody that diversity, who live it every day. Now, more than ever, we must come together. We must not let worry, suspicion and mistrust divide us.

[*English*]

We must remember that it is a short path from mistrusting one's neighbour to entrenching division. A peaceful society does not happen by accident and will not continue without effort. We live in a country that upholds the freedom of expression, including religious and cultural expression, and every Canadian should feel safe doing so. This is the right and freedom every Canadian has under our charter. Canadians' liberty is not about taking away the freedoms of others but living in a way that expands and strengthens freedom for everyone.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, as Canadians, we have proven that it is possible to build and define a country on the basis of shared values. Canada is defined not by a single historical, cultural, religious, ethnic or other identity, but by our shared values.

[*English*]

We are, once again, at a moment where our shared values are being put to the test. Unrest is being felt in big and small ways. Canadians are deeply worried, no matter their background. This is why we must hold on to our commitment to the idea of this country. We have been tested before about who we are and what we are, but the core values of Canada have always been there to guide us, to make us stronger and to bring us together when forces or events try to divide us.

Our diversity is our strength; we can never forget this. This is a time to reach out and support one another. It is a time to ask a friend, family member or colleague how they are doing or reach out to members of a different faith, offering to listen and help where we can. People are not all right, so let us make sure that they are not alone.

As I have said before, the Canadian idea of liberty is an inclusive, expansive freedom. Let us remember who we are as Canadians and what we stand for here and around the world: respect for everyone's rights and freedoms and the rule of law; respect for different languages, ethnicities and religions; respect for human life; and respect for each other.

Routine Proceedings

• (1535)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on October 7, Hamas carried out the worst attack on the Jewish people since the Holocaust. It deliberately targeted innocent mothers, babies, grandparents, partygoers, peace activists and countless others who had no connection whatsoever, even to military life. These were innocent civilians living their lives until they suddenly came to an end. The attacks unleashed a carnage that is almost unprecedented in human history. In fact, what was special about these attacks was the delight, triumphal pride and exhibitionism with which Hamas surely carried them out.

All of that reminds us that Hamas is not a militant organization. It is not a government. It is not an activist group; Hamas is a sadistic criminal terrorist death cult, and it must be defeated.

Indeed, Israel does have the right to defend itself in accordance with international law, and it has the right to respond, just as Canadians would respond if an attack of this type were carried out against our people or on our soil. There will be, and there can be, no negotiating with Hamas. Hamas can only be destroyed, just like President Obama destroyed and assassinated Osama bin Laden. There was no negotiating with bin Laden, and there can be no negotiating with Hamas.

This attack was also an attack on Canadians. I will quote my deputy leader, “In the carnage, five Canadians were murdered, and they are not just numbers.”

“Alexandre Look from Montreal and Ben Mizrahi of Vancouver were both murdered when Hamas opened fire on a music festival. Shir Georgy was also killed... Adi Vital-Kaploun of Ottawa was murdered in her kibbutz; and Netta Epstein was murdered as he [attempted to defend] his girlfriend [against] a grenade... They are now in our memory forever and may their memory be a blessing.”

“Canadian citizens missing are believed to be held hostage among the 199... by Hamas... who hold their own people under siege in the gruesome grip, serving as a proxy for the regime in Iran, imposing maximum terror on everyone in their path of destruction.”

“Among the missing believed to be held are Vivian Silver; Judith Weinstein; and Tiferet Lapidot, daughter of {Canadian} citizens. Their fate is unknown. Canada [can] and it must do more [to achieve their liberation]. We pray for their fate and their safe return.”

Meanwhile, a million Gazans are reportedly displaced. Many more are suffering or have lost their lives. Let it be said that the suffering of the Palestinian people is a tragedy. Every innocent human life, Palestinian, Israeli, Jewish, Muslim, Christian or otherwise, is of equal precious value. All of us must do everything in our power to preserve this precious life and minimize the suffering of innocent civilians.

Let us be clear, though, that this is not incidental to Hamas's actions; it was the purpose of Hamas's actions. Hamas not only seeks the maximum suffering of the Israeli people; it seeks the maximum suffering of Palestinians as well. Hamas has controlled Gaza ever since Israel departed from the Gaza strip, roughly a decade and a half ago, and it has worked diligently to preserve Palestinian suffer-

ing and prevent any opportunity for an easing of tensions or a future of peace.

• (1540)

We know why Hamas felt the need to act with such drastic cruelty at this time. Hamas, of course, is guided by its terror sponsor, the dictatorship in Tehran, which had been growing in its concern for Israel's signing of the Abraham Accords with the UAE and Bahrain and the signing of an agreement with Sudan, with even the possibility of normalization with Saudi Arabia.

This kind of peace between Muslims and Jews, between Israelis and Arabs, would be a nightmare for Hamas and for the dictatorship in Iran, which seek to perpetuate the conflict and the divisions as a source of power. They need to perpetuate the hatred in order to justify their dictatorships. That is why they felt the need to interrupt any path toward peace.

We all believe in a peaceful future that includes an independent Palestinian state, a two-state solution. We believe that Israelis, Palestinians and Arab countries need to discuss that peace. We understand that stability and security for the Israeli people are necessary for that to happen.

There are concrete actions that Canada can take toward these goals. I will list some of them, although they are not exhaustive. I expect that my members will be raising more of them later tonight in the take-note debate.

First, Canada must criminalize the IRGC, the terrorist arm of the Iranian government. There is no doubt that the attacks carried out on October 7 had a degree of sophistication and coordination to them that would not have been possible without aid from an outside government actor. That actor, of course, was the dictatorship in Tehran.

That same regime uses the IRGC, as it is one of the most sophisticated and far-reaching terrorist groups in the world. It coordinates between Tehran, Hamas and Hezbollah. It is unthinkable that the IRGC can operate legally in Canada. It can raise funds. It can prepare logistics. It can recruit new followers.

Some of the people attached to the highest levels of the IRGC live in Canada today, their very presence terrorizing peaceful Canadians of Iranian descent who desperately want to kick these terrorists out of our country. They are right. The terrorists must be kicked out. This organization must be made a criminal entity.

Second, we call for Hamas to immediately release all hostages.

Routine Proceedings

Third, we want a complete review of all aid programs to make sure that not one penny goes to terrorism.

Fourth, we need to protect places of worship of all different backgrounds. We know that synagogues, mosques and other places of worship have been targeted in the past in Canada, prior to this recent incident. We know that Muslims have been the victims of hateful and murderous attacks by monsters here on our own soil. We know that synagogues are now facing attacks by anti-Semites. We know that churches have in the past been burned down.

All of this is to say that we need to protect all of our places of worship. We need to debureaucratize and simplify the federal programs that provide security infrastructure at places of worship so that every single Canadian, regardless of their belief, can feel safe when they go to worship with their fellow congregants.

As I said at the outset and as I will say again, the lives of innocent Palestinians and Israelis are of equal value. To that end, we believe it is urgently important to minimize the suffering and protect the lives of Palestinians who had no part in these attacks, including by supporting safe zones for civilians in Gaza and by backing a humanitarian corridor for food, water and medical supplies. It means that we should support the evacuation of foreign nationals through Egypt. It means that we must do a comprehensive review of all of the aid we are sending to Gaza to make sure that it actually reaches the Palestinian people and not the terrorist thugs in Hamas.

• (1545)

Years ago, when a terrorist attack happened in the United States of America, one commentator, almost trying to absolve the attack, said that we needed to look at the root causes of terrorism. The root cause of terrorism is the terrorist, which I said at the time, to the great horror of my critics. Some of them said that the statement was too simplistic to be true. Others said that the statement was so obvious that it need not be said at all. In reality, it is neither: It is both simple and true, and it is perfectly the summary of the Liberal democratic world view.

Our view is that each individual is responsible for their own actions. The root cause of terrorism, therefore, is not Islam, Christianity, Judaism or any religion; it is the individuals who carry out the terrorism. This is important, because it means that when we see vile actions carried out by people purporting to act on behalf of a religion, we do not blame all of their supposed co-religionists. We do not blame Muslims for the actions of Hamas. We do not target our fellow Canadians because of something that has happened on the other side of the world.

Here in Canada, we judge people on their own merits, their own deeds and their own words. That is why the great Canadian Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier, when he was asked, “What is our nationality?”, did not list an ethnicity, a religion or any other superficial demarcation. Back then, we were already mixed up. We obviously had indigenous people, Scots, Irish people and many people from all around the world in our country. Therefore, we could not define ourselves on any of those lines. He said, “Canada is free, and freedom is its nationality.” So it is today.

Let us, then, set out to protect the freedom of all Canadians and to stand for the values of freedom all around the world. Let us sup-

port our Jewish and Muslim friends here in this country as they watch with horror and sadness at what is happening to loved ones on the other side of the world. They too are Canadians. They are our people. We must stand with them now and always, because, after all, we are Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first of all, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would like to extend our condolences to all Quebeckers and Canadians who have lost loved ones in the Hamas terrorist attacks in Israel. I would also like to extend our condolences to all Israelis who are going through an unspeakably difficult situation, as well as to all the innocent civilians in Gaza whose suffering is just as tragic.

What we do must be first and foremost humane, and then we must aim for a humanitarian approach, for compassion and understanding. It is important to put ourselves in the same situation. Let us close our eyes for a few seconds and imagine if we or our loved ones were in that situation. The aim must be to recognize and take action to defend the right to security that belongs to every human being.

In the past, many of us, including the Bloc Québécois, have been critical of Israel's policies. Nevertheless, we all witnessed, disbelieving at first, the appalling violence of the Hamas attack. We condemned it for what it is: terrorism. Imagine for a moment that we are Belgians, and a terrorist inspired by the Islamic State claimed responsibility for an attack that killed at least two people in the last few hours. This attack was likely fuelled by hateful words and calls to violence uttered by Hamas leaders and repeated in the streets of the cities and capitals of major western states. We must ask ourselves whether our response to the actively hateful propaganda and calls to violence is adequate. We must ask ourselves whether the means we have are sufficient in the face of this newly defined reality.

Since Israel was not going to remain exposed to such a threat, since Israel could not rely on the Palestinian Authority, and since Hamas has to be eliminated if there is to be any hope of lasting peace in the region, Tsahal is going to enter the Gaza Strip. The massing of Israeli troops at the Gaza border is on hold right now. I want to believe that one of the reasons for this is to allow the arrival of humanitarian relief that Palestinian civilians in Gaza are waiting and hoping for; they need it. Similarly, it is hoped that the road leading to the relative safety of Egypt will be opened now, in the next few hours.

Routine Proceedings

Like the other leaders, I want to stress the need not to confuse Hamas with the Palestinian civilians it is using to carry out its terrible plan. A Palestinian family and a Quebec family are the same. Hamas has revealed the full darkness of its intentions. Its members do not want peace for Palestinian civilians, they want war for everyone; meanwhile, Tehran is smiling.

Hatred is a profound evil that is rooted in and fuelled by a sometimes twisted reading of history. Hatred in Quebec and in Canada is, and must be, condemned.

• (1550)

Similarly, Canada must not remain on the sidelines of major movements and must ask to join its allies in considering and coordinating a western strategy to put a quick end to the hostilities and ensure that the creature called Hamas never raises its ugly head again.

If Canada joins the group of five countries that we talked about a bit earlier, namely, the United States, which took the initiative, the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Germany, it would likely mean that Quebecers and Canadians in Israel could be evacuated more quickly. It would also likely improve the chances of freeing Canadian hostages. Canada could more effectively add its voice to the demands of the United States, Europe and the UN for an immediate humanitarian response.

I would also once again invite the Prime Minister to meet with the leaders of all parties at a time suitable to them so that we can be privately informed, with all due respect for confidentiality, of any developments in this crisis, which is affecting so many of our citizens.

In the intervening period, which we hope will be short, we stand in solidarity with the victims of this unspeakable violence. Our heartfelt compassion, and sometimes even our tears, attest to our deep sorrow.

• (1555)

[*English*]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, New Democrats are devastated by the brutal massacre and terrorist attack by Hamas, that, on October 7, killed over 1,300 Israeli civilians, including women, children and the elderly. Among those victims were Canadians, members of our communities. The accounts of what was done to Israelis in this attack, including what was done to children, horrifies every one of us.

We condemn Hamas and these terrorist attacks that have caused so much pain to the Jewish community globally and in Canada. This begs the question of what Canada has done in the past few years to stop arms from going into the hands of Hamas. Hamas's actions constitute heinous violations of international law and international crimes for which it must be held accountable.

I want to express my profound sadness and anger at the rising anti-Semitism and anti-Palestinian racism that we are seeing globally, including in Canada. The rising anti-Semitism is causing Canadian Jews to keep their children home from school. Rising anti-Palestinian racism took the life of a six-year-old in Chicago yesterday.

Canadians from both of these communities are distraught, and I think the federal government could do more to increase the security across places of worship, something many communities have called for, for years.

We are in a very dark time and I am urging all members of this House to take care to understand how deeply communities are hurting. I grieve with Canadians who have lost loved ones and who are afraid for their families. I stand with the families of hostages and call for their immediate release.

As this crisis worsens, I also want us to pay attention to the unfolding humanitarian nightmare in Gaza. I want to state clearly that international law obligations are not reciprocal. One war crime does not excuse another. Retribution is not justice. Retribution does not bring peace.

I want members of this House to know that international law was not written by pacifists. The laws of war were written by governments whose militaries had suffered extraordinary losses, who had seen civilians massacred and who had experienced the horrors of war.

International law, which Canada has promised to uphold, sets limits on military actions, state and non-state, and what those countries can do in war. It seeks to protect civilians, all civilians.

David Miliband, the head of the International Rescue Committee, said yesterday, "International Humanitarian Law is the way that previous generations have learnt to mitigate the worst of war". It is a very low bar, but this low bar applies to everyone.

We are, unfortunately, watching violations of international law in Gaza. It is a siege with no water, no electricity and no food. Entire communities have been destroyed. Entire families have been wiped out. Over 1,000 children have been killed. Hospitals have been bombed and humanitarian aid workers killed. United Nations independent experts have said this amounts to collective punishment.

The former chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Luis Moreno Ocampo, said, "A full blockade of Gaza could be considered a crime against humanity and a genocide."

This morning, Defence for Children International confirmed more than 1,030 children in Gaza have been killed by Israeli forces since October 7. That is one child every 16 minutes.

We are now reading reports that Hamas is stealing what little humanitarian aid is available for civilians. Let us be clear: Hamas is making already vulnerable Palestinians suffer further in this siege. Palestinians have been suffering from Hamas's brutality, as well as the absence of real democratic Palestinian leadership. With the dangerous influence of external states like Iran, this has made things worse.

Routine Proceedings

• (1600)

However, it does not absolve Israel of its obligations to protect civilians; nor does it absolve Canada of its obligations to call out violations to international law when they occur.

United Nations relief chief Martin Griffiths said yesterday, “The past week has been a test for humanity, and humanity is failing.” The forcible transfer of a million people from their homes is not an evacuation; it is illegal. There are babies in incubators unable to be relocated and medical staff refusing to abandon these babies, knowing that they may die in the coming days. Gazans are afraid to be pushed into Egypt because they do not know if they will be allowed back. This is a humanitarian and political disaster of enormous proportions and Canada is silent.

Where is the government in condemning this siege, this forcible transfer, this humanitarian crisis? The minister has spoken to his Israeli counterparts. The Prime Minister has spoken to the leader of Israel to convey Canada's support. However, in any of those conversations has Canada told Israeli officials that this scale of revenge, these clear violations of law, are unacceptable to Canadians?

So many Israelis are speaking out against Israel's actions in Gaza. Survivors of the Hamas terrorist attack are asking for peace. They are saying “not in our name”. They are asking for the release of hostages, including Canadians. Maoz Inon, whose parents were murdered by Hamas said:

I am not crying for my parents; I am crying for those who are going to lose their life in this war. We must stop the war. ...we are not seeking revenge. Revenge will just lead to more suffering and to more [tragedies].

Yonatan, the son of Canadian hostage Vivian Silver, said, “She would be mortified [by the attack on Gaza]... because you can't cure killed babies with more dead babies. We need peace.”

Vivian Silver is a member of Women Wage Peace. She has spent years working for peace and justice in Israel and Palestine. Yesterday, Women Wage Peace made the following comments:

We hear words of revenge all the time – [we hear] “all restraints have been removed”, “we will wipe out Gaza”.... But one cannot resolve one injustice with another injustice.

We in this House need to be thinking of both the short-term humanitarian crisis and also the long term. New Democrats for decades have called for an end to the occupation and for a just peace for Israelis and Palestinians. This year has already been brutal for all in the region before the terrorist attacks and before this new siege of Gaza. Now we are moments away from a broader war that could engulf the entire region. We are moments away from an alarming and long-term refugee crisis. We are further from peace than we have ever been. We speak of ending the occupation, but we are so far away from a political solution and the Liberal government is failing to step up. It is failing to step up for international law, for Israelis and for Palestinians.

This is the moment to call for calm. We are witnessing an increase of attacks on Palestinians in Jerusalem and in the West Bank by settlers and Israeli security. We have seen reports of abuses of Israeli families who are demanding that the leadership of the Israeli government put the hostages first. People are divided. People are hurting.

The only solution is a political solution. There is no military solution to this conflict. I am begging the government to realize that what its members say now matters. It matters so much and they must call for a ceasefire. Canada must support international justice efforts by the ICJ and the ICC to investigate war crimes by all military actors in Palestine. All war crimes by all parties in this conflict must be prosecuted. Canada must call for a ceasefire and an end to the forcible transfer of civilians.

I want to end by thanking all Israelis and Palestinians working to preserve life: medical workers, humanitarians, human rights advocates, those calling for peace, ordinary people doing what they can in the face of such horror. They are the light in this darkness. We see them and we stand with them.

• (1605)

The Speaker: I see that the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands is raising her hand. Would this be on a point of order to request consent of the House to reply to the statement?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, it would be to state on the record the solidarity of members in this place, from all different parties, to condemn Hamas, and to make a very short statement.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 50th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

The committee advises that pursuant to Standing Order 91.1(2), the Subcommittee on Private Members' Business met to consider the items added to the order of precedence on Wednesday, September 20, 2023, as well as the order for the second reading of private members' public bills originating in the Senate and recommended that the items listed herein, which it has determined should not be designated non-votable, be considered by the House.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to Standing Order 91.1(2), the report is deemed adopted.

(Motion agreed to)

*Routine Proceedings***PETITIONS**

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to present e-petition 4395, signed by over 2,400 Canadians. They request that the government reconsider the proposed foreign influence transparency registry. They believe that this will not meaningfully address the intimidation of Canadians and other kinds of foreign interference, and this goes well beyond.

FREEDOM OF POLITICAL EXPRESSION

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a number of petitions to present to the House today.

The first is in support of my private member's bill, Bill C-257. The petitioners raise concern about the problem of political discrimination in Canada. They note that Canadians can face discrimination on the basis of their political beliefs and that this limits free debate and exchange of ideas. Bill C-257 would add political belief and activity as prohibited grounds of discrimination in the Canadian Human Rights Act.

The petitioners ask the House to support Bill C-257 and to defend the rights of Canadians to peacefully express their political opinions.

- (1610)

WOMEN'S SHELTERS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the second petition that I am tabling raises concern about cuts that the government is making to women's shelters. The petitioners note that women's shelters are, sadly, seeing increased demand. The high cost of living and the housing crisis have made it harder for women and children fleeing a violent home to find a safe place to live. They note that at a time when the Liberal government is dramatically increasing spending on bureaucracy and consultants, it is cutting \$145 million of funding for women's shelters.

Therefore, the petitioners call on the Government of Canada to restore funding that has been cut for women's shelters.

HEALTH

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition I am tabling responds to grave concerns that I have heard from many of my constituents about changes that the government has made around the regulation and costs of natural health products. The petitioners say that Liberals are threatening access to natural health products through new rules that will mean higher costs and fewer products available on store shelves. New so-called cost recovery provisions would impose massive costs on all consumers of natural health products and undermine access for Canadians who rely on these products.

The petitioners also note that provisions in the latest Liberal omnibus budget have given the government substantial new arbitrary powers around the regulation of natural health products, and they call on the Government of Canada to reverse the changes made in the latest Liberal budget regarding natural health products.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the final petition I will table today raises concerns about the politicization of charitable status determination by the Liberal government, proposals around applying a values test to charitable status determination and having discrimination on the basis of values associated with charitable status determination. Petitioners note the Liberals signalled in their last election platform a plan to go down this road of politicizing charitable status.

Petitioners call on the House of Commons to protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis, without discrimination on the basis of political or religious values and without the imposition of another values test, and to affirm the right of all Canadians to freedom of expression.

COVID-19 MANDATES

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am here to present a petition from Canadians from across the country who want a permanent end to the ArriveCAN app and the COVID mandates. Currently, the government has only suspended most of these mandates, but the petitioners are calling for the government to permanently suspend the ArriveCAN app.

FIREARMS

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition is from Canadians from across the country who are concerned about the health and safety of Canadians. They support the health and safety of Canadian firearms owners. The petitioners recognize the importance of owning firearms and that firearms are a way of life in Canada, but they are concerned about the damaging noise levels of firearms and the need for noise reduction. These petitioners acknowledge that sound moderators are the only universally recognized device to do such a thing, but they are criminally prohibited in Canada.

Moreover, the majority of G7 nations around the world allow these things for hunting and sport shooting, for reduced noise pollution. Petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to allow legal firearm owners to purchase these things and use them for all legal hunting and sport shooting activities.

PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition is from petitioners across the country who are concerned about how easy it is for young people to access sexually explicit material online, including violent and degrading sexually explicit material. The petitioners comment on how this is an important public health and public safety concern.

Petitioners note the significant proportion of commercially accessed sexually explicit material has no age verification software. Moreover, age verification software can ascertain users without breaching their privacy rights. Petitioners note many serious harms associated with sexually explicit material, including the development of addiction, the development of attitudes favourable to sexual violence and harassment of women.

As such, the petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada and the House to pass Bill S-210, the protecting young persons from exposure to pornography act.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN INDIA

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition is from petitioners from across the country who have increasing concerns about the human rights protections in India. The petitioners say that the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom notes that there seem to be various actors supporting and enforcing sectarian policies in India.

The petitioners state that Christians in India are being targeted by extremists vandalizing their churches, attacking church workers and threatening and humiliating their congregations. The petitioners say that crimes against the Dalit groups, including Dalit women and girls, are increasing. Petitioners also say that Indian Muslims are at risk of genocide, assault and sexual violence.

The petitioners ask for the Government of Canada to ensure that all trade deals with India are premised on mandatory human rights provisions, that extremists are sanctioned and that the government promotes a respectful human rights dialogue between Canada and India.

• (1615)

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of Bangladeshi students in Canada. Bangladeshi students often face long wait times to come to Canada to be allowed to study.

Canada has a program called the student direct stream, or SDS, which is a method that allows certain countries to have much quicker processing times to allow their students to come to Canada to study. This is something the petitioners are calling for. They would really like to see Bangladesh included in that program of student direct stream, because it would allow its students to come to Canada more easily. Of course, they add value to our country by studying here, working here and doing other things after they have studied. Often, many of them are waiting for many years, so the petitioners are calling for the government to include Bangladesh in the student direct stream in a very timely manner.

CRIMINAL CODE

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am presenting a petition from individuals who have brought forward concerns that continue to come across my desk. They indicate it is well established that the risk of violence against women increases when they are pregnant. Currently, the injury or death of preborn children as victims of crime is not considered aggravating circumstances for sentencing purposes in the Criminal Code of Canada.

Privilege

They indicate that Canada has no abortion law, which is true, and that this legal void is so extreme that it does not even recognize preborn children as victims of violent crimes when they are still within their mother. Justice requires that an attacker who abuses a pregnant woman and her preborn child be sentenced accordingly and that the sentence should match the crime.

Petitioners call upon the House of Commons to designate the abuse of a pregnant woman and/or the infliction of harm or death on a preborn child as aggravating circumstances for sentencing purposes in the Criminal Code.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

MATTER OF RECUSAL

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. Let me begin by emphasizing that I have deep respect for the Speaker's office and for parliamentary procedure. Every point contained herein is made out of a desire to uphold the rules of Parliament and to bolster public faith in Canada's democratic institutions.

With that said, I am rising today on a question of privilege concerning the disclosure outside of the House, by the Speaker's office, of your decision to recuse yourself from the pending ruling on the question of privilege which I had raised before Thanksgiving. It is an established convention that the House has the first right to information concerning certain House of Commons business, such as the content of bills and committee reports presented to the House, failure of which is a breach of the House's privileges. It will be my argument that this situation is equivalent to one of those cases.

Privilege

While the events in question arose as a consequence of my previous question of privilege, this disclosure outside the House is, I believe, a separate and discrete incident giving rise to a separate and discrete question of privilege and requiring a separate decision on its own merits. In my original question of privilege, I argued that it is both inappropriate and impossible for a Speaker to recuse themselves from ruling on a question of privilege in which they have some involvement. That involvement, of course, turned on your signature, Mr. Speaker, as parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister, which understated the cost to taxpayers of the Prime Minister's Montana vacation this spring by over \$200,000. I argued that, in circumstances where the Speaker has some involvement in the matter, the only appropriate recourse available is for the House itself to exercise the Speaker's screening function on a question of privilege as part and parcel of its deliberations on a privilege motion.

I would incorporate the same position and argument into the present question of privilege, where responsibility for the disclosure has been attributed to your office. In short, I believe that you also, Mr. Speaker, must refer this matter to the House.

As for the facts of this matter, on the afternoon of Friday, October 6, you emailed me to inform me that "as of early this morning", you had recused yourself from my original question of privilege. What might have been considered, possibly, a personal and confidential heads-up about a forthcoming statement you would make to the House, turned out not to be. Despite your decision having been made in the morning, no announcement of this was made in the House.

Further, almost immediately after I received your email, which appeared above a signature block identifying you as the parliamentary secretary to the President of the Treasury Board and the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Health, I noticed that the news of your recusal was published on Twitter, or X, and then on a Substack blog entitled Political Watchdog, both purportedly run by a teenager named Nolan Stoqua. The Substack posting included the following comment: "The Speaker's office confirmed to Political Watchdog that the Speaker...will recuse himself from ruling on the Member for Calgary Nose Hill's question of privilege. The Speaker has asked that the Deputy Speaker consider the matter and determine the next steps, says the Speaker's office."

The House sat that Friday, yet you did not make a statement about this so-called recusal. The Deputy Speaker, who presided over most of the day's sitting, similarly did not make any statement on your behalf before the House adjourned for Thanksgiving. The first time that members of the House would have officially learnt of this significant development was via a teenager's Twitter feed. This, I respectfully submit, raises serious questions about whether the privileges of the House may have been breached.

House of Commons Procedure and Practice, third edition, at page 81, explains that:

There are, however, other affronts against the dignity and authority of Parliament which may not fall within...the specifically defined privileges. Thus, the House also claims the right to punish, as a contempt, any action which, though not a breach of a specific privilege...is an offence against the authority or dignity of the House...In that sense, all breaches of privilege are contempts of the House, but not all contempts are necessarily breaches of privilege.

...the House of Commons enjoys very wide latitude in maintaining its dignity and authority through its exercise of contempt power...In other words, the

House may...consider any misconduct to be contempt and may deal with it accordingly. This area of parliamentary law is therefore extremely fluid and most valuable for the Commons to be able to meet novel situations.

Continuing at page 84, it reads, "By far, most of the cases of privilege [raised in the] House relate to matters of contempt challenging the perceived authority and dignity of Parliament and its Members."

The footnote which follows, footnote 125, points to the first in a series of precedents which I believe are most instructive in the present circumstances:

For example, in 2001, a question of privilege was raised regarding a briefing the Department of Justice held for members of the media on a bill not yet introduced in the House, while denying Members access to the same information. Speaker Milliken ruled that the provision of information concerning legislation to the media without any effective measures to secure the rights of the House constituted a *prima facie* case of contempt.

● (1620)

While it is understood practice now that the contents of bills that are on notice must not be disclosed before introduction in the House, something which Speaker Regan described on June 8, 2017, at page 12,320 of the debates as "one of our oldest conventions", it was nonetheless a novel situation when Speaker Milliken gave his ruling.

Just as the 2001 case would not have appeared in *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, first edition, often known as "Marleau and Montpetit", we will not find in Bosc and Gagnon any precedent concerning the matter I am raising today, but that is not a barrier to proceeding.

In reaching his landmark ruling, Speaker Milliken said, on March 19, 2001, at page 1,840 of the Debates:

with respect to material to be placed before parliament, the House must take precedence...The convention of the confidentiality of bills on notice is necessary, not only so that members themselves may be well informed, but also because of the pre-eminent rule which the House plays and must play in the legislative affairs of the nation.

Thus, the issue of denying to members information that they need to do their work has been the key consideration for the Chair in reviewing this particular question of privilege. To deny to members information concerning business that is about to come before the House, while at the same time providing such information to media that will likely be questioning members about that business, is a situation that the Chair cannot condone.

The matter was then referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, which subsequently concluded in its 14th report in the first session of the 37th Parliament, "Such an action impedes, obstructs, and disadvantages Members of Parliament in carrying out their parliamentary functions. In all of these circumstances, the Committee has come to the inescapable conclusion that the privileges of the House [of Commons] and of its Members have been breached in this case."

Just as the House has a pre-eminent position in the legislative affairs of the nation, it holds no lesser place when it comes to the law of parliamentary privilege. Bosc and Gagnon remind us, at page 76, "Matters that fall within parliamentary privilege are for the House alone to decide."

The procedure and House affairs committee added, at page 3 of its 42nd report in the first session of the 41st Parliament, “Parliament is the sole judge of the appropriateness of the exercise of any of its privileges.” The House concurred in this report and its view, which I quoted, on December 2, 2013.

The Supreme Court of Canada shares the view at paragraph 9 of its unanimous 2005 Vaid decision: “In other words, within categories of privilege, Parliament is the judge of the occasion and manner of its exercise and such exercise is not reviewable by the courts”.

To hold such a place in our constitutional order is significant and must be treated with great respect. That, I would argue, means the House itself must be the first recipient of rulings and decisions related to its privileges, not outside media or teenagers' blogs.

As for context of the role the House holds, Bosc and Gagnon note, at page 62, “Parliamentary privileges were first claimed centuries ago when the English House of Commons was struggling to establish a distinct role for itself within Parliament. In the earliest days, Parliament functioned more as a court than as a legislature, and the initial claims to some of these privileges were originally made in this context.”

Erskine May, 25th edition, paragraph 12.1, adds, “The power to punish for contempt or breach of privilege has been judicially considered to be inherent in each House of Parliament not as a necessary incident of the authority and functions of a legislature (as might be argued in respect of certain privileges) but by virtue of their descent from the undivided High Court of Parliament and in right of the *lex et consuetudo parlamenti*.”

Put another way, when considering matters of privilege, the House is cloaked with the vestments of a court. In a court of law, one would imagine the decision of a judge, who has been asked to make certain decisions, not being provided to the parties equally and in public, but instead passed to a teenaged blogger, to be a scoop from a court clerk. However, that is effectively what happened before Thanksgiving when the “Speaker's office” provided a statement to a person ostensibly named Nolan Stouqua.

Via these actions, I believe the House's pre-eminent place in being the sole judge of its own privileges has been breached. The dignity and authority of the House has been negatively affected by this.

• (1625)

To further this point, colleagues who had indicated that they had intended to come back to the House to make interventions on my original question of privilege and my call for your referral of the matter to the House were effectively denied the opportunity to do so.

Indeed, my colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby, the New Democratic Party's House leader, raised similar concerns in his intervention about this matter earlier today. He said that, even more frustrating, was the fact that the office confirmed this decision to a member of the media, in the case, an unverified blogger, and then did not inform the House as a whole or even the House leaders group.

Privilege

He went on to say:

As the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* states:

The Speaker is the servant, neither of any part of the House nor of any majority in the House, but of the entire institution....

He continued:

The responsibility of the Speaker is to the institution of Parliament and to the House of Commons as a whole, not to an individual member who raises a point and not to reporters who may be interested in the decisions taken by the Speaker. Providing more information to the media than to Parliament on matters that are fundamentally parliamentary in nature is really not acceptable.

In discussing how Speakers' rulings are delivered, *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, our bible, further states:

Sometimes, a ruling is delivered quickly and with a minimum of explanation. At other times, circumstances do not permit an immediate ruling. The Speaker may allow discussion of the point of order before he or she comes to a decision. The Speaker might also reserve his or her decision on a matter, returning to the House at a later time to deliver the ruling.

He concluded:

It is clear that rulings are meant to be made in the House. There is no precedent for a Speaker doing otherwise, and the rule book does not contemplate otherwise.

I agree with my colleague from the NDP on this point. It should be considered in the deliberations on this potential breach of privilege.

I believe the appropriate course of action to determine whether a prima facie case of privilege exists when the Speaker has a conflict of interest, as when the Speaker's office is said to be at the heart of the actions in concern, is to simply turn the matter over to the House. An appropriate analogy lies, I would submit, in the circumstances of a chair of a committee when a question of privilege is being raised in that venue. Bosc and Gagnon elaborate on page 1060, stating:

The Chair of a committee does not have the power to rule on questions of privilege...If a member wishes to raise a question of privilege during a committee meeting, or an incident arises in connection with the committee's proceedings that may constitute a breach of privilege, the committee Chair allows the member to explain the situation. The Chair then determines whether the question raised in fact relates to parliamentary privilege. If the Chair determines that the question does relate to parliamentary privilege, the committee may then consider presenting a report on the question to the House.

Accordingly, in closing, I believe the correct course of action on this matter is twofold: first, for you to refer this matter to the House for deliberation, given your personal involvement and your office's involvement in this matter; and, second, should the House agree with me that my concerns raised today in this new question of privilege constitute a breach, the matter can be referred to the appropriate committee to determine the appropriate remedy.

As such, I am prepared to move the motion.

• (1630)

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the member for her statement. Of course, we will look at that statement closely.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just want to add my voice in support of the comments made and the point raised by my colleague in the official opposition.

Government Orders

I will endeavour to not repeat what she has so eloquently put before the House, but I want to stress a couple of points. The first is that there is definitely precedence on things, such as legislation being leaked, constituting a breach of privilege. That has been well established. My colleague very skilfully underlined the fact that that was a new precedent at the time Speaker Milliken made his ruling.

This is an unprecedented situation, to find ourselves in this part of the life cycle of our Parliament, where the Speaker's position has now been filled by someone who was a parliamentary secretary right up until the moment of the Speaker election. It is new territory for parliamentarians.

The fact that the Speaker has had to rule on something that he himself was implicated in, in his previous position, is unprecedented. That is why our suggestion was that the proper way of recusing himself would be to put it to the House to decide.

It is important for parliamentarians to remember that the Speaker does not, formally, rule that a breach or a contempt has taken place. All the Speaker does is act as a filter, to say that a situation, on its face, or *prima facie*, rises to the level that we set aside all other business of the House to allow members themselves, and the House itself, to determine whether or not there is a breach or a contempt.

Our suggestion was that putting it to the House and removing the Speaker from that filtering position would not set a precedent in the case of the Order Paper question that prompted the original question. It would not bind future Speakers to rule that incomplete answers would necessarily, on their own, rise to that level. It would just say that, in this specific case, because of the Speaker's involvement in his prior role, the Speaker would remove himself from that filtering role.

The decision that was made today by the Speaker to recuse himself by way of allowing or empowering the Deputy Speaker to make the ruling was not something that the opposition had considered before the last break week. We had proposed an alternative. The Speaker had not yet ruled on that.

To find out by way of a public blog that that is the course of action that the Speaker is taking rises to the level of raising this question of privilege here today.

It also does not address the points that we made about the Speaker's conflict on the original point. It is true that the Speaker did underline for the House this morning that the Deputy Speaker is selected by the House. That is true. There is a motion that is put forward to the House and the House agrees with it, but that motion is proposed by the Speaker.

The Speaker is the one who consults with other party leaders and proposes that name to the House. The Deputy Speaker is not fully removed from, at the very least, that perception of a conflict of interest. Having been in the roles of both the Deputy Speaker and the Speaker, I can also speak to the dynamic way that the Deputy Speaker works with the Speaker. It is very clear that the Speaker is at the top of the list for chair occupants, and that deputies and assistant deputies are his or her subordinates.

That is why the statement by the Speaker this morning still does not address that aspect of the conflict. I would also pose the question to the Chair, because this decision was made on the Friday, not in the House but through what seems to be some kind of a political blogger, and that parliamentarians have not had the opportunity to raise this concern about even having the Deputy Speaker make this decision, we still believe that there is a point there that needs to be addressed.

I just want to stress that I believe the best way to move forward on this is to have the Speaker fully recuse himself by not delegating it to a Chair occupant, not delegating this question to his deputy, but by just stepping back and saying that he would let the House decide this one because he is not in a position to act as that filter.

I do not think it is too late. I understand the Speaker did make that statement this morning. I would urge him to look at the intervention by my colleague, my remarks and comments by the House leader for the New Democratic Party, and come back to the House with the tidiest solution that keeps the Speaker, as an individual and his entire office, out of the appearance, or even the suggestion, of a conflict of interest by putting it to the House to decide.

• (1635)

The Deputy Speaker: I appreciate the intervention from the hon. member.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CANADA—NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR ATLANTIC ACCORD IMPLEMENTATION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-49, An Act to amend the Canada—Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House on a matter of great importance for Atlantic Canadians, in particular constituents of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador. Today, I am going to speak to Bill C-49, an act to amend the Atlantic accord acts. Introduced by our government this spring, this is a piece of legislation that intends to bring Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador into the green energy future. More specifically, our government intends to strengthen and modernize the regulations governing their offshore regimes.

As a proud Atlantic Canadian, I can tell members about the importance of safeguarding our unique coastal environment, as well as the importance of creating sustainable economic opportunities at home. This is especially true given the events of the past year in Atlantic Canada.

Government Orders

This last year, we saw a once-in-a-lifetime hurricane, Fiona, followed by an uncontrollable once-in-a-lifetime wildfire, followed by deadly once-in-a-lifetime flooding. This devastating sequence of events is no coincidence. It is the consequence of a climate emergency that has been brewing for decades. It is the consequence of leaders who do not recognize that we must act now to protect our communities.

Atlantic Canadians needed economic growth this year. What they did not need was a significant taxpayer bill for climate disaster cleanups. That is why Bill C-49 would support Canada's clean energy sector to fight the climate crisis. That is why Bill C-49 would unlock the incredible economic potential that lies in the renewable industries within Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador.

I cannot speak for the official opposition, but my constituents in Cape Breton—Canso sent me here to do my part to make government work for them. The same is true for my government colleagues on this side. We are here to work for all Atlantic Canadians and for all Canadians. With that, our government intends to do the right thing for the economic and environmental future of Atlantic Canadians. I will discuss how this legislation is going to help in that effort.

The world is now looking for cleaner sources of energy, and offshore renewables are becoming a leading contender in that very search. As we look to the future of Canadian energy, offshore renewables have the potential to not only help Canada achieve its net-zero goals, but bolster our energy capacity in sustainable ways. However, current regulations are standing in the way of these very crucial renewable projects. That is why Bill C-49 would remove the red tape that is currently preventing green energy projects from getting under way. In fact, without this legislation, not a single offshore wind project can be built, which is an important fact to note. This fact alone should be sufficient to convey the importance of passing this bill.

The reality of the situation is that if we do not create the regulatory environment that allows these clean energy projects to go forward, then massive private sector opportunity will go elsewhere. In other words, Canada has the opportunity right now to be a leader in the emerging offshore renewable industry. If we do not rise to the occasion and become the leader, another jurisdiction surely will. Our government believes that meeting this moment to chart a new path for Atlantic Canada and indeed all Canadians is here.

However, Bill C-49 is not just about removing red tape. It is also about advancing our commitment toward strengthening our environmental protection. This legislation would ensure that the Government of Canada's MPA protection standard is applied in a manner that respects the joint management framework for the Atlantic offshore. It would also provide the federal minister and provincial officials with the ability to prohibit oil and gas activities in areas that could be important for marine conservation and protection.

This is an incredible step forward in our commitment toward expanding Canada's energy capacities in a responsible and sustainable way. It is also reflective of the great partnership we forged with our stakeholders and provincial counterparts, which has allowed us to work together toward common goals. It is why the governments of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador have declared their

support for this bill. In fact, the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador has gone so far as to publicly urge the federal opposition parties to support the passing of Bill C-49. I wish to echo this statement and reiterate to my opposition colleagues that the legislation is indeed critical for the future of Canadian energy. I would say it is critical for economic development in Atlantic Canada writ large.

• (1640)

The Conservatives, and many of them are colleagues of mine, have been talking a lot about common sense, but on this item, they seem to intend to vote against Bill C-49. I do not see the common sense in that. I believe that the magnitude of the opportunity before us is real and that the regulatory framework is strong. It is important for me, as a member of Parliament, to reach across party lines and ask for their support. It is support for Atlantic Canadians and support for coastal communities.

This regulatory framework would indeed provide it to rural communities like mine in Cape Breton—Canso. Historically, in my riding, we have felt left behind in large-scale investments. The large-scale investment that I think can happen here is the best case scenario. It is private sector investment. Eventually, no doubt there will be government support, but this should be led by the private sector, which is so key.

We are partnering with Atlantic Canadians to work on offshore wind and green hydrogen. I think that is fundamentally what common sense is about. It is about working together and working together for the common good. Canada is well positioned to lead, as we all know in this chamber, the clean energy economy, but we need to make the right choices now. That is what Bill C-49 is all about.

With that, there is a simple conclusion that I would like to make here. A vote against Bill C-49 is a vote against unlocking historic economic investments in Atlantic Canada. A vote against Bill C-49 is a vote against bringing good, sustainable jobs to my area, to the Atlantic region. A vote against Bill C-49 is a vote against the premiers of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador, with whom we have worked together to bring these projects to life. A vote against Bill C-49 is a vote against putting partisan politics aside for the betterment of our constituents.

I implore each member of this honourable House to vote with us on this legislation. Let us all do the right thing for Atlantic Canada with Atlantic Canada. Let us work to pass Bill C-49.

I am thankful for this opportunity. I look forward to working not only with members on this side of the House but with the opposition to make this legislation a reality.

Privilege

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Madam Speaker, I heard the Liberal member, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, talk about the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Premier of Nova Scotia. Those premiers will answer to their electorate if they do the wrong thing by their electorate and by the industries that are going to be impacted either positively or negatively by offshore wind or offshore oil and gas.

There is a little paragraph in the summary of Bill C-49, and if our Liberal members from Atlantic Canada do not have the time to read the bill, they can read this. The bill provides that the Governor in Council, the Prime Minister and his cabinet, can “make regulations to prohibit the commencement or continuation of petroleum resource or renewable energy activities, or the issuance of interests, in respect of any portion of the offshore area that is located in an area that has been or may be identified as an area for environmental or wildlife conservation or protection”. Does the member agree that item (g), referencing proposed section 56 in this bill, could be removed? If so, I would support a bill that takes out—

• (1645)

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

Mr. Mike Kelloway: Madam Speaker, the member across asked if we read. I can tell him that in Cape Breton, they do teach reading and writing and we are quite good at it.

I will also say this. When we look at this particular bill, it is looking at focusing on greater collaborations. I think the premier and the governing party in Newfoundland and Labrador understand the importance of collaboration and understand working for the benefit of the future, for jobs and for economic development. They understand that.

We can sit here all day and pontificate and throw barbs, as we do from time to time, but we are here as Atlantic Canadians to get people to work, to become economically resilient for our region and to export our energy in Atlantic Canada to Europe.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, at the end of his speech, my colleague spoke about the various impacts of voting against Bill C-49. I wonder whether a vote for Bill C-49 is a vote for increased oil and gas production in eastern Canada. I think that is a fair question.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks about that.

[*English*]

Mr. Mike Kelloway: Madam Speaker, this vote would change the regulatory framework to make renewable opportunities not just words on paper but a reality. For a long time, we have been looking at opportunities to green the grid in Atlantic Canada. This would provide a spoke on the wheel to do that. It would also provide an opportunity for us to become energy resilient as a region and look to offshore wind and green hydrogen to export to the rest of the world.

That is what we as Atlantic Canadians are focusing on. I hope everyone here thinks the same way and votes for this bill.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer recently came to the industry committee and noted that the Trans Mountain pipeline right now is at \$22 billion and continues to absorb more public money, which the government does not have a response to for the future, other than just continuing to pay. That is what the Liberals agreed to do. The Liberals also recognized the work of Stellantis and Volkswagen in the \$22-billion investment deal for batteries. That is tied to production and labour.

Is the member confident that the renewable energy and non-renewable energy projects and investments are going to be tied to labour and production so that there will be measured hours for persons who are basically paying for this project as subsidies?

Mr. Mike Kelloway: Madam Speaker, when we look at this particular bill, it is focused on establishing a regulatory framework and is basically amending the existing act to include offshore wind, hydrogen and renewables. However, I think any economic development opportunity in Atlantic Canada absolutely needs to be tied to set-asides for jobs and working with first nations communities in the Atlantic region.

* * *

• (1650)

PRIVILEGE**ALLEGED MISLEADING RESPONSE TO ORDER PAPER QUESTION**

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to respond to the question of privilege raised by the member for Calgary Nose Hill on Thursday, October 5, with a further intervention on Friday, October 6, respecting the government's response to Order Paper Question No. 1417 and Question No. 1582.

The member alleges that the government's response to these questions represents a willful misrepresentation of the facts, based on a CBC story reported on October 5 that produced a different amount for the trip that was the subject of the two Order Paper questions.

I submit that there was no intention to mislead the House or its members in the government's response to these questions. In fact, it is the government's view that the responses addressed the questions that were asked. This matter amounts to a debate as to the facts and does not, in any way, represent a willful misrepresentation of the facts to the House.

The crux of the questions posed is based on the notion of “total costs incurred by the government”. The government takes the view that “the government” includes all core departments of the public service and not independent arm's-length agencies, such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The fact is that neither of these questions specifically asked for that information. It is not for the government to make assumptions about what the member means to ask when submitting an Order Paper question. The government simply responds to the precise question that was asked.

The questions did not specifically ask for the costs incurred by the RCMP for the trip in question, and the government responded to the question that was actually asked. In no way can this constitute a willful intent to mislead the House.

Precedence has clearly established that the Speaker's role is not to judge the quality of the answers given to the questions posed, whether during Oral Questions, during question and comment period sessions in debate or through the process for responding to Order Paper questions. A long-standing adjacent principle that has been upheld by all speakers is the practice that members are taken at their word. The question of privilege being responded to seeks to contradict these two important practices of this House. I therefore submit that this matter amounts to debate as to the facts and does not represent a valid *prima facie* determination of a question of privilege.

The government takes seriously its responsibility to respond accurately to questions asked through the Order Paper process, but it can never put itself in a position to assume what the member meant to ask. That is the responsibility of the member when asking a question for which they desire a very specific response.

* * *

CANADA—NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR ATLANTIC ACCORD IMPLEMENTATION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-49, An Act to amend the Canada—Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this past weekend marked a significant milestone for many of us in this House. It has been 15 years since the class of 2008 began its journey of service to Canadians. I still have the picture on my refrigerator of my brothers and my father celebrating that special evening.

My first duty as an MP in this House was the spectacle of the multi-vote Speaker selection, which was particularly significant to me.

During the first break, I crossed the floor to speak to a hockey idol, or nemesis, of mine, the hon. Ken Dryden. I relayed to him how, as an eight-year-old, I had been told by my aunt that we had this relative who may even make it to the NHL some time. She was an Orr. We had a lot to discuss.

During the second vote break, I noticed the Right Hon. Stephen Harper doing paperwork at his desk in the House, so I went over to chat and enjoyed a fantastic one-on-one discussion with him. I proudly relayed those two experiences to my father while he lay in

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his hospital bed just a week before he passed away. It was the last smile we shared.

I am happy to speak to this legislation today, as it fits well into the responsibilities that I have been engaged in over this past decade and a half. The committees that I have served on that have touched this file include international trade, science innovation and technology, indigenous affairs, environment and, most recently, natural resources.

I have also advocated for Canadian resources on the global stage through the OSCE, ParlAmericas and Asia-Pacific. Most specifically, this advocacy has been on food security, energy security and addressing global conflict with rogue states, as well as international terrorism.

On the international front, when the Liberals, particularly the Prime Minister, get the opportunity to grandstand, it is a bewildering sight. Whether it be disruptive trade irritants with our trusted allies, ill-conceived and anti-natural resource eco-activist proclamations or unprofessional statements to global leaders, sadly, we now have a global reputation where we are showing others just how unreliable we are.

When it comes to the actions of the Prime Minister and his numerous environment ministers, the effects on both the energy industry and the global environment, as well as the lost revenue that could have kept our economy strong, could not be more dire.

This bill would amend the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board by adding offshore renewables to their mandates. It would also create a regulatory regime for offshore wind and other renewable energy projects similar to those that currently exist for petroleum operations.

It would also allow the federal government to rely on regulators for indigenous consultation. Unfortunately, this might result in court challenges and detrimental judicial decisions. This bill would add more red tape and uncertainty to an already overburdened bureaucratic framework.

The Atlantic offshore drilling ban could end offshore petroleum drilling in the Atlantic provinces in any designated region deemed to be a prohibited development area. Again, this would be done by political decree.

Let me express my admiration for the thousands of Maritimers who shared my home province of Alberta and became experts in oil and gas extraction. As with any job so far from home, it was a true family commitment. It has also helped enhance the energy expertise needed to explore and extract oil and gas in the Atlantic offshore. Sadly, the government views any criticism of its lauded legislative goals as being anti-Atlantic. That could be no further from the truth.

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The energy industry knows far too well the effects of Liberal policy on its Canadian assets. The industry does not need even more investors turning their backs on ethically produced and carbon-reduced energy, as well as strong workers rights, to satisfy the ideological fantasies of the Prime Minister and his cabinet.

The proposal to rely on regulators to satisfy the duty to consult with indigenous people, particularly in the proposed section 62, is of concern. It is well known that the government does not have a solid track record when it comes to serious discussions with indigenous people. The proposed section may face challenges in the future and jeopardize both offshore petroleum and renewable energy proposals on the grounds that it is the Crown's duty to consult, and this cannot be delegated elsewhere.

● (1655)

In the past, judicial decisions on major energy projects consistently cited the failure of a two-way dynamic and the lack of a decision-maker at the table during Crown-indigenous consultations. Is that what is being created here?

The legislation also speaks of indigenous collaboration. The history of the government's policies could leave billions of dollars of indigenous assets at risk. Will this be addressed?

The government currently formulates most of its environmental goals around the American Inflation Reduction Act, thinking that we will somehow benefit from American benevolence. Where was the government when the Biden administration's first action was to cancel the Keystone XL pipeline? There is not a chance that it was advocating for Canadian energy. It was too busy gleefully rubbing its hands, because someone else had done the dirty work. What are the consequences of these actions?

The Americans are not fools. Instead of allowing Canadian products to get to world markets, the U.S. is now flooding these same markets with their oil and gas. Indeed, we were outsmarted and outplayed, because the Americans knew the Liberals were more concerned with ideology than practicality. So much for ensuring that the energy produced in the most environmentally friendly way in the world makes it to our trading partners' shores.

However, there is a chance that our Atlantic offshore energy could help make this happen, as long as we do not put too many obstacles in the way. Many of the provisions and regulations that we see in this bill mirror the legislation that has just been struck down by the Supreme Court of Canada. On the issue of the recent SCC decision, there is much more to it than just this proclamation.

In September 2019, the Alberta government announced its court challenge of Bill C-69, and on May 10, 2022, Alberta's Court of Appeal deemed Bill C-69 unconstitutional. This of course prompted the Government of Canada to appeal that decision, which is its right.

Meanwhile, other provinces chimed in, stating their disapproval of the Impact Assessment Act provisions and the act's intrusion on provincial jurisdiction. I state this because the mechanism associated with Bill C-69 is mirrored in this legislation.

The jurisdictional overreach of Bill C-69 allowed for political interference in the regulatory process by the Minister of Environment

and cabinet. It has been disastrous for Canada's extraction industries.

Conservatives have warned the government and its NDP enablers that this unprecedented power over provincial infrastructure, industry and natural resources, including wind, hydro, critical minerals, and oil and gas, would hurt Canadian workers and was unconstitutional. This was upheld in the SCC decision this past week.

One of the other features of this bill addresses the full life-cycle analysis of renewable projects. This has been one of my missions when discussing both renewable and non-renewable energies. We have to analyze the environmental impact of all forms of energy, including its transmission. We must also measure the impact associated with the machines that are powered by this energy. Only then can we fairly determine what is the best type of system available for each region of this vast nation. This is important, because we are sorely needed on the world stage.

As I mentioned earlier, I have spoken up consistently in support of Canadian resources, both for agriculture and renewable and non-renewable energy. We hear from the government how European countries are onside with Canada's aggressive carbon tax and its anti-oil strategy. It may make them feel good that other ideological governments share their vision, but that is not the reality on the ground.

● (1700)

On the political front, we see those governments that continue to push the global green agenda onto its electorate being laid waste. The Liberal members seem to be too blinded by their leader's aura to see that it is happening here as well. This strategy of pitting one group against another is a logical tactic for combat, but not an honourable formula for governing. This is why this legislation needs to be amended.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I cannot quite figure how the member can say what he said in his concluding remarks. I understand the Conservatives do not want this legislation to pass, but let us be very clear. Provincial premiers and many different stakeholders have seen the value of this legislation. It is a very competitive area and we want to ensure that the Atlantic provinces have the opportunity to take advantage. That is what this legislation would do. There has been work in consultations and it even has the support of a Progressive Conservative premier.

Why does the Conservative Party feel this is a bill that it can filibuster on and deny Atlantic Canadians the opportunity to see economic growth?

• (1705)

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Madam Speaker, there are opportunities for economic growth in the oil and gas industry and in renewables. This is something we expect, but it has to be done right. That is the concern we have. There are probably six or seven sections in this bill that need more scrutiny, and that is the key. As we know, when it gets to committee, these amendments are critical and important.

The point is that we have seen the effects of a federal government that takes glee in restricting and limiting energy no matter where it is or from whom. There is the experience of the rest of Canada, but when it comes to concerns about Atlantic Canada, we simply want to make sure that everyone is on the same page.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I have heard time and time again from the Conservative Party that it is interested in lowering prices for Canadians. This bill is a great opportunity to help lower prices by ensuring that we support the use of renewable energy. Not only would there be a better use of renewable energy, but it would also create employment.

Is the Conservative Party interested in supporting the creation of employment by using renewable energy or is it interested only in protecting the profits of rich oil CEOs?

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Madam Speaker, of course jobs are important, no matter where they are in this country. The question that has to be posed is whether renewables are going to be cheaper in the long run, because that is the major concern that we have.

There are 50-some windmills about six miles from my home that are 20-some years in. They are going to have to be disposed of soon. No one could tell us what the actual overall costs are for reclamation. We have solar projects that people are concerned about because they do not know what the reclamation costs are going to be. We should make sure we know all the facts and then we can talk about the best method of getting energy to the citizens of this country. There are so many strengths from all over this country and we should be aware of them.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, the government believes that the only way to make advancements in clean energy is by taxing and hurting Canadians and federal government intervention. Canadians are rightly concerned with the Liberals' plan, as 2.7 million livelihoods have been brutally impacted and the government's economic record is nothing but disastrous.

I would ask the member to tell me what the government could do to encourage clean energy advancement without killing jobs and punishing Canadians with taxes, to have our clean capabilities meet the current world's need for clean oil and gas, but which the Liberals claim there is no business case for.

Mr. Earl Dreeshen: Madam Speaker, I could go on for a long time on that particular topic.

Quite frankly, the world needs Canada's oil and gas. It needs our expertise in being able to produce the most clean energy in the world. We could have gotten it to market if someone on the other side might have seen a case for this. While the U.S. is making dozens of natural gas facilities where it can transfer gas around the world, we are wondering when it would be a good idea to get our

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first one going. These are issues. If we had our natural gas displacing the energy in other places in the world, that would be the best step to what we are supposedly talking about, which is—

• (1710)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to resume debate.

The hon. member for Calgary Skyview.

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to debate Bill C-49 in the House today. Before I begin, I would like to note that we are standing on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe nation.

There is immense potential for offshore renewables, including the offshore wind industry in Newfoundland and Labrador and in Nova Scotia. It has the potential for new sustainable jobs and the potential for a supercharged Canadian low-carbon economy. With some of the fastest winds in the world off our east coast, with Bill C-49 we could build one of the world's greatest offshore wind industries, powering countless Canadian communities with clean, reliable and affordable electricity.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to interrupt the hon. member.

When we had speeches from the opposition side, the House was quiet and people listened, so I would like the same courtesy to be accorded now to the current member.

The hon. member for Calgary Skyview.

Mr. George Chahal: Madam Speaker, my Conservative colleagues do not like when I say “reliable and affordable electricity” because they want to increase electricity rates for Canadians.

We are going to bring immense economic opportunity and provide the world with the hydrogen it needs. According to the Public Policy Forum's new report published today, the installation and maintenance of massive onshore wind generation will create jobs and incomes at high levels of intensity for several decades during build-out, and continuing indefinitely with ongoing maintenance and replacement activity.

It also determined that the installation of 15 gigawatts of offshore wind generation would create an average of approximately 30,000 direct jobs annually during several years of construction and installation and about 1,200 permanent jobs for ongoing operation and maintenance.

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Canadian businesses know a good thing when they see it. They are more than ready to invest in offshore renewable energy. They are already doing it. Over the last several years, a number of Canadian companies have bought into international offshore wind projects according to Marine Renewables Canada. This includes Canadian financial institutions like the Bank of Montreal and CIBC, and Northland Power.

Northland Power is a Canadian company that has not waited around to invest billions in offshore wind. Headquartered in Toronto, Northland Power is already a global leader in offshore wind with three large operational offshore wind projects in the North Sea in Dutch and German waters and over 9,000 megawatts of offshore wind projects in development from Scotland to the Asia Pacific. It is a great example of how Canadian experience and ingenuity is moving offshore renewables in the global energy transition forward. That experience was most recently demonstrated in the last few weeks when Northland closed just over \$10 billion of financing for two additional offshore wind projects in Poland and Taiwan, despite a challenging economic environment.

Northland is a Canadian success story. It has grown from a purely domestic business 10 years ago to having offices in eight countries; deploying more than 250 people in offshore wind; establishing a centre of excellence for offshore wind in Hamburg, Germany; investing roughly \$6.5 billion into assets already in operation; and committing about \$9.5 billion into developing more offshore wind projects.

Perhaps the best news of all for Canada's workers and the economy is that it has confirmed that it wants to bring its experience and expertise home. It is so important to it that it decided to come to Parliament earlier this year to be present when the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources introduced this bill. It wants to be a part of fulfilling our offshore renewable energy potential, bringing jobs to Canadians and helping to grow our low-carbon economy. As we speak, the company is exploring opportunities in the Atlantic Ocean that will support both decarbonization efforts and electrification of the burgeoning green hydrogen sector.

I am sure all members agree that Canadian companies are more than willing to invest in this industry. If this legislation goes forward, it is only a matter of time. We are bringing billions of dollars and hundreds of jobs, or even more, to Canada's offshore. This can only happen if we work urgently to pass Bill C-49. That is why I find it so disturbing that Conservative members are so against bringing these economic opportunities to Atlantic Canadians.

• (1715)

I have seen this in my home province of Alberta, where Conservatives in Alberta have put out a moratorium. It is impacting over 118 projects, up to \$33 billion in potential losses of investments into our economy, impacting billions of dollars of investment and up to 24,000 jobs. Then, the premier started a misinformation campaign, spending \$8 million of taxpayers' money to drive a bus around Ottawa to misinform Canadians. That is \$8 million of Albertan taxpayer money being spent to misinform.

The natural environment off of our coasts makes us capable of becoming one of the strongest players in the world in the offshore renewable industry. If we look at the Global Wind Atlas, the winds

off our east coast are stronger than those around the U.K. and northern Europe, where there are already wind farms. If we compare our winds to those off the upper east coast of the United States, our offshore area is simply bigger and has higher wind speeds.

According to experts, and as published in Policy Opinions, the online magazine put together by Canada's Institute for Research on Public Policy, the price of electricity generated by offshore wind has also dropped significantly, in part, due to developers backing more efficient and bigger turbines. Now is the time for Canada to board this train, and the sooner the better.

The "Global Offshore Wind Report 2023", published by the Global Wind Energy Council, is predicting that the industry could face supply chain bottlenecks in every country that produces offshore wind energy by 2026, except for China. We have a timely opportunity here to be a part of minimizing that bottleneck and be part of the solution by developing the offshore wind industry in Canada, and encourage new investments into companies that could supply needed materials and parts to the world.

According to Marine Renewables Canada, getting this legislation passed will only help Canada expand its renewable energy industries. Perhaps this expansion of affordable, clean, renewable energy is the cause of the Conservative Party's opposition to this bill. The Conservatives have been clear that they want to make pollution free again, and now they are voting against Bill C-49 and all of the jobs it would bring to Canadians.

As I wrap up my speech, I would like to briefly remind members that we have so many things already in place that will make Canada's offshore renewable energy a resounding success. Both Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador are fully on board with this legislation. We created the Canada-Germany hydrogen alliance, so that we can supply Germany and hopefully other European allies looking for secure sources of energy.

Canadians have excelled in so many renewable energy industries. They want this chance to show the world that we can lead in the offshore renewable energy sector too. The door is wide open. We just need to walk through it.

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• (1720)

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Madam Speaker, last week, the New York State Department of Public Service denied an application from developers of energy in that state developing offshore wind resources to do exactly what this member is a proponent of. It denied the request for billions of dollars of additional subsidies and concessions. Why was that? It was because the developer said that without it, there was no business case.

I am wondering if the member across the aisle has seriously considered whether there is really a business case that is viable without costing Canadians billions of dollars in subsidies and concessions. I also want to know why that member is not supporting his home province of Alberta.

Mr. George Chahal: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member, who is on the natural resources committee, for his question. However, there is, once again, misinformation on what this is about.

In my home province of Alberta, Premier Smith and the UCP government have put out a moratorium, which is preventing \$33 billion in investment. Thousands of jobs will be lost. With the transition to a net-zero economy, it is estimated that it will create up 420,000 jobs across Canada.

This is about working together. That is why Premier Furey from Newfoundland supports this. I will read a quote for the hon. member: “Newfoundland and Labrador is perfectly positioned—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am sorry. We have to have time for more questions and comments.

The hon. member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I do not think that it is necessarily a bad thing to want to regulate the marine energy industry in eastern Canada. However, we are not talking only about future wind energy projects. For example, this bill also addresses oil and gas exploration and development.

At a time when we are in a climate emergency, and when scientists tell us that we must quickly stop using fossil fuels, does my colleague believe it makes sense that his government wants to double oil production within the next few years?

[*English*]

Mr. George Chahal: Madam Speaker, this bill is about working together with the governments in Atlantic Canada, with Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador, to make sure we are bringing forward opportunities to have more renewable energy.

The world is seeing a massive transition. There is up to \$1 trillion of investment that is going to come forward with renewables and through wind energy. We want to make sure that Atlantic Canada reaps those benefits, which are thousands of jobs and millions of dollars in investment. That is good for Atlantic Canada and great for Canada.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I would like to note that the member's party does not do a really great job with its promises for reconciliation. I am glad to see that this legislation

talks about engaging indigenous peoples. This is great to see in this bill.

One concern I do have is its terrible record of engaging or not engaging indigenous peoples, including recognizing collectives of peoples as indigenous when they are not. Because of that, I ask how the government will make sure that, when it is engaging with indigenous peoples, they are actually section 35 rights-holding indigenous peoples.

Mr. George Chahal: Madam Speaker, that is an important question. An important part of the work we do is working with and alongside indigenous communities across Canada. Working with the provincial governments in Atlantic Canada, it is going to be at the forefront of the work that is done to consult and work alongside indigenous communities.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I noted earlier in debate that some members incorrectly said that the findings of the Supreme Court of Canada in the reference case on the impact assessment meant that there would be over-reach in this bill, Bill C-49. As a formerly practising environmental lawyer who did not think Bill C-69 was constitutional, I would like to say that Bill C-49 is absolutely constitutional. There is nothing more federal than the offshore. This is federal jurisdiction.

Is my hon. colleague aware that the race is on right now between the United States and China to see who can get more offshore wind in faster?

• (1725)

Mr. George Chahal: Madam Speaker, that is why it is so important that we pass this bill to get it to committee quickly to do the hard work with stakeholders and make sure we get it right. There is a tremendous opportunity. We must strike now and make this happen so that Atlantic Canada and our great nation receive the benefits with millions of dollars of investment and good jobs.

Mr. Scott Reid: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, it is a practice of the House that, when a member realizes that he or she has a matter affecting the privileges of the House, the matter ought to be drawn to the attention of the House at the earliest possible opportunity. Therefore, it is my obligation to inform the House that a letter from the Ethics Commissioner confirming the existence of such a matter arrived in my email inbox just after 2:00 p.m. on the most recent sitting day before the present day, that is to say, on Friday, October 6.

The House rose less than half an hour after I received this email and today, therefore, represents the first reasonably available opportunity.

The matter in question relates to subsection 12(1) of the Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons. Subsection 12(1) states:

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A member who has a private interest that might be affected by a matter that is before the House of Commons...shall, if present during consideration of the matter, disclose orally or in writing the general nature of the private interest at the first opportunity. The general nature of the private interest shall be disclosed forthwith in writing to the Clerk of the House.

On September 19, I wrote to seek the commissioner's advice as I am the chairman of the board of a family business, Giant Tiger stores. Although my family business is a small player in the great scheme of things, having a sales volume that is only about 5% that of Loblaws, it is nevertheless a significant player in the discount side of the grocery industry. Therefore, it seemed advisable to me to ask the commissioner whether, in order to remain compliant with the code, I might have to recuse myself from certain debates in the House and elsewhere.

As noted earlier, the commissioner responded to me just after 2:00 p.m. on October 6, advising me that, in his view, I would have an obligation, pursuant to subsection 12(1), to report to the House if I am present in the House during any debate or a vote on Bill C-56 and also that the same restrictions apply to Bill C-352, a private member's bill covering much of the same subject matter.

I can advise the House that in anticipation of precisely such a response from the commissioner, I have been at pains to avoid being present during any such debates. However, a strict reading of subsection 12(1) would suggest that the reporting obligation is triggered by the mere fact of being present during a question period when questions on the subject are raised by any party and that, as well, if I were to participate electronically in any vote on the subject, even if my intention is simply to electronically vote to register a formal abstention, I would trigger subsection 12(1).

Therefore, pursuant to subsection 12(1), I am tabling the following four documents.

The first is the letter that I wrote to the commissioner on September 19, in which I laid out the general nature of my private interest in my family's business.

The second is an email thread containing subsequent correspondence with the commissioner and his staff, leading up to his response email on October 6, in which he advised me that I should not merely recuse myself from debates in the House of Commons but also that I should exclude myself from any discussion, debate or vote on these two bills that might take place during the Conservative caucus meetings.

The third is a further letter that I sent this morning to comply with the commissioner's further instruction that I will need to formally inform the Conservative caucus vice-chair, or the individual who would chair the meeting in their absence, of my private interest regarding Bill C-56 and Bill C-352 and provide a copy of the correspondence to his office. I was told it will then be made public in accordance with the code.

Finally, the fourth is the cover letter to the commissioner delivered to his office earlier this day in which I confirmed to him that I have complied with this further instruction.

● (1730)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The Chair thanks the hon. member for bringing this forth, but as a

reminder to the hon. member, we need unanimous consent to table documents.

Is the hon. member seeking unanimous consent to table the documents? Otherwise, they can just be sent to the Clerk.

Mr. Scott Reid: Madam Speaker, I suppose, in that case, I am asking for the unanimous consent of the House.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Does the hon. member have unanimous consent?

An hon. member: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member can submit all of the documents to the Clerk as part of his written submission.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to Bill C-49. I have not taken part in debate on a bill in quite some time. I am sorry if I am a little rusty.

First of all, this bill is a bit more complicated than it appears. As we all know, this is not the first time that we have debated about this. This bill aims to modernize the administrative regime and management of the marine energy industry—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am sorry, but I have to interrupt the hon. member for a few seconds.

[*English*]

The hon. member just started her speech. It is unfortunate that often when someone is speaking in French we have some background noise.

Can we afford the hon. member the courtesy of listening to what she is saying, please?

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I really appreciate it.

As I said earlier, the main purpose of this bill is to regulate the energy industry in marine environments in eastern Canada. Understandably, this mainly concerns oil and gas development, which my party and I regularly denounce here in the House, but also, as other colleagues mentioned, future activities related to the renewable energy sector, namely, offshore wind power off the east coast.

This is a bill that continues offshore oil and gas development, at a time when Canada should be looking to withdraw from oil and gas. The government has clearly stated this intention.

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As my Bloc Québécois colleagues mentioned, our main concern with this bill is the continued failure to meet marine biodiversity conservation requirements for renewable energy development in eastern Canada.

As I said earlier, tightening the rules around oil and gas development could be a good thing, but these rules should simply no longer exist, just like offshore oil and gas.

From an energy transition perspective, the offshore, non-renewable energy sector needs to decline rapidly. It is simple: No new offshore exploration or oil development project should be authorized, regardless of any special conditions. That is the path Quebec is currently taking and the maritime provinces should take note.

In 2022, Quebec put a firm and definite stop to oil and gas exploration and development in its territory by passing an act ending exploration for petroleum and underground reservoirs and production of petroleum and brine. The act also seeks to eliminate public funding for these activities. As such, every licence in connection with these activities has been revoked. We are talking about roughly 165 exploration licences, one production licence, three licences to produce brine and two storage leases. Quebec has become the first government in North America to prohibit oil and gas exploration and development in its territory. It has also been part of the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance since 2021. I was at COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland when Minister Charette made the announcement. I have to say that it is truly a source of pride for Quebec.

In joining this alliance, Quebec joins Denmark, Costa Rica, France, Greenland, Ireland, the Marshall Islands, Portugal, Sweden, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Wales, and Washington State, who are all working together to phase out oil and gas production. California, New Zealand, Chile, Fiji, Finland, Italy, Luxembourg, and Colombia are also associate members or friends of the alliance, and although they are not perfect in their energy production, they also want to do more and do better. Of course, Canada is conspicuous by its absence from this alliance.

Phasing out oil and gas production is not part of the Government of Canada's short-, medium-, or long-term plan. It is disheartening. These days, even the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, a former environmental activist no less, can be heard practically boasting that Canada is a major petrostate. What I find troubling about these statements is that the minister does not seem to want to improve Canada's situation. We hear about cutting and capping greenhouse gas emissions, but not one word about capping and cutting oil and gas production. That is more than disheartening; it is worrisome.

It is especially worrisome considering the summer we just went through. We had unprecedented wildfires, torrential rains, hurricanes and rising ocean temperatures. Rather than seeking to do more to combat or at least better adapt to climate change, the government is telling us it wants to increase oil and gas production, one of the main factors behind air pollution, likely the biggest one. It is unbelievable.

It is even more unbelievable when we consider the fact that Canada failed in its duty to protect marine ecosystems when it authorized dozens of new drilling projects in ecologically sensitive

environments, including drilling inside marine refuges. It is easy enough to understand that offshore drilling threatens marine life. For example, the sonic cannons used to explore the seabed interfere with blue and right whales' communication, sense of direction and foraging activities. Unfortunately, both are on Canada's endangered species list.

• (1735)

Exploration is noisy, yes, but extraction is risky. Accidents will happen, too, and spills have extremely serious ecological consequences, as we saw with the Deepwater Horizon oil rig explosion in April 2010. Need I also remind the House that regular activity alone brings dangerous pollution levels for wildlife?

Despite its commitments to marine conservation, the Liberal government is supporting the development of the offshore oil industry and authorizing drilling projects in these marine refuges. The Minister of Environment absolved himself of responsibility by arguing on multiple occasions that the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board is an independent body.

I would like to remind the House that the board exists under an agreement between the federal government and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and that the federal government is responsible for protecting natural environments. For years now, the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board has been promoting the development and exploitation of marine oil and gas. Every year, the board issues a call for tenders and auctions off new exploratory drilling permits.

Every year, the Bloc Québécois speaks out against this process because its objective runs contrary to the objectives of protecting biodiversity and fighting climate change. The boards, including the Department of Natural Resources itself, are responsible for both regulating the industry and fostering its development, which are two contradictory goals. This bill will not fix that problem. It will not prevent the development of the non-renewable energy sector.

I get the impression that, with Bill C-49, the government is taking us for fools, but we are not stupid. As my colleague from Jonquière already explained in the House, changing the names of the two acts and the two boards to remove the word "petroleum" is greenwashing pure and simple.

We need to face the facts. Ottawa and Newfoundland and Labrador intend to double Canada's oil production by 2030 to 235 million barrels a year. To reach this objective means launching 100 new drilling projects by 2030. One hundred new drilling projects is a lot.

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A few weeks ago, in the middle of the week of the United Nations Climate Ambition Summit, the federal government and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador announced that they intended to open thousands more square kilometres of marine environments to oil exploration projects. That was right in the middle of the Climate Ambition Summit week. I am sure the contradiction is not lost on anyone.

Canada was also slapped on the wrist in New York when the UN under-secretary-general for global communications called out the Prime Minister by describing Canada as “one of the largest expanders of fossil fuels last year”. Far from an honour, this distinction is an embarrassment.

The Minister of Environment defends his leader by saying the following:

The federal government has no jurisdiction over the use of natural resources. What we have said and what we are doing is taxing pollution from the oil and gas sector and all other industries.

What the government has the opportunity to do through the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board is not open up thousands of square kilometres of marine environment to oil development projects. In addition, as I mentioned earlier, some of the areas identified by the government for exploration are part of a marine refuge set up to protect biodiversity.

Who set up this marine refuge? The Liberal government itself. This is where we reach the height of irony. This marine refuge was set up by the government in 2019 to meet its international commitments to protect marine environments. According to the federal government, this is an ecologically and biologically important area that supports great diversity, including several species in decline. Using fishing gear that would touch the sea floor is prohibited, but if we follow the government's logic, it will be possible for oil companies to drill exploratory wells there.

That is kind of where we are headed with the government. It is not the path to take when it comes to climate change and the climate crisis. I invite parliamentarians to reflect on this issue.

● (1740)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate a number of the comments the member made.

I just want to highlight the fact that this is legislation that has received a consensus of support from the premiers, I believe, of both Newfoundland and Labrador, and Nova Scotia, along with many different stakeholders.

Given the very competitive nature of what is happening around the world and the importance of getting this legislation through the House, I wonder if the member could provide her thoughts in regard to why it is important to get it to the committee stage as soon as possible.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Madam Speaker, it is not surprising that the premiers of the provinces involved are in favour of this bill. For these provinces, more oil exploration simply means more money.

That is putting it bluntly, but that is what it boils down to. We agree on why this bill needs to get to committee quickly.

I think that the committee will need help from experts to better understand what the government is trying to do with Bill C-49. When I look at the details of the bill, I get the sense that it is an exercise in greenwashing. Put simply, the government is trying to get rid of the word “petroleum”. It talks about renewable energy because there are offshore wind projects, but the fact remains that the government intends to double oil production by 2030. That is certainly something we need to keep in mind. I hope we can have constructive debates in parliamentary committee, should the bill get there.

[English]

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have two questions for the future member for Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine. When massive wind farms are planned for the very rich fishing grounds that exist in her future riding around the Gaspé peninsula and the Magdalen Islands, who will she stand with? Will she stand with big wind energy or will she stand with the fishing industry?

My second question is this: I wonder if my hon. colleague would be willing for Quebec to pay back the equalization payments it has received from provinces like Newfoundland and Labrador, Saskatchewan and Alberta that were derived from the oil and gas industry.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Madam Speaker, that is a very interesting question. I wanted to address that in my speech, but I ran out of time. I wanted to talk about the fishers in the Gaspé region and the Magdalen Islands.

My riding covers part of the Gaspé, but there are also fishers in the Lower St. Lawrence. In Matane, in my riding, there is a seafood processing plant, a shrimp plant. Around the world, when people eat baby shrimp, they know the shrimp are from Matane because they are processed there.

Fishers back home are facing major challenges right now. Marine refuges are creating more conditions that the fishers have to respect. The fishers are not allowed to enter these zones with their fishing gear, yet the government would allow the oil companies to drill there. On that issue, I stand with the fishers, but above all, I stand with the energy transition and the fight against climate change. I do not think that the argument the Conservatives are trying to make on Bill C-49 will get us anywhere in the fight against climate change.

● (1745)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I know that my colleague is very concerned about the climate crisis, but protecting biodiversity and the goal of protecting 30% of marine areas by 2030 are also part of the discussion. Now we are finding out that, for the Liberal government, the area is only protected until we find [Technical difficulty—Editor].

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The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I do not know whether the hon. member finished his speech or whether we lost the connection because of a technical problem. I do not know if something like that is happening today. It happened this morning too. I will take a moment to check on that.

[English]

The hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, for the last couple of minutes the member spoke we were not getting translation and we did not hear what you were saying.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Somehow, and this was not the first time this has happened today, the individuals coming in virtually have just dropped off.

[Translation]

I do not know whether the hon. member heard enough of the question to be able to answer it. I will think about what I will do after that.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Madam Speaker, I believe my colleague was referring to one of the key issues negotiated at COP15, which Canada co-chaired with China last year. One of the commitments was to protect or conserve at least 30% of the world's oceans through marine protected areas. As I said earlier, the Liberal government did decide to protect certain areas, but then it changed its mind and opened them up to oil and gas exploration. That is somewhat contradictory.

I cannot help but think that the Liberal government and its Minister of Environment and Climate Change should not be leading this UN conference while also continuing to drill for oil and gas in their own country's waters. I think my colleague and I feel the same way about this.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sure the technical team is working with the hon. member, but I believe the member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia was able to answer the question.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to talk about clean energy and Bill C-49.

I have to say that the government has a very poor record when it comes to clean energy and when it comes to ensuring that Canada meets its obligations related to all the challenges associated with climate change. At least the government is taking a step forward with this bill to support the investments needed for Canada to create a clean energy economy and to create critically important jobs.

We support this bill. We want it to be studied and improved in committee. That way, we will have a bill that is even more robust.

[English]

What I do not understand, and I have been listening to the debate throughout the course of the day, is why Conservatives are so adamantly opposed to renewable energy.

I will start off by saying that I am one of the few people in this House who has actually worked in the energy industry. I have been ankle deep in oil as a former refinery worker at the Shellburn oil refinery in Burnaby, B.C., which was closed under the Conservatives, as they did so many times during that dismal decade of the Harper regime. They closed manufacturing jobs across Canada, and, of course, the Shellburn oil refinery was one of the victims of that.

I do not believe there is a single Conservative who has been ankle deep in oil. In that sense, the Conservative caucus is all hat and no cattle. During their dismal regime, the Conservatives provided billions and billions of dollars of support to corporate CEOs in the oil and gas industry but no support for the workers. We have seen this. As energy workers have been laid off across Alberta, there has not been a peep from the Conservative MPs to say that these energy workers are being laid off while we are pumping billions of dollars in subsidies to support oil and gas CEOs.

It is a real puzzlement to me that, given the Conservative track record, we have seen the appalling decisions made in Alberta by Conservatives, such as shutting down renewable energy projects. The NDP has a great track record on that, and I will come back to that in a moment. For Danielle Smith to say, "No, we're going to stop all those renewable energy projects, throw those workers out of work and shut down the renewable energy sector" is unbelievably irresponsible and incompetent, yet we have not had a single Conservative MP stand in this House to condemn Danielle Smith and the Conservatives in Alberta for taking such a woefully irresponsible action. Not a single one. They just have gone into hiding as Albertans are being thrown out of work. One would think that a Conservative MP who represents Alberta would be willing to speak up, but that has not been the case, sadly.

In that sense, I guess they are being somewhat congruent in opposing renewable energy projects in Atlantic Canada as well. If they oppose renewable energy projects in Alberta, if they are opposing renewable energy generally and if they deny that climate change even exists, I guess there is a certain coherency to them saying they are going to oppose this bill because it is going to create too many renewable energy jobs and help Canada too much by ensuring that we have the clean energy economy of tomorrow. In that sense, for once Conservatives are being consistent.

The reality is that climate change does exist, and we have been hit by it repeatedly in the last few years. I can speak as a British Columbian for what we have lived through over the last few years.

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The heat dome killed 600 people in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. Sixty of them at the epicentre of that heat dome, that intense heat that killed people in their apartments, were in my riding of New Westminster—Burnaby. We cannot tell people in my riding that climate change does not exist. We cannot tell people in my riding that somehow renewable energy is a bad thing and that we need to cut any possibility of providing supports for renewable energy. We have to just continue to hand money, as Conservative governments have done, to the bankers, billionaires and oil and gas CEOs. We saw with the heat dome the intense impacts of climate change.

• (1750)

Then the atmospheric rivers happened just a few months later, and they cut off the Lower Mainland of British Columbia from the rest of the country. The rock slides, the loss of life, the cutting of rail lines and roads and the flooding of the Fraser Valley all indicate the profound impact of climate change in British Columbia.

The Conservatives say that we do not need renewable energy, that climate change does not exist. The reason British Columbians are so highly opposed to Conservatives and that kind of discourse is that we have seen first-hand what the reality of climate change is.

That is why the government needs to act on these things. The NDP and its leader, the member for Burnaby South, have said repeatedly that things need to change, that the government has to start to walk the talk. The massive oil and gas subsidies going to corporate CEOs have to end and we need to make investments. This is a step forward, but it is by no means the only thing that the government should be doing. There is a whole range of other things that can make a difference, such as creating the kinds of clean energy jobs that help our economy prosper and other economies prosper. These are things that the government needs to be doing.

Just a few years ago, I went to the region of Samsø in Denmark. Samsø is a region that was economically deprived. It lost all its major industries. What the people of Samsø did, in working with the Danish government, is decided that they would retrain the workers in that area in clean energy jobs, and that is what they did. They got support from the national government of Denmark, and the Samsø region then went through a training program. As a result of that and their own investments from the people of the region of Samsø, they decided to build a first onshore wind farm.

These are the people of the islands, an incredibly innovative and entrepreneurial group. That wind farm was so prosperous that they decided to build an offshore wind farm, which was the largest in Europe at the time. It was incredibly prosperous. They then moved from there to biomass. They also moved from there to solar. They have transformed their transportation sector. They transformed their heating sector as well. The entire region is now a fossil fuel-free zone as a result of those investments by the people themselves.

This is where we are seeing other regions of this world and other countries going. They are making the investments in clean energy that have led to untold prosperity. Samsø today is more prosperous than it has ever been because of those investments.

I said at the beginning that I would talk a bit about the NDP record on this. We simply have to look at NDP provincial govern-

ments. In Nova Scotia, it was the NDP provincial government that made the investments in tidal power, which is now top of mind. In terms of innovations in tidal power, that NDP government made a huge difference.

In Manitoba, we have just seen the election of Wab Kinew as premier. This is an exciting development because when the Manitoba NDP was in power, it led the country in geothermal investments. We will see Manitoba rise again after the years of the terrible Conservative government there and the hateful campaign that it ran. The Conservatives in Manitoba were thrown out, and now there is an opportunity not only for real development in education and health care, but also for a thriving economy because of the kinds of investments we have seen in the past from the Manitoba NDP, which will come back.

In Saskatchewan, the NDP invested in solar power. In Alberta, it invested in wind power under Rachel Notley, and, of course, in British Columbia it was hydro power. When we look at all the forms of renewable energy, it is NDP administrations that have made the difference. The NDP makes a difference. We will do it nationally too, but in the meantime, we will support this bill and push the government to do better on ensuring a renewable energy future.

• (1755)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, nuclear facilities and oil and gas properties and businesses must demonstrate that they have a 100% reclamation plan in place and have the funds to ensure this can happen. If the member endorses the same 100% reclamation laws for renewable energy, could he tell us how this bill would ensure that an entity will remove the remnants of wind turbines when they are done their lifespan, as well as solar panels and other renewable forms of energy, so that the toxic metals involved in the solar panels, for example, are not going to be a threat to future generations?

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, that is a valid question that has to be addressed at the committee stage, which is why we want to move the legislation forward so the committee can examine it. That being said, while I have a lot of respect for my colleague, who has been here a long time, not a single Conservative MP, after the incredible debacle we saw with the abandoned oil and gas wells, stood up and said that oil and gas CEOs should not have abandoned those tens of thousands of wells and all that toxic metal. We have never had a Conservative MP stand in this House and say that is wrong. The Harper regime pumped tens of billions of dollars at oil and gas CEOs, and they were never asked to do the reclamation that is so important. I am hoping that finally Conservatives understand that what they did was wrong, and I hope they apologize to Canadians.

• (1800)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have already had the opportunity to speak to Bill C-49 by saying that this attempt to remove the term “petroleum” from the names of the boards was just more smoke and mirrors from the Liberals when it comes to the environment. In Quebec, we do not need to double oil and gas production.

Could my colleague explain to me why, from coast to coast to coast, there is so much need for oil and gas exploration and for production to be doubled when, in reality, we should be investing in the energy transition? Perhaps he can tell me about his part of the country.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, in my part of the country, British Columbia, we have a government that invests heavily in clean energy. There are huge investments coming from the B.C. government.

Premier David Eby and his cabinet are national leaders in clean energy investment. That is important. In addition, investments really need to be made at the community and regional level.

As I mentioned earlier, when we look at all the NDP provincial governments, whether it is in Nova Scotia in the past, Manitoba now with a new government, Saskatchewan, Alberta or British Columbia, there has always been unprecedented investment in clean energy and the green economy.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I know the member is very keen on the process of what takes place inside the House on the floor. The NDP and we as government have been criticized for bringing in time allocation on the legislation. I believe it was essential in order for us to pass this legislation. I wonder if the member could provide his thoughts as to why it was important.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I have said this before. There are two blocs in the House of Commons: There is the Bloc Québécois and there is the block everything party.

The Conservatives have blocked everything in this House. Whether it is clean energy, dental care, support for seniors or support for families, every single piece of legislation is blocked by the Conservatives. I do not think that is in the national interest. It is certainly not in the interests of Canadians.

Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC): Madam Speaker, today I rise to speak on Bill C-49, a piece of legislation that has garnered significant attention, concern and debate, both in this House and across our vast nation. As the representative of Yellowhead, a region known for its profound commitment to responsible energy development, I feel compelled to voice the concerns of my constituents.

At first glance, Bill C-49 may appear as a simple regulatory measure. However, digging deeper, we unearth layers of bureaucratic red tape that could stifle our nation's energy ambitions. History has shown that Canada's west, which is rich in resources and determination, has the potential to drive our national economy, yet time

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and time again, we find ourselves grappling with legislation that seems more intent on creating roadblocks than pathways.

A case in point is Bill C-69, which has been dubbed the no-more-pipelines bill by many. While the bill promised streamline processes and heightened project approval rates, the results have been far from encouraging. The stagnation is not just concerning, it is alarming.

Recently, large portions of Bill C-69 were deemed unconstitutional, casting a shadow over its legitimacy and efficacy. Instead of learning from these missteps, Bill C-49 threatens to echo these sentiments.

It layers on more gatekeepers, prolongs timelines and moves us further from our energy development goals. The current 30-day window for cabinet decisions could be stretched out, making it harder for projects to gain momentum. Is this the vision we have for Canada's energy sector?

Section 28 and section 137 of this bill would grant unchecked power to select officials by allowing them to potentially halt projects based on speculation rather than solid evidence. This is not how we should be governing our energy sector, or any sector for that matter.

Furthermore, I am deeply troubled by the absence of consultation with the fishing industry. Our commercial fishing communities play a pivotal role in our national fabric. To leave the industry out of the conversations surrounding Bill C-49 is not just an oversight, but a grave error.

I implore my colleagues, especially those representing Atlantic Canada, to critically assess Bill C-49. It is essential that we do not find ourselves down a path reminiscent of the failed and recently found unconstitutional bill, Bill C-69.

It is not just about looking at Bill C-49 in isolation. It is about understanding its place within a larger tapestry of regulations with potential cascading effects and how it communicates our nation's stance on energy development to the world.

When global investors see a nation riddled with regulatory obstacles and prolonged approval processes, they hesitate. They wonder if their investments would be bogged down in red tape, rather than contributing to tangible development and returns. In this globalized era where nations vie for the same pool of investments, we cannot afford to send mixed signals.

Yellowhead, the region I am honoured to represent, embodies the pioneering spirit of Canada. Our people understand the value of hard work, the balance of harnessing resources while preserving the environment and the importance of creating sustainable futures for our children.

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When faced with bills like Bill C-49, my constituents cannot help but feel their ambitions are being curtailed and their efforts marginalized. What kind of message are we sending to innovators and entrepreneurs when we allow bureaucracy to overshadow ingenuity? Do we want to be a nation that says we value green energy, yet simultaneously creates hurdles for its implementation?

Our constituents deserve clarity. They deserve to understand where we stand as a nation on energy, be it traditional or renewable. Bills like Bill C-49 do not provide that clarity. Instead, they further muddy the waters, leaving our energy sector, investors and countless Canadians whose livelihoods depend on it in a state of uncertainty.

As we move forward in our deliberations, I urge all members of this House to reflect not just on the specifications of Bill C-49, but on the broader message it sends about Canada's energy ambitions. Are we paving a way for innovation, sustainability and prosperity, or are we creating more roadblocks?

• (1805)

Our path should be clear. It should be one that aligns with our nation's values, our people's ambitions and our shared vision for a prosperous future.

While we have discussed the energy sector at length, there is another point we need to address, which is the overarching issue of governance, checks and balances. The manner in which projects are approved and by whom is critical to any democracy. Our systems are set up to ensure that no single entity has unchecked powers, but Bill C-49 challenges that foundation.

Let us examine the discretionary powers given to certain departments and ministers. This bill is granting a level of authority to officials that is a profound overstep in proper governance. To be clear, this is not about the mistrust of any individual or department; rather, it is about preserving the balance of power and ensuring that our projects undergo rigorous, unbiased scrutiny. The way the bill is written allows for the potential blocking of projects based not on existing tangible concerns but on speculative future possibilities. The implications of such a provision are profound. Can we in good faith stall or reject initiatives based on what might or might not happen in the future? This is a slippery slope.

Today it is a hypothetical future establishment of a marine protected area, but tomorrow it could be any number of speculative scenarios.

Furthermore, the recent decision of Bill C-69 rings in my ears, a bill that was found to be largely unconstitutional.

We are tasked with a duty to create and uphold laws that not only serve our nation's interests but also align with the foundational tenets of our Constitution. We must tread carefully, ensuring that the powers we grant and the decisions we make stand the test of constitutional scrutiny. As representatives, it is our duty to stand up and ensure that any bill, including Bill C-49, does not undermine the checks and balances that are integral to our democracy. It is not just about energy, fisheries or any singular domain, but about ensuring that we safeguard the processes, checks and balances that have served our nation well for over a century.

Let us pivot our attention to the precedents this bill may set, especially in regions like Yellowhead. My constituents are hardworking individuals who are deeply connected to their land and environment. Our region boasts an abundance of natural resources and we wear our badge of responsible stewardship with pride. The decisions we make here have profound ripple effects on their lives and they anticipate a bill that resonates with their aspirations, traditions and future, yet Bill C-49 emanates an unsettling ambience of unpredictability. By extending decision-making durations, we risk strangling potential projects in the web of red tape. Every additional day waiting for decisions translates to missed ventures, evaporating investments and, tragically, job opportunities slipping through the fingers of deserving Canadians. In an era where global competition is fierce, Canada's industries must remain nimble and compelling. While addressing environmental concerns is non-negotiable, our approach must also facilitate growth and progress. Burdensome regulations that deter investment and impede rapid action can render Canada an unattractive site for both local and global investors.

While the essence of Bill C-49 is noble, its present rendition leaves several questions unanswered. It is incumbent upon us, as representatives of Canada, to ensure our legislation strikes the right chord of fairness, dynamic progress and inclusivity.

I urge my colleagues to reflect deeply on the ramifications of this bill. I intend to hear from our diverse constituents.

• (1810)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, when I look at the legislation, it talks about the future, going forward and developing other alternative energies in a very competitive world. It is disappointing that the Conservative Party seems to be so narrowly focused in wanting to not see this legislation, at the very least, get to committee when we see the type of consensus and support it is currently getting.

It even addresses some of the points the member has raised, for example, the type of support it has from provincial premiers. The member made reference to constitutional jurisdictional control and so forth. A lot of that is in here.

Let us allow the bill to go to committee. We had to bring in time allocation. Why does the Conservative Party not want to focus on green energy?

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Mr. Gerald Soroka: Madam Speaker, I must admit that was a very lovely statement that the member for Winnipeg North just cast upon us. However, he is also a member who supported Bill C-69 that was found unconstitutional.

The member talks about how this is going to make it much easier for green projects to be built. I am quite sorry, but that is not true. There are a lot of burdensome regulations in there, and it does not matter whether it is going to be traditional or renewable energy resources. Either way, this bill is going to stifle any kind of development.

• (1815)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, but I do have some questions.

This bill has to do with the energy transition. I just want to tell my colleague what the energy transition is, exactly. It is a set of changes that energy production, distribution and consumption models are undergoing to make them more environmentally friendly.

I know the Conservatives are worried about their oil, but we know the main thing that happens when we burn fossil fuels, oil, coal and gas: climate disruption. Just look at the forest fires that raged from May 31 to the end of August in my riding, Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou. Just look at the melting ice in northern Quebec and Nunavik.

It is irresponsible. I wish that, instead of thinking only of oil, my colleague would tell me how to foster some degree of consensus so we can get this bill to work.

[*English*]

Mr. Gerald Soroka: Madam Speaker, I have just said in my speech that that is the thing. It is not just about traditional development of our resources or energy streams. This bill is also going to affect any type of green energy being produced. That is the problem.

We need to make sure that we have the proper scrutiny in place. There is too much burdensome regulation in this bill. There are many times the minister could just step in, arbitrarily, for whatever decision they want. The government can say that in the future we may have this kind of potential problem, so therefore we need to stop it right now or hold back on the process. I am talking about green energy development.

That is the concern with Bill C-49. It does not allow for proper procedures to follow through and for proper scrutiny.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, what I appreciate about the bill is that it would impact or create opportunities for marine infrastructure, creating jobs and a transition toward renewable energy.

I heard a lot of concerns about balance needed in this bill. I wonder if the member would agree that included in this bill there needs to be clarity in marine protected areas so we can make sure the fishers are protected.

Mr. Gerald Soroka: Madam Speaker, that is the whole point of our concern with the bill, the fact that it does not provide clarity, it does not provide proper consultation, even with the fisheries in Canada.

There are a lot of issues this bill does not address. That is what we need to be looking at. Sure, we could take it to committee, but the point is that even if we take it to committee, we are still going to have the same issues. Is the NDP going to support the fact that we need to change the bill or not?

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill C-49.

We are all painfully aware of the Liberal government's track record when it comes to tabling confusing legislation: more gatekeepers, more red tape, longer delays and the politicization of decision-making.

Canadians everywhere are tired of the Prime Minister, who scares businesses away from investing in our country. They are tired of stifling bureaucracy and costly Liberal bills. This bill is full of this.

The Prime Minister and his Liberal government have been in power for eight long years. They have nothing to show on the renewable energy front and have made no progress on attracting investment to Canada's energy sector. It is quite the contrary, so forgive me for being somewhat skeptical about the state of this current legislation as it is written.

We have seen this dog-and-pony show over the last eight years, over and over again. We had Bill C-55, Bill C-68 and Bill C-69, to name just a few. The Liberals consult, they equivocate and they blur the lines. They do everything they can to muddy the water, except get the job done.

Bill C-49 proposes to make the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board regulators. At the same time, it would create a regulatory framework for offshore wind and renewable energy, the regulation of which would be added to their mandates.

As my colleagues have stated before on this subject, the Liberals have finally decided to include the provincial governments as partners in decisions affecting their jurisdiction. Of course, they did not do this with Bill C-69, and we all know where that unconstitutional legislation stands.

Bill C-49 would triple the current regulatory timeline for project approval. Currently, the provincial review boards have the final say on the approval or rejection of a project, at which point the relevant provincial or federal ministers are given a 30-day period to respond before the decision is finalized.

Under Bill C-49, ministers would be given 60 days to respond, with the possibility of a further 30-day extension and a further possibility of an indefinite extension.

Government Orders

Thanks to nearly a decade of the Prime Minister, Canada is a country that is characterized by a strict and stifling red tape regime. We are now among the most costly and regulated business environments in the world.

Liberals continue to attack traditional energy development, trying to recklessly phase it out, to the detriment of all.

I will remind the House that the first thing the Prime Minister did after his election in 2015 was to publicly apologize for Canada's natural resources, saying that he wanted Canadians to be known more for our resourcefulness than our natural resources under his government.

It does not get much more out of touch than that. Liberals say they want to boost alternative energy, yet they use a bill like this to suffocate it in regulation and red tape. The proposed framework is not only one that creates more bureaucracy and red tape, but one that politicizes each and every step of the decision-making process. By giving final authority to federal and provincial ministers, the regulators are reduced to the position of giving recommendations only to the government.

To be clear, Canada's Conservatives support the responsible exploration and development of offshore resources, but we also believe it should be done responsibly, through an arm's-length regulatory process, not political decision-making.

An even more disturbing aspect of this legislation is its potential to be used to impose a complete shutdown on offshore oil and gas development projects at any time. I will say this again. This bill could end offshore petroleum extraction in Atlantic provinces for good at the whim of a minister.

This bill is a direct attack on one of Newfoundland and Labrador's key industries, one that generates billions of dollars of revenue and thousands of jobs. Section 28 and section 137 would allow the federal cabinet to halt an offshore drilling or renewable energy project if the area "may be identified" as a marine protected area in the opinion of cabinet.

I bring us back to Bill C-55, a bill Conservatives staunchly opposed. It allows the fisheries minister to unilaterally declare an area to be a marine protected area, essentially using the precautionary principle to shut down projects in the absence of any scientific proof.

Bill C-49 would do exactly the same, and this should scare every Atlantic Canadian. There could be a unilateral decision by a minister that is not based on science, leading to an arbitrary opinion from the cabinet that leads to the shutdown of a vital offshore resource development project our country desperately needs.

● (1820)

This is not the way to govern if Canada ever hopes to attract business investment in our energy sector. Furthermore, this cancellation process for new or currently operating projects provides no meaningful consultation with indigenous or community interests whatsoever. There is zero responsibility for any stakeholder consultation. This abdication of responsibility, this failure to fulfill the Crown's duty to consult with indigenous interests, may also invite

extensive court challenges, leading to further delays as was the case with the Trans Mountain pipeline debacle.

As I alluded to before, there are also a number of practicalities with the bill that beg for clarification. For instance, the bill requires some degree of federal funding to cover the expansion of mapping by the regulators, as well as the expansion of offshore activities generally. As for these financial implications, there is no specific funding allocated. We must also question whether the regulators will need additional personnel for technical expertise, along with additional funding to allow them to properly fulfill their new responsibilities under their new mandate. If so, where is this money coming from? Is it even realistic to expect the regulators to be prepared in a timely fashion to deal with this new work that is currently outside their scope? Bill C-49 leaves much to be desired in the way of clarity.

After eight long years of this Prime Minister, Canadians should be very wary of a government that says, "Don't worry about the details; we'll deal with them later." They need answers now and they deserve answers now, answers this government must be prepared to provide the House.

I was hoping the government would learn from its failure with Bill C-69, which had the same lack of detail on crucial issues, uncertainty about roles and responsibilities and vague timelines, but this legislation shows that they have learned absolutely nothing, which comes as no surprise.

We see the same inefficiencies of Bill C-69 imported into Bill C-49. Not only does the Impact Assessment Act have provisions to allow the federal minister to interfere in any given project if they deem that it is "in the public interest", but it would also allow them to create any arbitrary conditions to which a project proponent must comply. How does that create confidence or certainty for investors? Is it not the responsibility of government to create an environment in which businesses want to invest, and in which businesses want to create jobs and opportunities for Canadians? This Prime Minister seems to have forgotten this part of his very own mandate.

These provisions go further and would allow the minister, again, to impose arbitrary conditions during project review, which would serve to further delay timelines for an unspecified amount of time, potentially even years. This will only drive industry away from Canada. It provides absolutely no certainty to these businesses that want to invest potentially billions and billions of dollars in our country.

Government Orders

It cannot be overstated how detrimental the consequences of more Liberal uncertainty are. Shamefully, this has been the effect of taking Canada out of the global competition for energy development, both traditional and alternative, when instead we should be a global leader.

Going back to my earlier comments, perhaps this is exactly what the Prime Minister meant. Not once has he championed the Canadian energy sector on the world stage. Instead, he apologized for our existence, which only drives investment to other countries and squanders opportunities for Canadian workers. We have the resources and we have the workforce and industry leaders. We can be a global leader in the energy sector. Instead, the Prime Minister prefers to cede market share to overseas dictators whose environmental human rights standards are non-existent.

It is time to put Canadian energy first, it is time to put Canadian jobs first and it is time to put Canadians first. It is time to bring home powerful paycheques. We need a Conservative prime minister who will green-light new technologies, reduce approval timelines and remove the Liberal gatekeepers so that major energy infrastructure projects can finally be built in this country once again.

With that, I would like to move, seconded by the member for Lakeland, that the bill be amended by deleting all the words after the word “that” and substituting the following:

the House decline to give second reading to Bill C-49, An Act to amend the Canada—Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts, since sections 61 to 64 of Bill C-69, An Act to enact the Impact Assessment Act and the Canadian Energy Regulator Act, to amend the Navigation Protection Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts, have been ruled to be unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada, and those same sections are embedded in Bill C-49.

• (1825)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The amendment is in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary.

• (1830)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am going to get more into detail shortly, but I just wanted to get the member's thoughts in terms of a specific quote.

This comes from an individual, and I will give the name right away. It is in regard to this particular bill. It says that “Newfoundland and Labrador is pleased [with the federal's government's] proposed...amendments to the Canada—Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act” and looks forward to seeing them pass.

This comes from Premier Andrew Furey. There are so many other quotes that I will hold back right now but that I hope to get onto the record shortly.

I am wondering if the member has any thoughts in regard to the consensus that has been built on this legislation to see it passed into the committee stage. Does he support any of those stakeholders?

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, the hon. Premier Furey has stated that he wants this bill and needs this bill to pass, for clarity, for his own well-being.

It is our job in this House to clear up any confusion. The Supreme Court ruled 5-2 that Bill C-69 was unconstitutional. Over a third of Bill C-49 includes policy from Bill C-69. We need to fix this bill now, before it goes further.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, with regard to this, there is a consensus on the bill with regard to the provincial elements. If this is not going to be something they support, what would they offer as an alternative? It would be interesting to hear their response. If not this, then what is the next step?

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, just to be on record, the Conservatives 100% believe that provincial ministers have a say in what goes on in their neck of the woods. What drives us crazy and creates cause for concern is that there is no responsibility built into Bill C-49 for the government and the regulators to do any stakeholder consultation.

We absolutely want the provincial ministers to have a say. They know what is best in their communities and in their provinces, but Bill C-49 provides none of that.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I did oppose Bill C-69. Some of the hon. member's colleagues have said that anyone who voted for it obviously did not understand environmental assessment.

I do support Bill C-49. The Canada-Nova Scotia and Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador offshore petroleum boards need to have an expanded regulatory capacity to approve offshore wind.

I want to know if he would not agree with me that the tremendous potential for the economy in Atlantic Canada is in wind-generated hydrogen.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, in June earlier this year, our leader said, “Under my government, we would green-light green technology to allow for our brilliant engineers to invent the technology that will bring about cleaner, greener and more affordable electricity.”

What stands in the way of this is duplicitous bureaucracy and the government gatekeepers. That is exactly what we are seeing with Bill C-49. It provides no certainty to those stakeholders and the communities that this bill will impact the most, and it gives arbitrary power and authority to a minister, without scientific proof, to designate an area as a marine protected area and to absolutely kill any opportunity.

That is fundamentally wrong.

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Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague may remember that there once was a young MP from Prince George who uncovered the Liberal scandal that became known as the clam scam. I wonder if he could perhaps fill us in on what his concerns are under this bill, where a Liberal minister, without any authorization, on their own, could interfere with the goings-on in Newfoundland, where we have seen their actions.

• (1835)

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, there was a young member of Parliament at the time, probably a few pounds lighter at the time, who did uncover or discover an issue called the clam scam, where we had a federal minister who decided to award a contract worth millions of dollars to a sitting MP's brother and a former MP, all through Liberal patronage.

Again, as to this “Wait and see. Let us deal with issues later. Just trust us” approach, trust is earned; it is not just given.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have listened to a great deal of debate about this particular issue. It is somewhat surprising that the Conservative Party would stand in the way of what is good, sound, solid legislation, and not, at the very least, allow it to go to committee. It is unfortunate that the Conservatives do not recognize the importance of the legislation. Instead, they have chosen to filibuster. We just witnessed a member bringing forward an amendment. Thank goodness we have at least one political party that recognizes that the Conservative Party is, by filibustering this legislation, denying Atlantic provinces, in particular Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia, the opportunity to work with the government through this legislation to take advantage of the whole idea of renewable energy.

I do not understand why the Conservative Party would deny Atlantic Canada the opportunities within this legislation. If, in fact, the Conservatives have some legitimate rationale, they have the opportunity to allow the legislation to go to committee, which is all we are looking for right now. That is why we had to bring in time allocation. Even when this legislation passes through, we would have to see mirror legislation brought in from the provinces in question. Therefore, we have provincial jurisdictions waiting for this legislation to be able to pass.

The Conservatives try to give a false impression that we are trying to ram something through, when, in fact, a great deal of consultation has taken place. We have seen many Atlantic Liberal caucus members stand up and speak to this legislation because they have seen the value of the potential in Atlantic Canada when it comes to renewable energy. They have recognized that one does not have to be partisan to see that value.

I would like to quote a few individuals. “Newfoundland and Labrador is pleased [with] the [federal government's] proposed...amendments to the Canada—Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and looks forward to seeing them pass.” That comes from the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, Andrew Furey.

Another quote from the same person states, “Newfoundland and Labrador is perfectly positioned in the green energy transition. Part of that transition requires offshore wind so our province can be-

come a world leader in green hydrogen. We continue to support the Government of Canada on Bill C-49 and urge the other federal parties to do the same.”

Let us go to a different province and a different political party: the Progressive Conservative Party of Nova Scotia. What does Nova Scotia have to say in a couple of very selective quotes? Referring to Nova Scotia and Canada, this government states, “Both levels of government have the same goal: our aim is to balance progressive, clean energy exploration and responsible environmental stewardship.” That comes from Tim Halman, who is the minister of the environment for the Province of Nova Scotia.

Here is the minister of energy from Newfoundland and Labrador, Andrew Parsons. He says, “This is a big deal for us. Working with the feds in terms of offshore oil has worked well, but knowing that we will have a part of our waterways available for wind development within our jurisdiction was huge.” It continues; he says, “When it comes to the resources, we are the envy of many jurisdictions. We know that there is a huge amount of interest in offshore wind opportunities, so we knew we needed to move forward.”

• (1840)

This is from politicians of different political stripes, and the Conservatives do not even want the bill to go to committee. They would rather filibuster it indefinitely.

It is not just the politicians. I found another interesting quote I would like to share with members. This comes from Elisa Obermann, who is the executive director of Marine Renewables Canada. It is from her press release. She says, “This is an exciting day for Canada and our marine renewable energy sector. The tabling of the amendments is an important milestone towards establishing an offshore wind industry that will play a significant role in our clean energy future”.

There are many other quotes I could actually provide to the House, and that is because I truly believe that, when we take a look at Bill C-49 and what it would do, the essence of it is to ensure ongoing economic development in the whole area of renewable energy resources while at the same time saying there is a responsibility to protect our environment.

The government brought in this legislation quite a while ago now. I know I have had the opportunity to speak to it, and I had initially thought there would be support from the Conservative Party. We would have to pull my speeches from the records to get confirmation of that, but I honestly thought the Conservatives would support this legislation, because we often hear the Conservative Party saying it will support the energy sector, which we do in a very real and tangible way. Clean energy is a part of the energy sector, so by supporting Bill C-49, we would be supporting the energy sector.

It is amazing that the Conservative party tries to say we are trying to push this thing along and no one is supporting it, when nothing could be farther from the truth. We know there is substantial support for renewable energy. I reflect on my home province of Manitoba and the important role Manitoba Hydro plays, or I look at my Quebec colleagues, whether they are members from the Bloc or the Liberal caucus, or even the member from the New Democratic Party. We have within those two provinces great potential in terms of hydro development, and at the end of the day I suspect we will see a growing industry and spinoff benefits.

We can talk about how this energy is brought to life and is ultimately healthier for our environment, but it creates both direct and indirect jobs. Coming from a province that has such a wonderful hydro development and great potential, I am very sympathetic to my Atlantic colleagues who are so passionate on this issue and are wanting to see the legislation pass. That is the reason we had to bring in the time allocation, because we know that the Conservative Party is not prepared to see this legislation and that its members would rather filibuster and put up roadblocks. What we just witnessed with the moving of an amendment reinforces that fact, but the people of Atlantic Canada can know that a majority of people in the chamber see the value of it, and that is why we are going to ensure that it passes.

● (1845)

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Winnipeg North for his compelling speech. I say that with a bit of sarcasm.

I want to congratulate the member, though, on his daughter's reelection in Manitoba, the only provincial Liberal elected west of Toronto. I would note that every single Liberal gave resounding, long applause for the announcement that the NDP won the election. All his colleagues are as happy that the Liberals are gone in Manitoba as the Manitobans themselves.

The member repeated quote after quote from Atlantic ministers and premiers on that, but I have a couple of quotes for him that I would like to mention. Sonya Savage, the former Alberta minister of energy, said that Bill C-69 takes "a wrecking ball to the Constitution". Former premier Kenney said that Bill C-69 is a "prejudicial attack on Alberta".

Why does the member care only about quotes from ministers who are not from Alberta?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for recognizing my daughter. As a father, I am very proud of her and wish her well in her new adventure as the last standing Liberal MLA in the Province of Manitoba. The Liberal Party in Manitoba, I like to think, has the greatest potential for growth at this stage.

It is interesting that the member referred to me listening to what the Alberta premier has said. In my speech, I made reference to both Progressive Conservative and Liberal premiers in terms of the importance of Bill C-49. Both support the passage of the bill.

My response to the member would be that maybe the Conservative Party should be listening to other premiers aside from the Premier of Alberta, or along with her, too, I guess.

Government Orders

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague on his daughter's election. He is a former MLA as well, so it is important to recognize the family contribution to democracy. It is not unusual for him to stand and speak in this chamber, but it is important for us to recognize what has taken place.

With Wab Kinew and the NDP election in Manitoba, what does the member think about the fact that we have some partnerships on the east coast that are important? The Conservatives are opposed to the bill right now. I am looking for what the alternative is if we do not agree at this point in time, especially with sustainable energy on the docket, and where we go from there. I appreciate that the member has had a long history not only in this chamber but also as an MLA.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the recognition. As I said previously, I am a very proud father. Knowing her sense of commitment to not only her riding but the province; MLAs often take on that sort of role.

The passage of the legislation is a high priority of the government. We are very fortunate in the sense that we have at least one other political entity, the NDP, that has also recognized the value of the legislation. As a result, we are going to be able to ensure that this legislation gets passed. We have been working very co-operatively with the provincial jurisdictions in question so that we have a mechanism and a process that will enable the provinces and Ottawa to meet the economic opportunities going forward.

● (1850)

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Madam Speaker, could the member explain to the House why it is so important that we get this bill off to committee? I sit on the natural resources committee, and it is waiting for Bill C-49 to get there to be further reflected on and returned to the House.

Could my colleague make a brief statement on why it is so important to get this bill to committee and brought back?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the primary reason is that once it gets to the committee stage, the committee is able to break it down into the different parts and see if there are any ways we can improve upon the legislation. If there are, great; if it is good as is, then it can pass through the system so that the provinces can mirror the legislation and, ultimately, Atlantic Canada and Canadians would benefit.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I rise in the House this evening to speak to Bill C-49 at second reading. The bill amends the Canada—Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act. I will briefly talk about the bill, then I will talk about Quebec's choices and, lastly, I will talk about Ottawa's poor choices.

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First, under bilateral accords, the federal and provincial governments jointly manage oil and gas resources in the offshore areas of Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia. Bill C-49 amends the federal implementation acts for these accords. I will go over the key changes. Bill C-49 builds on the existing petroleum regulatory scheme to establish a new regulatory scheme for offshore renewable energy projects in Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia. The Minister of Justice defines renewable energy projects as follows:

An offshore renewable energy project means any work or activity that relates to the exploitation or potential exploitation of a renewable resource to produce an energy project, that is not conducted by or on behalf of a government or educational institution.

Parallel to the legislative amendment, there are two regional assessments under way for offshore wind energy development: one in Nova Scotia and one in Newfoundland and Labrador. These assessments will provide information and analysis regarding future offshore wind energy development activities that would be governed by the amended development legislation.

The government is presenting Bill C-49 as an operation to develop offshore renewable energy in Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia. According to the government, “the global offshore wind market alone forecast to attract one trillion dollars in global investment by 2040.” It is worth noting that the goal of developing wind energy is linked to the goal Canada set out in its hydrogen strategy, which aims to supply countries, including Germany, with clean hydrogen.

Second, as mentioned in a December 2022 note on exploratory drilling and marine biodiversity, we know that offshore drilling poses a threat to marine life. For example, the acoustic devices used to explore the seabed and seismic surveys interfere with the communication, orientation and hunting activities of blue whales and right whales, two endangered species in Canada.

While exploration activities may be noisy, development activities are risky. While accidents can happen and spills have a serious environmental impact, as was the case with the explosion on BP's Deepwater Horizon drilling rig in April 2010, even regular activities create a dangerous amount of pollution for wildlife. Despite its commitments to marine conservation, the federal government is supporting the development of the offshore oil industry and authorizing drilling projects in the very marine refuges it created.

Since the pandemic, the Liberal government has been repeating that the economic recovery depends on a strong, resilient and innovative oil industry, even though the Bloc Québécois has been presenting alternatives since the summer of 2020 through its green recovery plan—I would even go so far as to talk about a green finance plan. I have to give a nod to my colleague from Mirabel who has worked hard on this file. There is something to this.

Speaking of environmental risks and the oil industry, I want to repeat the wise words of the member I used to work for. He used to say, “It is not a matter of whether an accident will occur, but when.” Sooner or later, we will have to repair serious environmental damage.

During the pandemic, the federal government accelerated the environmental assessment process to authorize 40 exploratory drilling

projects east of Newfoundland and Labrador in an area frequented by endangered species. Environmental groups initiated proceedings against the federal government because the regional assessment process for exploratory oil and gas drilling off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador was incomplete.

Ottawa and Newfoundland and Labrador have a plan to double production beyond 2030 to 235 million barrels per year, which will require 100 new drilling projects by 2030. That is a lot.

Ottawa approved Norwegian oil company Equinor's Bay du Nord megaproject off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. Despite protests from environmental groups, Bay du Nord appears to be the first of many new oil projects, since new licences were recently auctioned off for oil exploration in over 100,000 square kilometres.

● (1855)

It reminds me of “Drill, baby, drill”. In early November 2022, four oil companies spent \$238 million to win auctions for exploration work over an area of 1.2 million hectares. The licences were granted by the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board, which is under the jurisdiction of the federal government and Newfoundland and Labrador. Its mandate is to facilitate the exploration and development of oil and gas resources.

In July 2020, Canada joined the Global Ocean Alliance, a U.K. initiative that now includes 73 states that are committed to defending before the UN the goal of 30% global marine protected areas by 2030. One of the key issues in the COP15 negotiations is to include in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework a commitment to protect or conserve at least 30% of the world's oceans through the establishment of highly and fully protected marine areas and other effective area-based conservation measures. Let us just say that, with these projects, we are wondering how Canada will manage.

The Bloc Québécois believes that the Government of Canada and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change cannot assume their leadership role at the UN Biodiversity Conference and advocate for the protection of the oceans while authorizing and promoting the development of the oil and gas industry in sensitive marine areas. As I have indicated, the Liberal government authorized oil exploration in the very marine refuge that it itself had created. How could this government have any credibility when it comes to ocean conservation?

According to the department's own words, the Northeast Newfoundland Slope marine refuge is “an Ecologically and Biologically Significant Area that supports high diversity, including several depleted species”. The Liberal government has authorized drilling in that very marine refuge. However, even BHP, the oil company behind the project, recognizes that the marine region is home to many species of fish, birds and marine mammals, 36 of which have been designated at risk.

According to the Liberal government, marine refuges where there are exploratory activities can still count towards Canada's marine conservation objectives until actual extraction and production takes place. In light of scientific knowledge about the dangers of exploratory drilling, this makes no sense. It also flies in the face of international marine conservation standards.

Once and for all, Quebec is putting a stop to oil and gas exploration and production inside its borders. We have made our decision. While the federal government carries on like this, Quebec has officially started its energy transition. On April 12, 2022, the Quebec National Assembly passed an act ending exploration for petroleum and production of petroleum and brine and to eliminate government funding for these activities. This new law prohibits oil and gas exploration and production while revoking all licences active Quebec. It also provides for the closure of wells drilled under these licences and site remediation. The Quebec ministry of natural resources will conduct hydrogeologic studies and perform the monitoring and control activities required to ensure that the work does not harm the environment.

Since August 23, 2022, oil and gas exploration and production has been banned in Quebec, and every licence in connection with these activities has been revoked. There were 165 exploration licences, one production licence, three authorizations to produce brine and two storage leases extant in Quebec. Quebec made a clear choice. Furthermore, holders of a revoked licence must permanently close the wells drilled under their licence and restore the sites. Quebec is the first North American jurisdiction to ban oil and gas exploration and production in its territory. Quebec is part of the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance, or BOGA, a coalition of governments that are committed to the same goal. Quebec is aiming to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 37.5% below 1990 levels by 2030 and achieve net zero by 2050.

Third, I want to make a comparison. In 2020, Newfoundland and Labrador's oil production was 282.7 thousand barrels per day, or 5% of Canada's overall production and 24% of Canada's light oil production. Newfoundland and Labrador is the largest producer of crude oil in eastern Canada and is the third-largest oil-producing province in Canada, after Alberta and Saskatchewan.

In conclusion, let us work on this bill in committee. We can talk about it there. The Bloc Québécois is ready to collaborate in the true spirit of the energy transition.

• (1900)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member makes reference to the protection of lands and water, if not directly then indirectly. It is important to note that, when Stephen Harper was the prime minister, his government had, I believe, somewhere in the neighbourhood of 1% on the protection of lands and water. Today, we are at 14%, which is a significant increase, and we are forecasted to hit 30% by 2030.

We have recognized as a government that it is good for us all to provide and encourage good middle-class jobs and boost the economy, but it is also good to protect the environment. Can the member provide her thoughts on the different attitude of this government

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compared with the previous government, where the protection of land and waters is now at 14%, with a goal of somewhere around 30%, which is significantly higher than Harper's 1%?

[Translation]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Madam Speaker, the opposition is applauding the government, and I think there are a lot of similarities between the two governments. I think Canada is still an oil country, unfortunately. That seems clear. It is not just the Conservatives. Canada recently earned a title I would not be very proud of. It joined the ranks of climate hypocrites, countries that are known to engage in greenwashing at the international level. That is clear.

Setting a target to protect 30% of lands and waters is nice and all, but, as I said in my speech, when the habitats of protected species such as right whales and blue whales are opened up, I have to wonder how that can be achieved.

Seriously, we just witnessed yet another prime example of how both Liberals and Conservatives engage in mutual backslapping and keep promoting fossil fuels instead of making meaningful investments in a true green transition, in jobs and science that will actually enable us to make the ecological and environmental transition.

[English]

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to acknowledge that it was the NDP and the Liberals who voted for Bill C-69 at the end stages.

On Friday, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that significant sections of Bill C-69, in exactly all the ways that Conservatives warned, were unconstitutional. This is important because the Government of Quebec also opposed Bill C-69 as the Liberals were ramming it through in the end stages. The NDP and the Liberals ignored both the Government of Quebec and the Conservative Party which was raising all the issues that the Supreme Court has now highlighted.

Conservatives want to green-light green projects. We want to see petroleum offshore development and renewable offshore development for the people of Atlantic Canada, but here is the problem: Sections 61, 62 and 64 of Bill C-69 are in Bill C-49.

Does the member agree that we need to get that right and make sure that we can pass this bill with the certainty, clarity and confidence that all Canadians deserve?

[Translation]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Madam Speaker, we want the bill to go to committee because we want to have this kind of discussion on the clauses. We still have too many questions. We would like to present amendments and proposals.

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My colleague mentioned Quebec, but as I said in my speech, Quebec made a clear choice to get away from oil and gas. What we are talking about is Bill C-49. While we are still talking about possible investments in oil and gas, Quebec has decided to make a much greener choice and to truly get away from oil and gas and ban these projects.

I look forward to hearing from my colleagues. They will no doubt deliver a great presentation in committee, putting forward proposals and defending Quebec's environmental interests.

• (1905)

[*English*]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I would like to thank the member for her very informative intervention.

I wonder if the member agrees, based on the information that she has shared with us, that a good portion of the discussion at committee will need to be to seek clarity for creating stronger provisions for marine protected areas.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Madam Speaker, I fully agree with my colleague.

My colleague from Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, who is the fisheries critic, surely has something to say about protecting marine species. She has already made a presentation explaining the importance of enhancing protections for these protected species. She is lobbying for greater protection.

We in the Bloc Québécois really believe that we will need to think about these marine protected areas and create much more robust provisions, particularly in committee. If not, it means we are not serious about meeting this 30% target.

[*English*]

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the constituents of Kelowna—Lake Country.

I rise today to speak on the government's latest attempt at over-regulating, bureaucracy-building legislation, Bill C-49.

I have noted in this debate that several speakers on the government side have scarcely spoken about the details in their own legislation. They have spoken solely on the offshore renewable revenue they believe this bill would potentially offer to applicable provinces. I say “potentially” because if the government members had taken more time to study their own bill in greater detail, they would have found that Bill C-49 features such a mess of new red tape, it would be surprising if anyone could complete an offshore project of any kind, let alone have it generate revenue.

This is symptomatic of the government's approach to Canada's resource sector. For every talking point, there are miles of new regulations, new levers for federal bureaucracies to kill jobs and projects, and endless delays. Shovel-ready projects that start with Liberal photo ops are left to be strangled by bureaucratic Liberal laws and regulations.

After eight years, the Liberal government has continued to drop the ball on project after project. We would think the government might act with some humility after last Friday when the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the government's previous pipeline-killing legislation, Bill C-69, was unconstitutional.

Conservatives warned the Liberals repeatedly that their no-more-pipelines act, Bill C-69, did not respect provincial jurisdiction, and was a power grab by the Prime Minister and his career activist environment minister to phase out these key sectors.

Liberals were called out by energy workers who wanted to keep their livelihoods; by indigenous communities wanting to sustainably develop their lands; by stakeholders in multiple sectors, including wind, hydro and critical minerals; by nine out of 10 provincial governments and every territorial government; and now by the Supreme Court of Canada.

I could speak for hours on the comments made by provincial and business leaders on the Supreme Court of Canada ruling against the unconstitutionality of the Liberal bill, Bill C-69, but I will mention just a few.

The Premier of Alberta said, “The ruling today represents an opportunity for all provinces to stop that bleeding and begin the process of re-attracting those investments and jobs into our economies.” The premier also said, “And we will continue to fight against Ottawa’s unfair overreach”.

The economies of British Columbia and Alberta have been closely intertwined, especially with the resource sector. Many residents in my community of Kelowna—Lake Country have worked in the resource sector in Alberta in the past.

The president of the Independent Contractors and Businesses Association of B.C. said in an interview on Bill C-69 that there is complexity, confusion and cost, and as a result, investors did not know if they were going to be investing in Canada, and whether or not they could get projects to “yes”. That was causing investors to pause and look at other countries rather than Canada.

The World Bank came out a few years ago and ranked Canada number 64 in the world in the length of time it takes to approve a project. That is a very embarrassing statistic for the country.

A 2019 C.D. Howe Institute report titled “A Crisis of Our Own Making: Prospects for Major Natural Resource Projects in Canada”, stated:

With investment in Canada's resources sector already depressed, the federal government's proposed Bill C-69 would further discourage investment in the sector by congesting the assessment process with wider public policy concerns and exacerbating the political uncertainty facing proponents with a highly subjective standard for approval.

That is exactly what happened. The cost of the Liberals' refusal to reverse course was billions of dollars in potential investment that was taken out of Canada. Energy projects that would have been built in Canada were instead built in countries with lower environmental standards and fewer labour protections.

This new bill, Bill C-49, should be removed by the government and completely revised because it applies provisions from that now unconstitutional bill, Bill C-69, to Canada's Atlantic offshore sector.

Looking at the core details of Bill C-49, it is very clear in the needless political roadblocks it seeks to create that it would stall projects in our offshore industries.

● (1910)

It triples the approvals timeline from the current framework and takes the final authority in the decision-making away from on-the-ground regulators to ministers in Ottawa. This is once again the Liberal philosophy of "Ottawa knows best". What would be the result of handing the final approval of offshore energy projects to our Greenpeace activist environment minister? The answer is obvious: no good-paying jobs for hard-working Canadians and instead, political decision-making. We know this from other legislation, like the government's just transition bill, which is seeking to take away jobs from energy workers in exchange for employment that cannot guarantee the same levels of benefits or pay.

Why is the government seeking to hand operational control of the Atlantic offshore industry to a Liberal environment minister who the Newfoundland Liberal member for Avalon said did not understand the "issues of the region"? It is a question only the Liberals can answer.

Regulators who have worked in this sector and this region for years are better placed to make these decisions on a timeline that already works for both regulators and industry. Adding more red tape, which often does nothing more than repeat pre-existing environmental reviews, will do nothing to create good-paying jobs, particularly in renewables. We know this because of the unmitigated disaster the government made of a viable tidal energy power project in Nova Scotia.

Sustainable Marine Energy's Bay of Fundy tidal energy project had enormous potential to deliver clean energy for Canadians. Had it been built, it could have generated up to 2,500 megawatts, while bringing in \$100 million in inward investment and eliminating 17,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide annually, the equivalent of taking nearly 3,700 cars off the road. The project was proceeding at pace under the Harper government, but after the Liberal government's election, Sustainable Marine Energy was snagged in a forest of red tape from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

After eight years, that company withdrew the project completely last spring. Despite \$28.5 million of taxpayer money having been invested into the project, the government refused to release this clean green project from a regulatory trap of its design. The result: taxpayers are out \$28 million, Canada loses out on a powerful source of green energy, and the people of Nova Scotia, who had this environmentally friendly project killed in front of them in Ottawa by bureaucrats, are forced to pay Ottawa's carbon tax now.

Government Orders

Bill C-49 will never deliver a dime of renewable revenue to provinces so long as the Liberal government regulates renewable projects like tidal energy out of existence. It will also not deliver revenue from vital offshore drilling projects when the now unconstitutional Bill C-69 enforces impact assessment reviews that last for more than 1,600 days, or when Bill C-55 allows the fisheries minister to select prohibited development areas solely on her call, the power which the legislation today also reaffirms.

The Prime Minister, in the aftermath of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, said there was no business case for LNG exports to be shipped out through Atlantic Canadian ports to our European allies. The United States became the largest exporter of liquefied natural gas in 2021, as projects ramped up production and deliveries surged to Europe to alleviate the energy crisis there.

Just last week, one of Canada's closest and historic allies, France, signed a 27-year deal with Qatar for its LNG production. A 27-year deal would have been a fantastic way to generate revenue for Newfoundlanders, Nova Scotians, Albertans, British Columbians and Canadians. Instead, the Liberal government has no clue about the value of Canada's resources. Instead, it is focused on gaining more political control and its ideological job-killing agenda. It is not even a green agenda because, as I mentioned earlier, the government is happy to kill green projects just as slowly.

A Conservative government will support Canadians in every region by responsibly building energy projects of every variety that bring home jobs for Canadians. We will build green projects to sustain our environment, not just regulate them out of existence. We will champion Canada's world-class resources to our allies and we will deliver results.

The Liberal government only creates more red tape, regulates projects out of existence, drives away investment and brings more control to Ottawa. The Liberal government is just not worth the cost.

Government Orders

● (1915)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I wonder if the member can explain to the House why she chooses not to believe that a Progressive Conservative premier and a Liberal premier in Atlantic Canada fully support this bill and want to see it go to committee. The bill is all about greener energy. When she says that we have failed Canadians, she is not talking about the Government of Canada or the Liberal Party of Canada; it goes far deeper than that. How does she justify this in such a solid way, while not respecting what it is that Atlantic Canada premiers would like to see?

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Speaker, the member has been speaking for a long time in here, and just recently, before I spoke, he spoke about the official opposition filibustering indefinitely and delaying this legislation. That is pretty rich, because this member wastes more time than anyone in this House and maybe in parliamentary history. I am not sure.

He spoke twice on this legislation, which moved everything ahead tonight. I had to cancel a phone call with a constituent, since everything was moved ahead because this member had to speak again and bumped everyone else. He is actually the one who is delaying his own legislation.

As we move forward, we are going to speak to this legislation. We are going to bring comments forth from our ridings and our constituents, which I have done.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, could my colleague expand on how it is possibly the case that we are in this House of Commons, debating a bill that imports sections from a law that was supported by the NDP and the Liberals, that has been in place for the last five years and that was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court on Friday, when specific sections, such as section 61, section 62 and section 64 of Bill C-69 are in Bill C-49?

Conservatives want to green-light green projects, and we want to expand the Canadian oil and gas sector so that the world and all Canadians can have energy security and energy self-sufficiency.

The NDP-Liberals warned expert witnesses and warned every province and territory that was against Bill C-69 at the time or called for major overhauls, but this bill contains sections that, as of Friday, the Supreme Court said were unconstitutional. Could my colleague comment on how it can possibly be that the NDP-Liberals are now trying to ram through a bill containing these sections?

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Speaker, it makes absolutely no sense. There was a Supreme Court of Canada ruling just a few days ago, making part of this legislation unconstitutional. Here they are reaffirming the exact parts that were called unconstitutional on Friday.

The government should be pulling this legislation. It should be going back to the drawing board, pulling out the parts that have been deemed unconstitutional and coming forth with something else. This whole process really does not make any sense. As the government tries to quickly push this legislation through by shutting down debate, it is wanting to move this legislation through even faster. It makes no sense.

● (1920)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, just to be clear, is the member saying that this government, the Government of Nova Scotia and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador are all pushing forward unconstitutional legislation? Does she really believe that?

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Speaker, I do not know what other jurisdictions are doing in other parts of the country. We are talking about legislation that is here in the House of Commons, and this is what we are debating today. That question does not even make any sense.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to Bill C-49. The legislation would amend the Newfoundland and Labrador accord act, as well as the Nova Scotia accord act, legislation that governs and regulates offshore petroleum management between the federal government and those provinces: Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia. The legislation before us, in short, would establish a single regulator with respect to conventional offshore petroleum, as well as offshore renewables.

I will say in that regard that Conservatives fully support the principle of establishing a regulator responsible for all offshore energy projects. Moreover, we recognize the need to establish a regulatory framework in order for Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as Nova Scotia, to leverage the opportunity to take advantage of the shift toward offshore wind, in particular, and the opportunities that this would provide those two provinces.

That is not the issue. The issue is in the details of the bill, and a very quick review of the bill evidences that it is a badly drafted piece of legislation. It is indeed another disastrous bill from the disastrous Liberal government.

With respect to the environmental assessment process, the bill incorporates the Liberals' anti-energy Bill C-69's Impact Assessment Act. This is legislation that, last Friday, was largely determined by the Supreme Court of Canada to be unconstitutional. Indeed, of the provisions of the Impact Assessment Act that have been incorporated into Bill C-49, each and every one was determined by the court to be unconstitutional.

Members can think about that for a minute. We have a bill, a substantial component of which pertains to something as significant as the environmental assessment process, and it incorporates a statutory scheme that was deemed to be unconstitutional. The environmental assessment process is a pretty big deal when it comes to offshore energy projects.

One would think that a responsible government would go back to the drawing board to get it right. One would think that a responsible government, at the very least, would reflect on the impact of that very clear repudiation of the government's disastrous Bill C-69, which was supported by its coalition partner, the NDP, against the objections of all 10 provincial premiers. However, this is not a responsible government. It is a reckless government.

On Friday, the Supreme Court of Canada in no uncertain terms repudiated the government. On Monday, the government's response was to shut down debate and impose time allocation to see that the bill receives as little scrutiny as possible. It is a bill that would achieve the opposite of what it is purported to do.

The bill would kill offshore renewable projects before they even got off the ground as a result of a significant amount of new red tape, delay and uncertainty. Indeed, if the Liberals were honest, they would call the bill what it actually is: "an act to kill offshore renewable energy".

• (1925)

I will give you, Madam Speaker, and all hon. members examples of why that is. Pursuant to the accord acts at this time, the minister has a 30-day period to respond to a decision of the regulator as to whether to approve or reject a project. With respect specifically to renewables, not oil and gas offshore, the current government would double the time for the minister to respond from 30 days to 60 days, which is more delay. This is from a government that talks so much about championing renewable energy. However, that is just the beginning, because this bill would provide that the minister may initiate multiple 30-day extensions, so even more delay. This bill would provide the possibility of an indefinite bidding process, even where the regulator gives the green light to a project. That is an indefinite delay.

Where have we seen that before? It was none other than with the Liberals' disastrous and now largely unconstitutional bill, Bill C-69, the no pipelines bill, the Impact Assessment Act. That law came into effect four years ago, again, with the full support of the NDP over the objections of all the provinces. More than 25 projects have been in the queue for approval. How many projects have been approved over four years? The answer is not one, zero. Therefore, the bill has done what we said it would do, which is kill energy projects as a result of delay, uncertainty and red tape. It has also negatively impacted Atlantic Canada, with the \$16-billion Bay du Nord project, which is hanging by a thread.

Therefore, they have a disastrous record of zero projects in four years, almost all of them languishing at phase two of a four-phase process. Moving ahead, in the face of that, Liberal MPs from Atlantic Canada have the audacity to stand up and say that the way to develop renewable offshore energy is to duplicate, copy and paste the very regulatory regime that has resulted in zero projects moving forward. It is really quite incredible.

However, it gets worse—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, the time provided for this is over.

The question is on the amendment.

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• (1930)

[*Translation*]

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

[*English*]

Mr. Scot Davidson: Madam Speaker, we request that the amendment be adopted on division.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would request a recorded division.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the recorded division stands deferred until Tuesday, October 17, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I suspect that if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent to see the clock at 7:44 p.m. so we could start the take-note debate.

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to see the clock at 7:44 p.m.?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to order made earlier today, the House shall now resolve itself into a committee of the whole to consider Motion No. 29 under Government Business.

* * *

[*English*]

SITUATION IN ISRAEL, GAZA AND THE WEST BANK

(House in committee of the whole on Government Business No. 29, Mr. Chris d'Entremont in the Chair)

The Chair: Before we begin this evening's debate, I would like to remind hon. members of how proceedings will unfold.

Each member speaking will be allotted 10 minutes for debate, followed by 10 minutes for questions and comments.

Pursuant to an order made earlier today, members may divide their time with another member. The time provided for the debate may be extended beyond four hours, as needed, to include a minimum of 12 periods of 20 minutes each. The Chair will not receive any dilatory motions, quorum calls or requests for unanimous consent.

We will now begin tonight's take-note debate.

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Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

That this committee take note of the situation in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank.

Hon. Ya'ara Saks (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I will begin by saying I will be sharing my time this evening with the Minister of International Development.

So many people in my riding, in my community in York Centre and across Canada, constituency by constituency, have lost loved ones or are facing the unbearable unknown of whether their children, parents or friends are alive. This is true both in the southern communities of Israel and places across the country, as well as within Gaza, as we speak. They each have names. They have families and people who love and miss them. The pain is very fresh and raw. I know so many people who feel vulnerable and scared at this moment.

Hamas is a terror organization and its actions on October 7 are nearly unspeakable, but let me be clear: Hamas is not the Palestinian people. The level of devastation and trauma that everyone in the region has been through, and are going through, is a lot to process. We are in shock and in mourning. There is no justification for the horrors we have witnessed both in Israel and in the crisis that is unfolding in Gaza.

In the face of horrifying terror, destruction and loss of life, our communities came together, like they always do. In doing this, they have taken a moment, and we take a moment, to remember those we have lost and the stories of humanity and compassion. I think of Arab Israeli paramedic Awad Darawshe, who in the face of terror stayed to treat the wounded at the Supernova music festival; the Filipina nurse Angelyn Aguirre, who refused to leave her elderly patient alone; Ben Mizrachi from Vancouver, who at just 22 years old attended the wounded at the music festival; Alexandre Look from Montreal, who barricaded the entrance to a shelter to protect others; Adi Vital-Kaploun, whose two young sons miraculously survived these horrors; Shir Georgy, who was murdered at the music festival; Netta Epstein, who threw himself on a grenade to save his girlfriend; and peace activist Vivian Silver, who remains missing at this time.

We have a duty to bear witness, to hear and tell all of their stories and the stories that are yet to come, as difficult as they might be, to make sure those who were murdered in these acts of terror and those who will die needlessly in the crisis that lies ahead will be remembered, and their memory be a blessing.

These moments are traumatic to engage with, and I have certainly learned this over my lifetime, but if these times teach us anything, it is how little distance stands between us because we cannot lose our humanity in this moment. Our communities have been deeply touched by these events. No one in this country will ever be able to fully understand what Israelis and Palestinians have gone through in this time of war, yet we all feel these moments deeply. This is true for the Canadians in Israel and Gaza experiencing these unspeakable horrors, their families back home and the millions of people, both in the region and around the world, who are witnessing this hour by hour.

Last Friday was an incredibly emotional moment welcoming passengers from the first flights from Israel. After they have experienced such trauma and devastation, our priority is ensuring that they are back to safety and home with their loved ones. We will continue to do what we can to bring those we love home. As we look forward, I still worry what will be in the coming days for Jews, Muslims, Israelis and Palestinians. I fear for the people of Gaza who are victims of Hamas and its unrelenting oppression, which serves only to perpetuate the unending cycle of violence in the region. I also worry for our communities here at home, for our children who are afraid to go to school and for our places of worship, which are afraid to be open. There are so many who fear for their safety. We must come together in unity to fight back hate and to combat terror.

As I end my speaking notes tonight, I will share this thought. We say this in Hebrew:

[Member spoke in Hebrew]

[English]

May we be shielded by loving kindness, enveloped in peace and bestowed upon with light and truth. May we bring that together both in this chamber and for those who are in this crisis at this moment.

• (1935)

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Chair, the Prime Minister earlier today said that the aid that was recently announced for the region would go to aid innocent civilians in Gaza and that there would be no possibility that it could wind up in the hands of Hamas. I am wondering if the member could comment specifically on what measures her government is taking to ensure that this money will not wind up with Hamas.

Hon. Ya'ara Saks: Mr. Chair, to reiterate what our Minister of International Development said, not one penny of the humanitarian aid that is going to help those in Gaza who need help at this moment will go to Hamas.

We have some of the strictest regimes for funding in the world. We only work with trusted third-party partners, and we will stand clearly against terrorism.

• (1940)

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Chair, I would like to thank my colleague for her intervention.

We have spoken before in this place about the impact that anti-Semitism has had on the member, her family and her community, and I know that we are seeing a rise in that across the country. I also know that we are seeing anti-Palestinian hate happening across this country.

I spoke to a colleague today who said that she is worried about her mother who sometimes speaks Urdu in public and has told her that she has to stay home. I have spoken to other people who have said that because their sisters are wearing a hijab, they are going to go home and protect them as they are worried about them.

Perhaps the member could talk a little bit about what more we could do as Canadians, as a country, to come together to protect against the anti-Semitism and anti-Palestinian hate we are seeing, which is on the rise across this country.

Hon. Ya'ara Saks: Mr. Chair, the hon. member and I have indeed spoken on many occasions about our deep concern for peace in the region.

I would say that diversity is our strength in this country, but inclusion is a choice, and it is one that we must model each and every day. My own daughter is on a university campus and she took off her Star of David today. This is unacceptable. She also walked to school with her Muslim friend and had to be worried about her safety as well going through the streets to campus.

We have a collective duty as parliamentarians in the House to model the Canada we wish to see.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Chair, I want to thank my hon. colleague for her very touching speech. I think it moved us all, no matter which party we represent in this House.

Canada was one of the first countries to announce humanitarian aid, and I congratulate the government on that announcement. Now it is time to deliver that humanitarian aid. If there is no humanitarian corridor, this aid will not get to the people we want to offer it to, the people we want to help. That is why it is so important to have a humanitarian corridor into the Gaza Strip.

How does the Canadian government plan to ensure that this humanitarian corridor is put in place?

[*English*]

Hon. Ya'ara Saks: Mr. Chair, the Minister of Foreign Affairs just returned home to Canada after days in the region working with our regional local partners as well as on a multilateral effort to get humanitarian aid into Gaza and create humanitarian corridors.

We are deeply committed to this work, as much as we are committed to making sure that the hostages being held under Hamas right now are released. We have a collective duty as an international community to ensure that civilian lives are protected and to ensure that hostages are returned to safety.

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Chair, first of all, I want to thank my colleague for her courageous speech. I know that this is something that is deeply personal for her as an Israeli Canadian and that this past week has been exceptionally difficult for her personally, as well as for Jewish and Palestinian communities across this country.

I wonder if the member could talk about what is important for us to do now here in Canada to bring communities together.

Hon. Ya'ara Saks: Mr. Chair, today we announced the appointment of the new special envoy on preserving Holocaust remembrance and combatting anti-Semitism, the hon. former ambassador Deborah Lyons. One of her first tasks is to work with her special envoy counterpart on Islamophobia, because as the members of this chamber well know, this is a government that is committed to combatting hate and committed to creating safe spaces for all Canadi-

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ans, no matter who they are, where they worship or how they identify. We will continue to do that work each and every day.

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I am thankful for this opportunity to address my colleagues.

I join the minister, the hon. member for York Centre, in condemning Hamas. The pictures of the attacks by Hamas on innocent Israeli civilians are horrific. I unequivocally join my colleagues in condemning Hamas and its blatant act of terror. Our priority is the civilians.

Every human life is precious, whether it is Muslim, Jewish, Palestinian, Israeli or Christian. Hamas does not and will never represent Muslims and Palestinians and does not represent the Palestinian people and their legitimate aspirations. We must do everything we can to continue to protect both Israeli and Palestinian civilians. We will continue to work with our allies in the region and beyond to make sure that all civilians get the assistance and aid they need.

The reality is that this humanitarian crisis is getting worse. We need unimpeded humanitarian access and an open corridor to make sure that life-saving food, medicine and water get to those who desperately need it now. We are working very closely with our international partners, trusted organizations like the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Societies, and groups in the region that have always served everyone. I have had a number of conversations with ICRC; MDA, the equivalent of ICRC in Israel; and the Palestine Red Crescent Society, to get a sense of the needs on the ground and the heroic work being done by humanitarian and medical workers.

With regard to our support so far, we have wasted no time in taking action. We were the first western country to commit an initial \$10 million to put much-needed aid and assistance in the hands of trusted organizations so they can deliver water, food and medicine to civilians in need. We will continue to work with our allies to call for the respect of international humanitarian law, which means allowing unimpeded access to medicine, food and other aid.

I want to emphasize that in our domestic approach, we know that Muslim Canadians, Jewish Canadians, Palestinian communities and Arab communities are impacted by this. There are folks with family members who have been killed as a result of this conflict. Family members are experiencing grief because their loved ones are being held hostage by Hamas. Family members are really concerned about being caught in the conflict in Gaza and making sure they are safe.

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● (1945)

We must not let the actions of Hamas turn into hate in Canada. I unequivocally condemn the rising acts of anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim behaviour that we have seen in Canada in the last week. We must come together to call out hate in all its forms.

I am so proud of the fact that our special envoys are working together. I spoke to both of them on the weekend. It is so heartening for me as a Canadian to see that our special representative on combatting Islamophobia and the newly appointed envoy on preserving Holocaust remembrance and combatting anti-Semitism are not only working together but embracing each other to lead us forward and make sure that we are holding on to the diversity and inclusion that make Canada so strong.

Canada only succeeds when Canadians can put aside their differences and work together for the betterment of all, not just in the good times but also in the difficult times. We are steadfast in coming together to assist the most vulnerable. I want to reiterate our government's active engagement on this issue. We will be there to support civilians.

We will continue to monitor the situation. We will work with our partners, regional friends and allies and make sure we continue to work with trusted organizations that have served us well over the years to make sure that Canadians have the framework to help the most needy and vulnerable. Canada will continue to do that.

● (1950)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Chair, I thank the minister for his comments this evening.

I want to underline our belief in the importance of humanitarian access. In the past, we have heard stories of humanitarian crossings being targeted by Hamas. Two years ago, we heard testimony on this at the foreign affairs committee, so no doubt access will be challenging, but it is certainly very important.

I want to ask the minister about the Iranian regime's role in supporting Hamas. What level of coordination does the minister see the Iranian regime being involved in with these recent horrific terrorist attacks? What additional steps should Canada take to hold the Iranian regime accountable?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen: Mr. Chair, our focus has of course been on making sure we work with our friends and allies to help everyone affected by this conflict. I share the concerns of my colleague with respect to Hamas and its actions. We were all horrified by the terrorist attacks that Hamas launched against Israeli civilians in the south of Israel. I share the concerns of my colleague with respect to anyone, any entity or any country that would aid a terrorist organization.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Chair, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech, which was excellent, as his speeches always are.

We have seen demonstrations in recent days that have included unacceptable actions and slogans. That kind of thing has no place in a country like Canada, and I say that as a Quebec sovereignist.

I have a question for my hon. colleague. Is it not important for us all here in the House to be united, not divided? Is this not the time for all the representatives of Canada's 338 ridings to band together, stand shoulder to shoulder and ensure that no one tries to score political points on human tragedies? Instead, we need to unite, lead by example, and perhaps prevent certain acts in our communities that have no place here.

[*English*]

Hon. Ahmed Hussen: Mr. Chair, I absolutely agree with my colleague. We should be united around the principle that every human life is precious. We have to condemn terrorism in all its forms. We have to make sure that we are always calling for the respect of international humanitarian law, and we have to stand up for the rights of civilians to be protected in conflict. That is what we stand for and that is something we can all agree on here in this chamber, across party lines.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Chair, I have many constituents who are very worried about their loved ones. Some of them are Canadians who are in Gaza at the moment, and some of them have sponsored family members who have yet to make it to Canada. They are trying to find a way to get to safety. Many of them cannot access GAC services for evacuation. Others are simply looking for a pathway that could help them get to a corridor of safety.

What is the government doing to provide evacuation for Canadian families abroad, individuals abroad who have permanent resident status and loved ones who are waiting for their sponsorship to be completed so they can get to safety?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen: Mr. Chair, I thank my hon. colleague for raising a really important question.

Many of us in our roles as members of Parliament have been dealing with constituents who are concerned about loved ones affected by this conflict, some who have loved ones trapped in Gaza and others whose extended family members, friends and loved ones are being held hostage by Hamas. The fact of the matter is that our government has been really prioritizing this issue. My colleagues, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of National Defence, have been working non-stop on this issue, and I am happy to report to Parliament that a number of those efforts have been successful, enabling Canadians to be evacuated back to Canada, in some cases from the West Bank to Jordan and in some cases from Israel back to Canada. Those efforts are ongoing and we will do everything we can to help Canadians evacuate from Gaza, West Bank and Israel.

● (1955)

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Chair, I am going to split my time with the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

I stand in this debate with sadness and anger as a Canadian, as a member of the House and as a Jew. Jewish Canadians are not only mourning; they feel that they are under threat. It is our duty here to provide reassurance and protection to those who feel vulnerable, whether within the Jewish community, among the Muslim community or in any other community.

It is unfathomable to me that in 2023, anyone should fear sending their kids to school or being near a place or in a place of worship, at a community centre or in a business owned by an identifiable group at the centre of this war. It is a complete perversion of the rights and freedoms afforded to anyone in this country, and it requires more than just words like “stay vigilant”. It requires action. It requires action from every level of government.

The outright slaughter of babies, of mothers, of Holocaust survivors and of hundreds of innocent civilians should be easy to condemn, a simple moral test that too many have failed, because the visceral language of the entitled creates a fetish of blind demonization of one party in this conflict, even in the face of such obvious carnage. Instead of condemnation, too many Canadians stood and celebrated in demonstrations, dancing in the streets branded in Hamas propaganda. Too many more sought to justify, minimize or rationalize the brutality.

I would remind the House, in this vein, that the 1988 Hamas covenant and the revised charter from about five years ago must not be ignored in the conversation. The original charter is rather clear on Hamas's genocidal intentions. It calls for the complete destruction of Israel as an essential condition for the liberation of Palestine and the establishment of a theocratic state based on Islamic law. It states the need for an unrestrained and unceasing jihad to obtain that objective and the outright dismissal of any negotiated resolution or political settlement of Jewish or Muslim claim to the land. It is by every account anti-Semitic.

What happened in Israel on Saturday is true to Hamas's explicit charter edict, their objectives and their ambitions. On October 7, Hamas carried out the worst attack on the Jewish people since the Holocaust. They intentionally targeted innocent mothers, children, babies, elderly Holocaust survivors, entire families and innocent civilians carrying out their daily lives until they were so brutally cut short.

Among them were Canadians, with five murdered and three others believed to be captive. The gruesome attacks unleashed a carnage so unspeakable, so unthinkable, that it would not be believable unless it was captured on video and put on the Internet, as we see. They are not militants. They are not government. They are not a resistance movement. They are as the member for Carleton said: Hamas is a “sadistic criminal terrorist death cult, and it must be defeated.”

Israel has the right and obligation to do just that. As a defensive operation to destroy Hamas and its military capacity in Gaza continues, the pleas for restraint, compromise and peacebuilding are destined to fail with the genocidal aims of Hamas, as in their charter.

With that, it is the government's responsibility to ensure that Canadians are evacuated from the region, that missions serve those

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abroad who need help and that it advocates for the safe release of hostages. I would add this final critical point. If there is one thing we can take away, it is for the government to finally, as it said it would, criminalize the IRGC, the funder and convener through which the regime in Iran is fighting a proxy war to proliferate terror not only on Israelis but on those in Gaza and around the world.

We will not let the government have a free pass on this, for it is too common for Israel to have friends when it is easy and much harder for those friends to stand up when times get difficult. For the destruction of terror in Hamas, in the Iranian regime and around the world, and for the security of our ally, Hamas must be destroyed. Things will get harder.

• (2000)

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Chair, I just want to share with my colleague how deeply troubling the events have been. Certainly, with my family history, having lost my whole family on my father's side in the Holocaust, what is going on is very troubling. I learned many valuable things from my father, and I was very touched by Vivian Silver's son's comments about his mother, who is currently a hostage with Hamas. He said, “You can't cure killed babies with more dead babies. We need peace”. He spoke about the fact that vengeance is not a strategy.

As somebody who is an intergenerationally impacted member of the Holocaust, having grown up with no family because of war, I am wondering what she thinks of Vivian Silver's son's comments about what is currently happening in Gaza.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Chair, Vivian Silver, alongside Judih Weinstein and the daughter, Tiferet Lapidot, of Canadians, the three hostages we know of, should be the government's primary priority right now. We must secure the release of those hostages, not only to ensure that Canadians come home safely from the grips of Hamas, who have terrorized the region as a whole, terrorized Israelis and terrorized Palestinians, but to ensure that there is no regime out there that would look to Canadians as currency. To make sure that there are no Vivians in the future and that Canadians are not taken hostage, we have to have a strong stand on this; we have to do more.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Chair, my colleague has put forward a bill in this House, Bill C-353, that deals specifically with this issue of hostages. Of course, many of us are seized with concern about the situation of these hostages, including Canadians. I wonder if the member can share a bit about the private member's bill she put forward before this situation happened, what the provisions of that bill are and the impact it would have in Canada's playing a stronger role securing the freedom of hostages.

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Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Chair, we will have the opportunity to speak to that bill. Hostage diplomacy is becoming all too common in this world. We have seen it before with Canadians; we see it now with Canadians; we will likely see it in the future with Canadians. It is incumbent on the government to make sure that hostages have an open line of communication with family by establishing a liaison and, more importantly, that we co-operate with those who provide the information for the secured release of those in arbitrary detention or those in a hostage situation. We want to give the ministerial authority to be able to do that, whether it is a monetary compensation or whether it is something based in citizenship, and I look forward to the support in this House for that bill.

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I want to thank my colleague from Thornhill, as well as colleagues on the opposition side, for their support for our community and me personally over the course of the past number of days. I have heard varying perspectives in this chamber today on the conflict in Israel and Gaza. I am wondering about one of the things I heard. A member from another opposition party talked about and characterized Israel's response as one of "revenge". I took exception to that.

I am wondering if the member could comment, from her own perspective, as to whether she feels Israel's response is one of revenge or one that is occurring in terms of its right to defend itself.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Chair, we have said in this House before that Israel absolutely has the right to defend itself. Vengeance would mean that Israel does proportionately exactly the same thing as what was done to Israel. That would never happen, because that was done by the monsters in Hamas. That would mean that Israelis would engage in rape, decapitation and complete humiliation of their victims. That is not what a democratic ally and our friend Israel would ever do.

• (2005)

The Chair: Before we go to the next speaker, I just wanted to thank everybody for being in the gallery today. As much as we enjoy that you are here listening to this debate, you are to keep your thoughts to yourselves so the debate can happen on the floor.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Chair, Canada must stand with the state of Israel. The events of October 7 were the biggest loss of Jewish life since the Holocaust. On that day, Hamas launched a terrorist attack and invaded Israel. Some two and a half thousand Hamas terrorists broke through the border, attacking Israeli military bases and massacring Israeli citizens.

The latest count indicates that 289 IDF soldiers were killed and over 1,100 Israeli civilians were killed. Thousands more casualties took place as IDF soldiers and Israeli civilians were injured. The over 1,100 Israeli citizens who were killed were not killed inadvertently or accidentally. These 1,100 civilians were deliberately and systematically targeted and murdered by Hamas.

They were gunned down execution style, just like the mobile killing squads of the Nazis, the Einsatzkommando, who executed some one and a half million Jews by firing squad during the 1941 Aktion campaign in Eastern Europe. It was the Holocaust by bullets

before the Holocaust by gas chambers that murdered an additional four and a half million Jews.

On October 7, whole families were executed, innocent babies were killed in their cribs and the dead were mutilated. Some of the dead were paraded through the streets of Gaza. The war that began October 7 is an existential threat to the state of Israel. The very state of Israel is threatened by this war, particularly if Hezbollah in Lebanon and the IRGC in Iran start participating in attacking Israel.

One of the belligerents in this war, Hamas, has targeted Canadian interests. Five Canadian citizens were murdered by Hamas and another three are missing, presumably being held hostage by Hamas in Gaza. We, in this House, call for the immediate release of these hostages by Hamas. We will not forget about the five Canadians who were murdered by Hamas. We will not forget what will happen to the three Canadians currently held by Hamas.

There has been widespread condemnation from western democratic leaders of Hamas's barbaric terrorist attacks, including Canada's democratic leaders. There has been widespread solidarity expressed by western democracies for the state of Israel at this difficult time. This institution, the Parliament of Canada, projected an image of the Israeli flag on the Peace Tower as a sign of our solidarity.

The coming days and weeks will be a test of western condemnation of Hamas and a test of western solidarity with Israel. In the coming days and weeks, Israel will exercise its right to defend itself under article 51 of the United Nations Charter, which states, "Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations".

In the coming days and weeks, we should be clear that Israel has the right to eliminate Hamas as a threat from the Gaza Strip and to liberate the hostages Hamas has taken. As casualties mount, we should resist the temptation to call for a ceasefire until the Israel Defense Forces achieve its goal of eliminating this existential threat to the state of Israel.

This is a war. It is a legal war under international humanitarian law. Under the law of armed conflict, it is a justifiable war against a terrorist group, a group that the Government of Canada has officially listed as a terrorist entity under the Criminal Code of Canada.

The state of Israel has the right to prosecute this war at the time and pace of its choosing until it has accomplished its goal of eliminating this existential threat. Israel has the right to determine, within the bounds of international law, how it will prosecute this war. It has the right to determine the pace of this war. It has the right to determine the timing of this war, including when the war ends.

Palestinians are also victims of Hamas. The suffering of the Palestinian people is a real tragedy. A million Palestinians have been displaced in Gaza. Every innocent human life, whether it be Palestinian, Israeli, Jewish, Muslim or any other faith, is of equal precious value. We must do everything in our power to preserve this precious life and to minimize the suffering of innocent civilians.

• (2010)

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Chair, I have a great deal of respect for that member, and I am deeply disappointed by that intervention.

He spoke about the need to eliminate Hamas. The children who are being bombed in Gaza today are not Hamas. The children who are dying every 16 minutes, right now, in Palestine are not Hamas.

Would the member agree that collective punishment is against international law, and that that is what is happening right now in Gaza?

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Chair, I agree with my hon. colleague that we should not conflate the terrorist group Hamas with the Palestinian people.

We support the aspirations of the Palestinian people who aspire to an independent sovereign state, a two-state solution in the Middle East. We believe in the aspirations of the Palestinian people to live in peace and security in their own country, with their own self-determination, among the community of nations.

However, we must also be clear that Hamas is a terrorist group, and Hamas committed horrific war crimes, not just in attacking Israel in the first place, but in slaughtering over 1,000 innocent civilians in what were clearly war crimes and which were so systematic they might actually rise to the level of crimes against humanity.

At this difficult time in Israel's history, we must stand with the state of Israel, as we stand with other democratic nations, in their defence and security.

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I would like to ask my hon. colleague if he could comment on the following two questions.

First, what does he believe would happen should Hamas announce, at this moment, that they were releasing the hostages being held in Gaza?

Second, what does he believe would happen in the region if Hamas were to change from its charter, its aim and its pursuit of the eradication of the Jewish people from the Earth?

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Chair, I am not going to speculate on what Hamas might or might not do.

What I will say is that Hamas must release the some 199 hostages they are currently holding, three of whom may be Canadian citizens. We will be watching very carefully to see what Hamas does with these three missing Canadians.

I would further add that Hamas is a listed terrorist entity under the Criminal Code of Canada. As such, providing material support to this organization within Canada is a criminal offence, something

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that we expect our law enforcement to prosecute to the full extent of the law.

Let us be clear here, Hamas has been an organization in the Middle East that has created great misery, not just for Israelis but for Palestinians themselves. The elimination of Hamas will hopefully lead to a two-state solution that would allow the Palestinians to fulfill their aspirations to live in their own country, side by side, peacefully among the community of nations.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Chair, as it is my first opportunity to take the floor on this issue, let me first say that the Green Party stands with all other parties in this place in condemning, unconditionally, unequivocally, Hamas as an organization and its quite horrific assault on innocent Israeli civilians on October 7.

I think we stand with a lot of commonality here. I hope my hon. colleague for Wellington—Halton Hills will forgive me for picking up on what I see as the place of divergence and hope we can find consensus there too. As the Secretary General of the United Nations António Guterres said recently, “Even wars have rules.”

Clearly, Hamas violated all humanitarian norms and international law. That does not mean, as our friend from Edmonton Strathcona said, that we do not say to Israel that as hard as it is in this moment, when we stand in solidarity with them with the goal of eliminating Hamas, that innocent children must not be bombarded indiscriminately in Gaza.

We must help Israel eliminate Hamas. We also must stand up for humanitarian goals and international law, and call for a ceasefire so that we can protect human life in Gaza.

• (2015)

Hon. Michael Chong: Mr. Chair, we agree that innocent civilian lives need to be protected, and that is why we have called for three things.

First, we have called for the establishment of a safe zone in the southern part of the Gaza Strip to allow Gazans who are fleeing from the north, where a lot of the IDF is targeting Hamas infrastructure, to get to the south of the Gaza Strip in safety.

Second, we are calling for a humanitarian corridor to allow for food, water and medical supplies from outside the Gaza Strip to enter the Gaza Strip.

Third, we are calling for a humanitarian corridor to evacuate foreign nationals who are in Gaza, particularly Canadian citizens, who are trapped there.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Chair, on Saturday, October 7, Hamas launched a coordinated attack against Israel from the Gaza Strip. The attack was sadly dubbed “Operation Al-Aqsa Flood”. It was a large-scale terrorist operation that killed more than 1,400 people, mostly civilians—men, women, children and babies only a few months old—who, according to some sources, were beheaded and burned.

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In the face of that cruelty and brutality, in the face of terrorism and hatred, we must all first and foremost offer the Israeli people our deepest and most sincere condolences. It was with sadness and concern that I spoke these words earlier today, and it is with equal emotion that I repeat them tonight in the House. The Bloc Québécois strongly and unequivocally condemns these terrorist attacks by Hamas. We reiterate that Israel has the right to defend itself against Hamas. However, we must not conflate Hamas with all Gazans or with the Palestinian people.

Israel responded to these terrorist attacks by declaring war on Hamas and ordering half the population of the Gaza Strip to leave. Over one million civilians have been forced from their homes. It is an impossible situation, one that the UN even describes as illegal.

Nevertheless, more than one million residents of Gaza have fled south, raising ominous concerns for young families. In addition to bombing the Gaza Strip, Israel has laid full siege to the area. The resulting blockade has forced Gaza's only power plant to shut down, cutting off the water supply and depriving hospitals of electricity. According to a number of sources, many Palestinians are now resorting to drinking salt water, leading to rising mortality rates. The worst is yet to come, as the days dwindle to hours before Israel's anticipated ground offensive against Gaza begins.

Faced with this situation, we are appealing to Israeli authorities. A democracy like Israel has a duty and a responsibility to act within the framework of international law and human rights. Not enough attention is being focused on the need to create a humanitarian corridor into the Gaza Strip. Time is running out. The situation is beyond urgent. Human lives are at stake.

At this very moment, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Italy are working together to try to open humanitarian corridors and help civilians. Canada must join these efforts and do everything in its power to pressure its partners and use every means necessary to help at-risk populations. Canada can and must do more in the current context. This is a matter of responsibility in the face of the real humanitarian crisis that is unfolding right now.

I stand before the House this evening knowing how little impact my words can have on the situation and on the despair of those whose lives are being ravaged by the atrocities of war, but wholeheartedly supporting victims on both sides of the armed conflict, the families of the missing, and those who have perished in the inhuman attacks we have witnessed in recent days.

I cannot imagine, even for one second, how terrified the civilians must be. Hour after hour, they live with the uncertainty of not knowing whether they will ever be able to return home and hug their loved ones again. Unfortunately, their fears are well-founded.

As reports emerge that Hamas is using civilians as a human shield and that Palestinian civilians could die in a ground assault on Gaza, there is nothing in this world that could justify an attack on these people, nothing that could justify the lack of humanity, nothing that could justify the horror.

At the risk of repeating myself, I believe that, most of the time, collaboration and cross-party co-operation must triumph over political agenda pushing. For the sake of the victims and everyone af-

ected by the conflict, I am calling on my colleagues from all parties to show wisdom and compassion. I am also calling for respect for the principles of international law. They are often undermined, but they should prevail in this situation.

● (2020)

I spoke these simple words at the beginning of my speech, but they bear repeating: The Bloc Québécois strongly and unequivocally condemns the terrorist attacks by Hamas and reiterates Israel's right to defend itself. With men, women, entire families and children dying, we cannot overemphasize how vital it is to create a humanitarian corridor in Gaza because, sadly, history has taught us the hard way that it is always the eleventh hour when we talk about human lives. Everyone here in the House is human. Let us prove it.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Chair, this is a sad evening. Last week, we witnessed attacks by Hamas that cost brothers, sisters, parents and children their lives. What these families are going through is so sad and horrible. As the member just said, we know that collective punishment is not an option. Even today, tonight, we saw bombings in Gaza, a collective punishment that is causing the deaths of brothers, sisters, parents and children. My colleague spoke on the importance of a ceasefire, of a corridor for humanitarian assistance, and of insisting that all hostages be freed.

Can my colleague tell us how critical it is for Canada to speak with such a voice to ensure that there are no more victims after the many grim events of recent days?

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Chair, as a Quebec sovereigntist I want to say that Canada is not a global military or economic power, but it has a history of leadership in international human rights. One need only think about Brian Mulroney during apartheid or of Lester B. Pearson and the peacekeepers. I will give only those two examples to keep things equal between the Liberals and the Conservatives.

It has been a long time since Canada has played that sort of role on the world stage and now an opportunity is presenting itself. We need to resume that leadership role and make this our mission. As I was saying earlier, everyone here, the 338 members from all parties, even the independent members, must unite in calling for this humanitarian corridor, which is so important for saving human lives. That is something tangible that we can do. We would save lives. In order to do that, Canada needs to unite, all of the politicians here in the House must unite and ask Israel to set up a humanitarian corridor to bring in international aid.

• (2025)

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Chair, I agree with my colleague about the importance of having a humanitarian corridor. I would add that the setting up of a humanitarian corridor will require the buy-in and collaboration of multiple parties, but it is certainly important for the international community to work on delivering that outcome.

I wonder if he could share specifically what he thinks the response of Israel should be to this terrorist attack. I do not know if I heard that specifically, and I would appreciate hearing what he thinks the response of Israel should be to these events.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Chair, I am going to borrow my leader's words to answer my colleague's question. As I said at the beginning of my speech, Israel obviously has the right to defend itself, and the Bloc Québécois strongly supports that notion.

However, international law must be respected. I believe quite honestly that if we ever want the dream of two states in the region to become a reality, the State of Israel and the State of Palestine, Hamas cannot be part of the solution. Given what happened, Israel is right to want to uproot Hamas from the Gaza Strip. That said, it must do so while also upholding international law, and that obviously means ending the illegal blockade and giving people access to water, food and medicine.

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Chair, does my hon. colleague think that the actions of the Israeli government constitute revenge?

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Chair, the answer to that is no.

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Chair, does my colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean believe that the current Israeli government has everything it needs to resolve this situation peacefully?

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Chair, as I was saying, Israel is the only democracy in the region. Israel has the largest army in the region and is supported by the planet's major powers. Israel obviously has a greater responsibility for resolving the conflict.

I believe that it would be possible for Israel, as a democracy, to resolve this situation peacefully. However, it will depend on what happens with Hamas. Is Hamas ready to resolve this peacefully? That is another question.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Chair, I completely agree with everything that my dear colleague from the Bloc Québécois said. A humanitarian corridor is essential.

I especially want to thank him for underscoring the role of our country. That may be a bit hard for him to do, as a sovereigntist, but he underscored Canada's historic role and leadership as a country in favour of peace and international law. For that, I thank him very much.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague for thanking me. Working with the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands is always a pleasure.

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We are going to keep working together. As we said, we are all human. If there is one good and upstanding person in the House, it is certainly the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

[English]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Chair, nine days ago we woke up to the news of the brutal terrorist attack by Hamas on Israelis. Today we have learned that the fifth Canadian is among the victims of Hamas. Netta Epstein, who was just 21 years old, died while trying to protect his girlfriend by jumping on top of a grenade. He saved her life by sacrificing his own. May his memory and the memories of all those killed be a blessing.

Like many of us in this chamber, I have heard the pain and devastation felt by Jewish and Palestinian Canadians; people who are worried for their loved ones stuck in Gaza, where every day brings more destruction, death and despair; Canadians who are afraid for their family and friends in Israel and who wait for news about those taken hostage. They are trying to maintain hope when there are so many reasons for despair.

• (2030)

[Translation]

Jewish Canadians, descendants of Holocaust survivors, grew up listening to stories about their family members being dragged from their homes and killed. Today, they watch videos of young Jewish people at a music festive being massacred or taken hostage. They fear the promise of “never again” has been broken.

Canadians of Palestinian origin see their families trapped in Gaza, said to be the worst place on Earth. In war, children are always the ones who pay the price.

[English]

This is a time when we must speak clearly: We condemn Hamas. We condemn the brutal murders of whole families and the taking of hostages. Terrorism is abhorrent to all of us who love peace and strive for justice. We cannot allow the world to use this terrorism to justify the human catastrophe unfolding before our eyes in Gaza.

The United Nations has said that nearly half of Gaza's people have been forced to flee from their homes. Morgues are overflowing. Hospitals are running out of supplies like painkillers, leaving those injured to endure terrible suffering. Food and water are scarce. There is raw sewage in the streets. Canada cannot stand by while the people of Gaza are left to die.

It took the Prime Minister a full week to put out a statement about the suffering in Gaza. Surely we must recognize that the lives and suffering of Palestinians concern us equally.

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I want to tell the story of Reem Sultan. She has spoken of her relatives in Gaza who have fled for their lives, moving from shelter to shelter. She said that there is no electricity and little water and food. Some have died and everyone is in fear. There is no way to help those fleeing for their lives. After ordering Palestinians to evacuate, Israel hit the remaining access roads to Egypt with air strikes. These are Reem Sultan's words. They need the supplies to come in. They need the border opened. They need the water, medicine and food to come in by trucks. They are in an open-air prison right now.

We are also witnessing a disturbing rise of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian racism in Canada. Jewish and Muslim parents are worried as threats make them wonder if they should send their children to school. Places of worship are targets requiring police protection. Palestinian and Muslim Canadians report ugly harassment and threats on the streets as they are blamed for crimes they did not commit. We have seen the devastating impact of Islamophobia in Canada before. We saw it yesterday in Chicago, with the killing of a six-year-old Muslim boy who was stabbed to death.

At this moment, I take courage from the life and work of Vivian Silver, an Israeli-Canadian peace activist from Winnipeg, who is currently believed to be among the hostages. Like so many in Israel and Palestine, Vivian has worked tirelessly for peace. She has done this work for decades, trying to build understanding between Israelis and Palestinians. She organized Friday afternoon meetings between members of the kibbutz where she lived and people who would gather in a field and speak with Palestinians in Gaza. She helped people living in Gaza to get access to cancer treatment. She is a mother and grandmother whose family misses her terribly.

Her son was recently interviewed about what he wants to see happen to free his mother. These are his words, "We need to stop the violence now. Vengeance is not a strategy."

Her son describes the last moments he spoke to her. They sent text messages, because she was too afraid to speak and let the terrorists know where she was hiding. His last message to her was to let her know that he was with her, that she was not alone. If he can resist the call for revenge, surely we must demand the same of the Israeli government.

I also want to share Vivian's own words describing her life's work advocating for peace.

She stated:

I am driven by the intense desire for security and a life of mutual respect and freedom for both our peoples.

The thought of yet another war drives me mad. Like the last three, it will not solve the conflict. It will only bring more dead and wounded.

Vivian is not alone. Millions of Israelis and Palestinians all over the world desire peace. They want to live in safety and security. New Democrats have always been the ones to nurture the desire for peace, even when louder voices called for war. This is why we are calling on Canada to work with our international allies to end the bloodshed. We continue to call for an immediate release of all hostages, for the protection of all civilians, for an end to the siege and bombardment of Gaza, and for humanitarian aid to reach civilians urgently and without restriction.

International law must be upheld and respected. Make no mistake, collective punishment is a violation of this law. Canada must insist that all those who broke these laws are held accountable, even those nations we have called friends. Canada must call for a ceasefire to end the killing of innocent civilians in Gaza immediately. We cannot allow for the continuing dehumanization of an entire population. When we stop seeing each other as human, when we stop believing that each life has value, this is when the seeds of genocide take hold.

These are dark days, and the weeks ahead are likely to bring even more anguish, but we can never surrender to despair and never forget that we share a collective humanity and collective responsibility to protect all people from violence and terror.

● (2035)

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Chair, all week, since the events in Israel as a result of the terrorist attack by Hamas, I have been saying that we have to be able to condemn without the insertion of the word "but". The leader of the NDP just began his speech, empathetic, so it seemed, to the victims of the terrorist attack by Hamas, only to insert the word "but". Perhaps I misunderstood him, but it sounded to me that he was suggesting that Israel is committing or on the verge of committing genocide. Genocide, of course, is the intent to eradicate a people. Therefore, my question for the leader of the NDP is twofold: One, does he believe that Israel has a right to self-defence; and two, does he believe that the current reaction by the Israeli government in its response to a terrorist organization with anti-Semitic and genocidal objectives is revenge?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Chair, the concerns I want to raise are that we want to protect all lives. The outcome of war is more death and destruction. I quoted Vivian Silver, a peace activist who has spent her life trying to advocate ways for us to move toward peace and security. She herself suggested that conflict and war bring only more death and destruction.

While we unequivocally condemn the terrorist acts of Hamas, we continue to implore that the only way forward to save lives is peace, and we continue to be a voice to say that war will beget only more destruction, more despair and more loss. We have to find a better way forward.

Given the circumstances, given the conditions that are being imposed on the people of Gaza right now, who are without any proper access to resources like water, medication and food, the conditions are being set up for imminent and horrific despair, loss of life and tragedy. That must be avoided.

● (2040)

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Chair, I will ask again. The leader of the NDP used words like "revenge", "genocide" and "collective punishment". It sounds like he has walked those back after his prepared remarks.

Government Orders

I am going to ask him one more time if he believes, and this is a serious matter, that Israel is committing or is about to commit a genocide. Yes or no?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Chair, many human rights experts and the United Nations have expressed dire concerns about the conditions and the lives of people in Gaza. I share those concerns. Anyone who cares about the collective responsibility and the collective humanity we have to protect life will look at the circumstances right now of people in Gaza and say that without access to food, without access to water, without access to electricity and without access to the resources needed to run a hospital, the conditions being imposed are dire. This is something that is deeply concerning.

We know there are innocent people in Gaza, and the imposition of these horrific conditions on everyone in that community is deeply concerning. That is what the United Nations has expressed, and that is what we are expressing. What we want to be clear about is that our goal here should be to save lives. That is why we are calling for a release of all hostages. We are calling for a ceasefire. We are calling for a path to peace to save innocent lives.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Chair, I would like to thank the leader of the New Democratic Party for the love he has shown for both Israelis and Palestinians.

Right now, we know that the hostages who have been taken by the terrorist organization Hamas are likely in Gaza. We know there are 150 Canadians, at least, who are in Gaza. We know that more than 50% of the population in Gaza is in fact children. The New Democrats have called for a ceasefire.

Why does he think the other parties in this House think it is all right to be bombing the hostages, to be bombing children and to be bombing Canadian citizens who are in Gaza right now? Is a ceasefire not a better solution right now as we try to get those hostages out?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Chair, we are in a very horrible time right now, and it is important to acknowledge how painful and how difficult this is. What my hon. colleague is pointing out is that the path we are suggesting is to look at our collective humanity, to not lose sight of the fact that every life is precious and dear and that we do not want to walk down a path that will result in even more death, destruction and despair.

That is the path we are on right now. That is the path the world is headed on. We are calling out, as difficult as it is and understanding how horrible the circumstances are, and saying that more war and more violence will result only in more loss of life. We need to find a better way forward. That is why we are calling for a release of all hostages. We are calling for a ceasefire. We are calling for a path to peace. The only outcome of more war is more death, and we have to prevent that.

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I was very concerned by what I heard before. The Jewish people were the victims of the greatest genocide in human history, the Holocaust. Israel is the only majority Jewish state in the world. It sounded to me very much like he accused the state of Israel of being on the verge of committing a genocide.

I would like to ask, yes or no, do you believe that Israel is committing or is about to commit genocide?

● (2045)

The Chair: I will remind hon. members to run questions through the Chair.

The hon. member for Burnaby South.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Chair, I understand that there are very real emotions and really serious concerns, and I respect and acknowledge that.

What we are concerned about are the conditions right now that are being imposed on the people of Gaza, the conditions which involve no more electricity, no more clean water, no more access to food and no more access to the resources necessary to run a hospital. These conditions being imposed on an entire population are very serious. The consequences of actions like that are very dire. The United Nations has pointed out that the consequences of a path where necessary resources are withheld from a population could be devastating and dire. That is what I am expressing as a very deep concern. That is why we reiterate our call. Release all the hostages. We need to ensure that there is a ceasefire. We need to see a path of peace because we need to save all lives.

Innocent lives have been lost. More will be lost if the steps that are being taken continue.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Chair, I commend my colleague on his speech.

We understand the NDP's position on the ceasefire and the humanitarian corridor. I would like my colleague to tell us what solution he is currently proposing. Does Israel currently have the tools it needs to resolve the conflict? What concrete measures does the member propose to spare civilians and put an end to the conflict as quickly as possible?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Chair, the only solution to conflict is a political and diplomatic solution, not war. That is what we are proposing because we know that war only leads to more death, destruction and devastation. That is why we are calling for a ceasefire, the release of all hostages, and a path to peace and security. That is the only way to find a solution.

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Chair, it seems like the NDP leader has essentially offered a defence of complete pacifism. He has stated, as a principle, that he seems to believe that war is never the solution, that more war is never going to lead to peace. I want to just clarify his views on that. Does he believe that there is no case in which war is necessary or just? If there is any such case, it would seem to me that a response to this kind of terrorist attack against civilians would likely qualify.

Does he believe there is such a thing as a just war, that there is any instance where the use of force against an aggressor is justified? What is that case, in his view?

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Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Chair, we are denouncing and are concerned about an approach of collective punishment. Of course, there are serious concerns, and we denounce the terrorist attack of Hamas.

However, our concern is that there are many innocent lives that are being put in a condition of desperation and a dire lack of access to basic necessities. That is a serious concern. The approach that we have to take is one in which we resolve conflicts through peace and through a desire to achieve safety and security for everyone. That cannot be achieved with more war.

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I will be sharing my time with the member for Winnipeg South Centre.

Let us start by asking ourselves why we are here tonight. We are here tonight because a terrorist organization that has in its charter the destruction of the State of Israel and of the Jewish people launched the worst attack against Jews since the Holocaust. It crossed the border into Israel. It slaughtered babies. It slaughtered women in their 90s who were Holocaust survivors. It took men, women and children who were huddled together in bomb shelters and kibbutzim, slaughtered them brutally and put it on video. It went to a music festival where young people were having fun, and slaughtered them all.

Among the 1,400-plus people who were slaughtered, which is the number that we know right now, were six Canadians: Alexandre Look, Ben Mizrachi, Adi Vital-Kaploun, Shir Georgy, Netta Epstein and Judith Weinstein Haggai. I have just learned from the family of Tiferet Lapidot that she was also slaughtered and that her body has been found. Seven Canadians have been slaughtered. I have been speaking to the families of those people, and it is devastating for them.

Something that has been impressed on the Jewish community for a very long time is the feeling that in the world today, we are very isolated. Anti-Semitism is on the rise, people are worried and this has exacerbated the situation. Israelis never thought this could happen. They thought their intelligence was better than this. Jewish Canadians are left shocked, vulnerable, apprehensive, afraid and angry. That is where we are today.

Israel, as a nation, has the right to defend itself within international law. We talk about the Holocaust, and the difference between today and the Holocaust is that in the Holocaust, we had no army for the Jews. We had nobody to stand up for us. Now we have a democratic state that has an army that can defend itself and the Jewish people, and that army has a right to eradicate a terrorist organization that has wreaked misery not only for Israeli families but for Palestinian families as well. Hamas uses its population as human shields.

We absolutely need to make sure that in Gaza, there is a humanitarian corridor. We need to make sure, and Israel has historically had the idea to make sure, that it does not attack civilians. We need to make sure that civilians are protected as well as possible, that humanitarian aid reaches Gaza and that there is a safe zone in the south. All of these things are important, but Israel has the right and the duty to defend itself. That is important.

I want to turn to something that has not come up as much as it probably should, which is that in Canada, there are two communities right now that are very vulnerable and nervous: the Jewish community and the Muslim community. Of course, all people who identify as Palestinians, whatever their religion, feel very vulnerable. Jews in Canada are not responsible for the actions of the State of Israel, and Palestinians in Canada are not responsible for the actions of Hamas. These two populations in Canada have historically gotten along very well and been allies, and we, as parliamentarians, have a duty.

• (2050)

[*Translation*]

We all have a duty to ensure that, here in Canada, we avoid the battles being fought in the Middle East, that all communities get along here in Canada, that we, as parliamentarians, offer our full support to the people in our ridings who feel extremely vulnerable right now, especially young people and students in our schools and universities. That is critical.

[*English*]

We, as politicians, have to set an example for everyone. Whether we agree or not, we need to be seen talking to one another and sharing our concerns in a civil way, because that is the way we set an example for future generations and other countries around the world.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Chair, I want to ask my hon. friend about his views on the Iranian regime's role behind this attack. It is clear, I think, that the Iranian regime is seeking to support terrorist organizations throughout the region. If we look at Israel's borders, we see Iranian regime engagement with Hamas, with Hezbollah and with the Assad regime in Syria. We have called for the government to take additional steps to hold the Iranian regime accountable, listing the IRGC as a terrorist organization, for example, and taking additional steps in terms of sanctions. This attack is another data point in terms of the horrors we have seen over the years with regard to the actions of this regime.

I wonder if the member could share what his views are on listing the IRGC, on the role of Iran in this particular attack and on what Canada can do to hold the Iranian regime accountable.

• (2055)

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Chair, that is a very important question. Iran is definitely responsible for Hamas having the resources it had to carry out these terrorist attacks. Whether or not Iran was actually involved in plotting these attacks, we do not know yet; I imagine we will at some future date. However, what we do know is that Iran is actively involved with Hezbollah and may well try to get it to create a second front in Lebanon. We need to make sure, along with our allies, that Iran does not further exacerbate tension in the region. Of course, I have voted in the House to designate the IRGC as a terrorist organization, and I certainly continue to support that vote that I made several years ago.

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague opposite for his speech, which was passionate as usual. I would first like to let him know that my thoughts are with him. This evening, we are dealing with a difficult situation that requires sensitivity. I will ask my colleague a question about something he said. Where does one draw the line between defence and revenge?

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Chair, I always enjoy getting questions from my hon. colleague, who is very intelligent. He always asks good questions. In my opinion, we are in a situation where a western democratic country was attacked by a third party, a terrorist group, whose stated purpose is to eradicate that country. The terrorist group's goal is not to create two states but to eradicate the State of Israel. Israel has the right to defend its population, just as every other state in the world does.

Unfortunately, sometimes it seems as though the issue is dealt with differently only in the case of Israel. I am grateful to the Bloc Québécois for taking a clear stance on this issue.

[*English*]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Chair, I know my colleague to be a very kind man, and I feel for him and his community. I know how difficult this week must have been for the member, as a Jewish Canadian, and I am deeply sorry.

However, my concern is that the member speaks about the right that Israel has to eradicate Hamas, and I utterly agree with him on that. Israel has every right to eradicate Hamas. The problem is that it is not Hamas that I am worried about; it is the children in Gaza. Israel does not have the right to undertake collective punishment. In fact, Noi Katzman, whose brother was murdered by Hamas, has said, "The most important thing for me and also for my brother, is that his death will not be used as a justification for killing innocent people."

There has to be a way we can protect civilians, and right now, that is not happening. There is no corridor. There is no safe place for these families to go. There is no safe place for these children to go. There is nowhere for them to go to escape from the bombardment. How do we stand by and say that killing innocent children will make up for the murder of innocent people?

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Chair, I also know my hon. colleague to be a very nice and well-reasoned person, and I consider her a friend. We disagree on this. I do not believe that anybody is saying any of the things she just said. Israel will do its best, as always, to make sure to make civilian casualties as low as possible. The difference between Hamas and Israel is that Hamas attacks civilians; that is its goal. Hamas wants to kill as many people as possible; Israel does not. Israel wants to go after military targets of Hamas, and I trust the State of Israel will do that.

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I want to start by sharing a story.

When I was a kid, my father would talk to me often about his life as a kid. Mostly they were positive stories filled with wisdom and great life lessons. However, one story he told took place at the Crescentwood Community Centre when he was about 12 years old. He and some other Jewish kids from the neighbourhood were at-

tacked behind the building. They were beat up and bloodied because they were Jews. It really has not been until today that I have understood and felt the same fear that I suspect my father felt back then.

It is with that in mind that I quote something Professor Irwin Cotler said earlier as we announced a new Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism. It was that the Jewish population in Canada represents 1%, but 67% of all hate crimes in Canada are levied against the Jewish community.

This is not to say that we do not have an issue in diaspora communities across the world and across the country. I appreciate that emotions are running raw. I appreciate that when we are traumatized and conflicts such as this arise, we are pushed back into our most primitive state and that innately we respond in tribalistic ways where we feel that, for our own survival, we have to stick with our people. There is certainly danger in that as we seek peace, and I recognize that.

I am able to stand on the floor of this House and say that the loss of every Palestinian child's life is tragic without adding the word "but". The loss of every Palestinian life is tragic. It seems as though my colleagues in the NDP are not capable of speaking to what has occurred in Israel without the insertion of the word "but", and I encourage them to reflect on the perspective that they have in the ways in which they are contributing to our national dialogue right now on this critically important issue.

In the Jewish faith, we have a ceremony called the unveiling. It takes place roughly a year after the passing of someone. On Monday we had the unveiling of the tombstone for my father. As we were walking to the gravesite, we walked past the headstone of my grandmother. It reminded me of the importance of relationship. It reminded me of the importance of bridge building, and that despite the fact that our emotions are raw, we do not have to agree on everything. In fact, we are not going to solve the problems of the Middle East in this chamber or in our communities. What we can do is respect one another. We can show empathy. We can engage in dialogue.

Most importantly, I want to come back to what I saw and was reminded of on my grandmother's headstone last week during my father's unveiling. It said, "Here lies Esther Carr. She made everybody feel like a somebody." Right now, all of us in this chamber and all of us across the country must make one another feel like a somebody as we work through this incredibly difficult period.

• (2100)

The Chair: I just want to say that I was here for the last speech by the previous member for Winnipeg South Centre, and it does seem that he did pass on some great genes to the member.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

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Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Chair, I am not sure if that was the member's first speech in this place, but we were actually at the same university together years ago. I did not expect to be agreeing with him when I asked him my first question in the House. I look forward to future opportunities no doubt to cross swords with the member with greater sharpness in the exchange. I do thank the member for what he shared in his comments.

I invite the member to reflect on some of the foregoing discussion about proportionate response versus vengeance. Some members of the House have, I think, tried to characterize any kind of military response to a terrorist attack as being necessarily vengeful. To me, vengeance implies a vicious desire to inflict harm, rather than a response that is survival or protection oriented.

I wonder if the member could reflect on that distinction.

• (2105)

Mr. Ben Carr: Mr. Chair, I remember fondly the member opposite and I would debate one another on a local Ottawa campus radio station some years ago. Since then he arrived here much sooner than I and made important contributions to our public discourse.

The definition of genocide has a particularly important adjective: deliberate. I think of the innocent lives lost, of Palestinians and Palestinian children, that my hon. colleague from Edmonton Strathcona was right to point out in regard to the tragic nature of how it came to be.

I would suggest the reason we are seeing such loss of life is as a result of the common enemy to the Israeli people and the Palestinian people, and that is Hamas. Hamas is the enemy of Palestine and of Israel. This is something that we must be incredibly mindful of and steadfast in our repetition of as we engage in this debate.

To answer my colleague's question specifically, revenge is not a response to an organization whose fundamental pursuit and objective is to eradicate people from the earth.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Chair, I welcome the member to the House.

There is no doubt that Hamas is the enemy of the Israeli people and the Palestinian people. The human rights violations have been widespread. The killing of 1,400 innocent people attests to that. They are brothers, sisters, parents and children who died. I know if any member in this House could have done anything to stop the deaths of 1,400 people, they would have stepped forward.

That is the point the member for Edmonton Strathcona and the leader of the NDP made. At this sombre occasion, there is the collective punishment that is taking place and the bombing in Gaza right now. The death toll is rising to 3,000 people. There are 1,000 children dead so far and 10,000 wounded.

The question is if we could stop the killing of those innocent lives, those brothers, sisters, parents and children, through this bombing, would we not step up to do that? Is that not what is behind the important call for a ceasefire, to have that humanitarian corridor so that food and water can get to the people who have no food, no medicine and no water? Ensuring that the hostages are released is absolutely fundamental as well.

Is that not our role? Should it be Canada's role to ensure there is no further loss of life?

Mr. Ben Carr: Mr. Chair, the collective punishment is the collective punishment that Hamas is creating. The conditions that Hamas is creating is collective punishment on its own people and the people of Israel.

I would ask my hon. colleague to reflect throughout this debate and afterward on what would happen should there be a ceasefire. Of course we want an end to the conflict. Of course we want to end the loss of innocent lives. If Hamas were able to continue, it would rebuild and it would rebuild stronger. It would attack again because its objective is the eradication of the Jewish people from the face of the earth.

Although I have a deep appreciation for the moral objective that members from the NDP feel they bring to the conversation, it is not a pragmatic, practical or realistic way to deal with a terrorist organization hell-bent on genocide.

• (2110)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Chair, I will be sharing my time with the member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley.

First of all, we are having a lot of trouble clearly identifying who we are dealing with when it comes to Hamas. Last week, for example, I was flabbergasted to hear that CBC/Radio-Canada had asked its news anchors not to use the word “terrorist” to refer to Hamas. Last night, on the program *Tout le monde en parle*, news anchor Céline Galipeau answered a question from Guy A. Lepage by saying, “Out of concern for remaining neutral, we prefer to use more specific and neutral language, but we can speak of combatants, armed men or hostage-takers. That's what we prefer.”

I am going to use the time I have left to talk about Hamas in more detail, because I think some people may not understand exactly who we are dealing with.

Hamas emerged in late 1987, at the beginning of the first Palestinian intifada. The group's charter calls for the establishment of a Palestinian state in the place of Israel and rejects all agreements between the Palestinian Authority and Israel. Hamas has a military branch that has led many anti-Israeli attacks in Israel and in Palestinian territories since the 1990s. Hamas continues to refuse to recognize Israel or to abandon its violent resistance against Israel. It proactively encourages and leads terrorist attacks and does everything it can to sow hatred against Jews. As a result, the American government designated Hamas as a terrorist organization in 1997, and Canada followed suit in 2002.

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Hamas's explicit mission is to murder Jews and to eradicate Israel and replace it with a Taliban-type theocracy. Videos distributed primarily by Hamas and posted on social media document acts of torture, sexual violence, violence against children and desecration of corpses. Even Palestinian officials have recognized that the missiles fired by Hamas constituted war crimes. A Palestinian envoy to the Human Rights Council said that every missile launched against Israel constitutes a crime against humanity, whether or not it hits its target, because it was directed at civilian targets.

On October 7, 2023, over 1,500 Hamas terrorists attacked the Israeli border around the Gaza Strip and went on a murderous rampage in the southern regions. Over 1,300 people were killed and thousands more were wounded in this bloody attack, which was accompanied by a barrage of 5,000 rockets launched indiscriminately on Israeli towns and villages.

Why deny reality? The members of Hamas are terrorists. There is ample evidence of that. It is time to tell the whole truth about these violent criminals. This is not merely a conflict between two peoples. These are acts of terrorism and war crimes. What is more, I think it is despicable that anyone in Canada can express support for Hamas knowing that at least five Canadians are among the victims, including Alexandre Look of Montreal.

Israel has the right to defend itself and to exist. We will always unequivocally the terrorist acts without mincing words. We will always stand by the Israeli people. Hamas must be destroyed. Hamas has provoked something irreparable, and it must pay the price.

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague for his speech. This does not happen often, but for once, we are in agreement. The members of Hamas are terrorists. Hamas is seeking the annihilation of Israel. Hamas is evil. We all agree on that.

However, does the fact that these terrorists want to cause harm and the annihilation of Israel justify any action that will affect the entire Palestinian people?

Is my colleague for or against the establishment of a humanitarian corridor?

• (2115)

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Chair, as we have indicated today, we are in favour of establishing a humanitarian corridor and providing support in safe zones. We also support the evacuation.

As a priority, we obviously call on Hamas to release the three Canadians being held hostage and to allow the evacuation of other Canadians in the Gaza Strip or elsewhere in Israel who want to leave. Obviously, we support those calls.

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I thank my hon. colleague for his excellent speech.

Unfortunately, the hon. member may not have heard that the bodies of two of the three Canadians we thought might have been taken hostage were found today. That means the Canadian dead now number seven.

Does my hon. colleague agree with me that it was an attack not only on Israel but on Canada, on the United States and on humanity?

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Chair, sadly, my colleague just informed me that two more Canadians died as a result of Hamas's unspeakable attacks. That is why I took the time in my speech to describe Hamas. I think that is worth repeated reminders.

We often tend to hear people say they are against Hamas, but there is always a "but". There should be no "buts". We must be 100%, unequivocally, behind Israel in fighting Hamas and destroying every last one of its members.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Chair, I never thought that one day I would have to rise in the House to speak about such tragic events.

There is something that I have found surprising all evening: Some have tried to dehumanize what happened on October 7 by talking about an attack on Israel, forgetting that it was an attack on women and children who were subjected to unspeakable acts, on fathers who fought to the death to protect their families, on elderly people who asked for nothing more than to go on living, and on people who were going to celebrate peace nearby. The attack on Israel is first and foremost a terrorist attack on people and on civilians.

Does my colleague agree with me that Hamas, which is behind this despicable, sadistic, and unspeakable attack, needs to be completely eliminated, and that Israel has the right to hunt it down to ensure the safety of Israeli civilians, whatever the cost?

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Chair, quite obviously, my colleague is absolutely right.

There has been a lot of talk about an attack on Israel. Now, it is true that some people are trying to downplay the reality of what happened and the disgusting way Hamas attacked Israeli citizens. Canadians died. Some victims were from the United States. There were people at a concert. Young people were there to have fun and listen to music. Paratroopers came in from all sides and started shooting. It does not make any sense at all.

That is why we always have to think of the act that was committed, whether it was against Israel or against people from any other country who were there that day and were attacked by 1,500 Hamas commandos. These terrorists did this simply to spread terror. That is what terrorism is. It is about spreading terror and scaring people.

[English]

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Chair, on October 7 we woke up to an unspeakable horror. Hamas terrorists brutally invaded Israel, invaded homes, intentionally killing 1,400 Israeli civilians and taking hostage over 100 more.

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We must stand shoulder to shoulder with Israel as it defends itself from the criminal and barbarous acts of Hamas. Among the dead are seven Canadians. May their memories be a blessing. At least one Canadian is still missing and presumed held hostage. All hostages must be released.

More Jews were killed in Saturday's attack than on any single day since the Holocaust. They were children, babies, men and women intentionally slaughtered in their homes. They were young people, just out listening to music at a dance party. This was an unprecedented, brutal, intentional attack.

As we speak, Hamas is threatening to execute innocent hostages. This outrage cannot and must not stand. Do not let anyone say that Hamas is the legitimate voice of the Palestinian people. It is not a government. Its members are not activists or freedom fighters. They are not a resistance movement. They are a genocidal, murderous and evil death cult, and they must be defeated.

Hamas has demonstrated, in an especially depraved manner, why it is listed as a terrorist entity by Canada and its western allies. There is broad consensus that the war on Hamas is a just one. Hamas is a sworn enemy of Israel, intent on its annihilation, but it has also betrayed the Palestinian population it claims to represent. Its goal is to maximize the suffering of both Israelis and Palestinians. It serves as a fundamental impediment to peace and the goal of reconciliation between Israel and the Palestinian people.

Make no mistake: Hamas is a direct proxy of Iran, and that is why Canada must list the IRGC as a terrorist entity. I have to say that all celebrations on Canadian soil of the evil, sadistic Hamas terrorist attacks on Israeli citizens are abhorrent. Shame on all those who participated.

Conservatives unequivocally condemn the invasion of Israel by Hamas terrorists and the sadistic violence that Hamas has carried out against innocent civilians. Now is the time for moral clarity. There is no moral equivalency between democratic Israel and the butchers of Hamas. There is no response within the boundaries of international law that would be disproportionate to the crimes Hamas has committed.

Israel has the right to defend itself against these attacks and respond against the attackers, just as any other country would. Theodor Herzl, the father of modern Zionism, was famous for saying, "If you will it, it is no dream."

In 1948, that dream became a reality, a homeland in Israel, the promised land. Working together, Israelis turned a desert into an oasis, an island of democracy surrounded by a sea of autocracy, a Jewish state where Jews could live in peace, free from fear and persecution.

Let there be no doubt: Israel is the ancient and indigenous homeland of the Jewish people.

Many politicians will stand with Israel when it is easy, but listen to what they say when it is hard. They will talk about both sides. I am here to say that there is only one side: the side of morality, the side of democracy, the side that Israel is on.

Too often we see politicians at the United Nations unfairly single out Israel for criticism. I will always stand against the unfair singling out of the Middle East's only democracy.

We call on the government to conduct an immediate review of all aid going to Gaza, to ensure it does not go to funding Hamas in its campaign of terror but rather to aid innocent civilians. Already there are calls for Israel to de-escalate. I cannot believe I am hearing this, even from the NDP. I ask, would any country de-escalate after having its people slaughtered in cold blood and still held hostage? No, they would not.

I wish the people of Israel and its brave soldiers Godspeed on their mission to defend the promised land from pure evil. As then prime minister Stephen Harper said, "Through fire and water, Canada will stand with you."

Am Yisrael Chai.

• (2120)

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I thank my hon. colleague, a good friend who delivered an excellent speech.

At the United Nations and at international organizations there is frequently something that happens, which is Israel being treated differently from everyone else in the community of nations. At the UN Human Rights Council, Israel is the only regular item on their agenda. Israel is disproportionately singled out for condemnation in every UN agency.

It seems, with this war, there are some who would treat Israel differently from every other country in terms of its right to self-defence under international law. I am wondering if the hon. member might comment on that issue.

• (2125)

Mr. Marty Morantz: Mr. Chair, I want to thank my colleague for pointing out that Israel is perpetually singled out. It seems there is a unique obsession, not only in the United Nations but particularly in the United Nations, to hold Israel to a different standard and to say that Israel is not a supporter of human rights or even Palestinian rights. We see countries in the region, autocracies, that do not treat their populations with the same rights, and they cannot be allowed to stand.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Chair, I think that there is a pretty clear consensus tonight that what happened on October 7 is unimaginable. It was a terrorist attack that must be condemned in the strongest possible terms. We also agree that Hamas must be eradicated from the Gaza Strip.

The Gaza Strip is now blockaded and, under international law, humanitarian corridors must be put in place. Currently, this is not the case.

In my colleague's opinion, what is currently preventing Israel from setting up humanitarian corridors?

[*English*]

Mr. Marty Morantz: Mr. Chair, Conservatives have called for and support the idea of a safe zone in southern Gaza, humanitarian corridors to provide needed supplies of food, water and medical supplies in Gaza and of course to enable foreign nationals who are in Gaza to be safely removed and taken back home.

At the end of the day, Israel has a right to defend itself, and its mission is to eradicate Hamas. At the end of the day, that will be a good thing for not only Israelis but Palestinian citizens.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Chair, I want to send my heartfelt sympathy to my colleague. As a Jewish Canadian, I know he is experiencing such incredible heart-break right now.

While I am not Jewish, I empathize with every Jewish Canadian and with Jewish people around the world for the horrific things that have happened in Israel over the last several days.

Because I am not Jewish, I am going to quote from somebody who is a survivor of the massacre at the Kibbutz Be'eri, who asked, "How am I supposed to wake up every morning and know that 4.5 kilometres from me, from my home in Kibbutz Be'eri, in Gaza there are people for whom this is not over? If you hear my words, look deep, deep inside and ask yourselves what your values are. I know what I want. I want a just peace."

Do the children in Gaza not deserve the same peace that we are all hoping for, for the Israeli people?

Mr. Marty Morantz: Mr. Chair, I know the NDP likes to do it, but it is important not to conflate Hamas with the plight of the Palestinian people. With regard to the plight of the Palestinian people, all I can really say to the member is that if she truly wants peace for the Palestinian people, she will get behind international calls for the eradication of Hamas.

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Chair, let me begin by saying that, like all Canadians, I have watched with horror the events unfolding in Israel and Gaza. Violence and acts of terror are never the way to lasting peace and justice. Hamas is an illegal terrorist group that does not represent or advance the cause of the Palestinian or Muslim people. I condemn the intentional targeting of innocent civilians regardless of their political views or affiliations. I worry for the safety of the innocent civilians caught in the middle of this escalating conflict, especially the children.

I want to say that I will be sharing my time with the member for Outremont.

I am also concerned about the rising incidence of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism here in Canada where we live in peace with our neighbours. While we worry for our friends and loved ones overseas, we must treat each other with patience, kindness and understanding. My prayers are with all of those who are deeply worried and traumatized by the events in Israel and Palestine.

As a mother, I worry about the trauma so many children must be experiencing. I know everyone has been traumatized by the news of the attack on a Muslim family in Chicago and the death of a six-

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year-old boy who were targeted because they are Muslim. As a mother, I worry for the safety of my own children when they go out to eat, play basketball or go to work. We are all worried.

I came to Canada to live a peaceful life. I condemn all incidents of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. I urge any incidents of hateful violence to be investigated by the proper authorities. There is no place for any hatred in Canada.

I have heard from many in the Scarborough community who are deeply concerned about Israel's order to one million innocent civilians to flee Gaza under an unrealistic deadline. International law is clear: Civilians must be protected and must not be targets.

It is painfully clear that a humanitarian crisis is under way in Gaza. The situation is dire. There are serious shortages of water and food. Hospitals have run out of vital supplies. Electricity is not available. Casualties are mounting by the day. The siege of Gaza must end. The innocent civilians of Gaza must not be victims of this conflict. The World Health Organization and the United Nations have urged that this order be rescinded. There needs to be a humanitarian corridor and support for these innocent civilians including food, water and electricity. The United Nations and other humanitarian agencies are ready to help and do that work. Canada must do all it can to ensure the safe and unimpeded access of relief via a humanitarian corridor. I urge Canada to be a voice for an immediate ceasefire, the end of all violence and the return of all hostages home to their families.

While our focus is on the immediate crisis and the protection of the innocent civilians of Gaza, the West Bank and Israel, we must not lose sight of the need to end the cycle of violence. The only way to do that is through dialogue. History has shown us that war and violence are never the way to peace and justice. Canada has long been a proponent for a two-state solution: A free and democratic state of Israel and a free and democratic state of Palestine, living side by side in peace. Sadly, that dream seems to slip further away every day, yet I do not know what other option for a better future there could be.

Canadian policy is also clear: Israeli settlements in the occupied territories are a violation of the fourth Geneva convention and constitute a serious obstacle to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. Again, I call for Canada to recognize the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. All those guilty of war crimes must face international justice.

When I speak to members of the Palestinian community, they are tired. They are in pain. They feel their future has been on hold for generations. They feel their freedom has been denied.

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● (2130)

They just want what all of us want, what all of us take for granted: to be able to work, to walk their children to school and to be able to give the next generation a better future without security checkpoints and constant worry. They yearn for hope but so many, too many, are without hope. They cannot see a better future for their children.

Let Canada be a voice for hope.

● (2135)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know my hon. colleague is very sincere in her convictions on these matters.

I wanted to pick up on the issue of the importance of establishing a humanitarian corridor and safe zones for the distribution of essential humanitarian assistance. Our party supports that and has called for that.

I want to note that the last time there was conflict between Gaza and Israel, there was one instance that we heard about at the foreign affairs committee where Hamas intentionally targeted a humanitarian crossing point.

I asked Canadian officials why Hamas would intentionally target a humanitarian crossing. Canadian officials at the time said:

In terms of the reason...obviously the intention and the pressure on all parties Hamas may not have wanted alleviated instantly, to keep the pressure on and keep sending the message.

I wonder if the member would agree that as vitally important as establishing these humanitarian corridors are, one of the challenges has been, historically, that Hamas has shown capricious disregard for the lives of Palestinians and has, in fact, used their pain and the prevention of access for humanitarian aid as a tool to try to exert more pressure on the international community.

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my speech, it is really important that all parties to a conflict have the responsibility to abide by international law. International law is very clear. Civilians must be protected and must not be the targets.

The situation right now is very dire. There are serious shortages of food and water. If there is no water, there is no life in Gaza. Hospitals have run out of vital supplies, so it is very important that all efforts are made.

As the Minister of International Development has cited this morning, all of the humanitarian aid should be directed toward the civilians who do not have any food or water.

The innocent civilians of Gaza must not be the victims of this conflict.

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her sincerity, her conviction and her articulation of support for the pursuit of peace.

I understand the pain she is feeling and the fear she is feeling as a leader both in her religious and faith-based community and also in her responsibilities as a parliamentarian, broadly speaking. I think that all of us are feeling that way right now.

We will have differences in terms of the way in which we approach solutions to this very difficult conflict. On this side of the House, of course, there will be difficult conversations, as I imagine there will be on that side of the House.

In what ways can we, both within these walls and outside these walls, as colleagues and as parliamentary leaders, start to bring the temperature down in the country and work together, despite these differences, in order to restore a sense of security and safety for all Canadians?

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Mr. Speaker, I am also really concerned about what is happening domestically, these increasing incidents of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. While we worry about our friends and loved ones overseas, I think it is really important that we must treat each other with patience, kindness and understanding. This is what Canadians are known for.

Canadians, I know, are worried. I heard it while I was in my riding last week but I think it is really important that we all come together to make sure that we fight anti-Semitism and Islamophobia right here in Canada, so that everyone feels safe.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech, which I really appreciated. I thank her for her sensitivity. I would like to ask her the following question. We have heard a lot of good intentions this evening, but beyond good intentions, what specifically can be done?

[English]

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my remarks, the only way to break out of this cycle of violence is for Israelis and Palestinians to work together for just peace that recognizes the rights of Israelis and Palestinians, who only want to live in peace, freedom and security.

We have a lot of work to do to get there. I hope that Canada plays its role in making sure of its call for lasting peace in that region.

● (2140)

[Translation]

The Speaker: I would like to thank the members for the way they are behaving during this debate. This is a very important debate that touches on very sensitive issues, but members are showing restraint in the debates and questions. I thank all members for their patience.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and member for Outremont.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about Alexandre Look, a 33-year-old from Montreal.

His mother told RDI that her son had called, over video, at about 11:15 p.m., Quebec time. He said, "Mommy, we're in the middle of a terrorist attack." His father added, "We witnessed our son's murder."

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Young Alexandre took refuge in a shelter with about 30 other people. According to reports, survivors who were with Alexandre Look in the shelter explained that he tried to block the entrance, which had no door. That is when he was fired upon by militants. One of the survivors had this to say about Alexandre: "I swear to you, he was our shield. If he hadn't been there, we'd all be dead." This Montrealer gave his life to save others.

Shir Georgy, 22, Ben Mizrachi, 22, Adi Vital-Kaploun, 33, and Netta Epstein, 21, were all Canadians.

[*English*]

These are Canadians murdered in cold blood, each with a heart-breaking, terrifying story, Canadians taken hostage, each with a heartbroken and terrified family. I spoke to a father. His voice still rings in my ear. His daughter was kidnapped and he lays awake at night wondering if she is alive or dead.

There are Canadians in Gaza, hoping to come home, hoping to find safety. There are Canadians in Israel, hoping to come home, hoping to find safety.

There are families, many families from my community in Outremont, who found themselves in Israel for the Jewish holidays. As I am sure many members of Parliament understand, who have heard from families with loved ones, I have been immersed night and day, day and night, in one thing. That is the safe return of our Canadians. I cannot describe the calls with sirens in the background, babies screaming and parents asking for help; parents asking to get on a plane.

Our utmost priority has been the safe return of all Canadians whether they are from Gaza, the West Bank or Israel, whether they are Muslim, Jewish or Coptic Christians, like those who flew home on our military plane just a few days ago.

Our government will continue to devote itself to keeping all Canadians safe. For me that means two things: bringing our people home and keeping our country free from the hateful rhetoric and violence that flourishes anywhere and everywhere whenever we pit one community against another.

I have been horrified by the explosion of hate here in Canada and around the world; in Germany there are apartment buildings where Jewish people live that were marked with a star of David, a horrific echo of Nazi persecution; in Australia, a crowd of so-called protesters shouted "Gas the Jews" over and over again, and in the United States, a Palestinian boy, a boy just six years old, was fatally stabbed 26 times.

[*Translation*]

In Montreal, less than 48 hours after the massacre in Israel, a demonstration was held to celebrate the terrorist attack by Hamas as an act of resistance. A few days ago, some young people from the Université de Montréal shared their fear with me. Some are being harassed. Some begged me to appeal to the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal on their behalf. Worried parents fear for the safety of their children. That is happening here at home, in Montreal.

[*English*]

The position that Canada has taken is that of all western democracies. It is the only position that could allow the rules-based order to survive. It is to defend one's territory and defend one's people against terror. Should a terrorist organization enter our country's borders and attack Canadians, would we not respond? Yes, we would.

Do Palestinians in Gaza who had nothing to do with the massacre by Hamas have the right to access food, water and fuel? I want to be crystal clear: Without a doubt, they absolutely do. Should there be a humanitarian corridor? There absolutely should. Should there be safe passage to neighbouring countries such as Egypt? Of course there should be. However, as a Canadian government, our priority is to defend Canadians, and we too were attacked.

Canadians have been taken hostage by this terrorist organization; Canadians have died at the hands of this terrorist organization. Those responsible need to be stopped, because if anyone in this House of Commons aspires to peace, hopes for a just and lasting resolution and dreams of a two-state solution and of a Palestinian state living side by side with an Israeli state, then Hamas must be destroyed.

• (2145)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, this debate is difficult and emotionally wrenching because this week has been emotionally wrenching. Hamas's crimes are horrific. I cannot say strongly enough that Hamas must be eliminated.

I know this is dangerous to think out loud in a debate among colleagues, but as this debate has gone forward, I have been thinking this: How can we ensure the safety of the civilian population of Gaza? I think we all agree they must not be conflated with their horrific captors. Let us make no mistake: Hamas has kept the people of Gaza hostage as well, since 2007.

On one side in this war is the State of Israel. On the other side is a terrorist organization of criminals laced through and hiding among a civilian population. I know that "perhaps" in this context is a dangerous notion for someone in politics, but let me climb out on a limb and ask this: Canadians have the history of having invented the peacekeepers under former prime minister Lester B. Pearson; as such, can we imagine a policing action of many states to eliminate Hamas? Can we go in and eliminate the criminals, without bombing from the air, and have an ability to rescue innocents and hostages? I am not saying with no violence. Can we kill and eliminate Hamas, but do it carefully through peacekeeping measures?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleague that Hamas has been keeping the Palestinian people hostage. I agree that the Hamas terrorists must be stopped and destroyed. I am not here to speculate on how we do that. I am certainly open to suggestions. However, as I said in my speech, and if my colleague was listening, this is a conflict halfway around the world.

I am not sure that, right at this moment, these are the ideas that need to be said in this House. Canadians are afraid and hurting. Our duty is toward our Canadian community.

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Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just heard the leader of the Green Party propose that perhaps Hamas could be eliminated by another international force. I would speculate that, if other countries volunteered to do that, Israel would be happy to have that occur. However, in the absence of having other countries commit troops to defeat Hamas, Israel is obviously on the front line and committed to protecting itself.

My grandmother was a Holocaust survivor and, as a result, I reflect a lot on the meaning of “never again”. Part of what this means for Jewish people or their descendants is that, during the horrific period of the Holocaust, other people and other nations did not step forward to prevent and stop the Holocaust. As such, Jewish people realized the need to protect themselves and develop the military capacity to defend themselves. If it were necessary to stand alone, they would have to protect themselves and make sure that something like this would never happen again. Could the member comment on that?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Mr. Speaker, I have worked with my colleague on several occasions toward a common cause. He is touching upon a very important point, which is that October 7 and the horrific attack by Hamas mark the day when the most Jews were killed since the Shoah and the Second World War. That has served to retraumatize survivors of the Holocaust, and all Jewish people, here in Canada and around the world. I think that is a very important point.

• (2150)

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague spoke about Canadians hurting. She spoke about the people in her own community, the fear they have and ensuring that we are protecting them. In my community, it was just reported that there was a sign in an apartment building for everyone to see that said “Kill all Muslims”. What do we need to do today to ensure that anti-Palestinian and anti-Semitic messages are really addressed here in this place?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Mr. Speaker, that is a subject I care very deeply about, and I would like to just make absolutely clear that acts of hatred, whether Islamophobic or anti-Semitic, have no place in this country. We must all work together in order to bring people together and ensure the safety of all Canadians.

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for South Surrey—White Rock.

As most of us in this chamber and around the world did, I woke up on October 7 to look through my phone on Twitter, which is now called X, at the unspeakable horror that was going on in Israel.

It is hard to describe what happened and what transpired in Israel, with the brutality of Hamas members and how they did what they did so joyfully. They engaged in livestreaming the atrocities as they committed them, as if it were some kind of badge of honour. These are despicable, unspeakable acts, and it is unimaginable for us here in Canada that these things could even happen. When we look at the context of what is going on from the safety of being here in Canada, we actually cannot understand the horror that the people

in Israel went through. The suffering is enormous. The brutality is extreme.

We always have to remember that Hamas is not a government or a military. Hamas is a brutal terrorist organization with one purpose, and its members carried out that purpose in a disgusting way in Israel.

I have spoken with my friends in the Muslim community and in the Jewish community. There is deep pain right now with the suffering that has gone on in Israel and the fact that there are still close to 200 hostages being held in who knows what kind of conditions. Of course, there is suffering that is going on in Gaza right now.

We always have to remember this: Hamas is responsible for all this suffering. Its members engage in despicable tactics, where they hide in Gaza. They precipitated all this conflict.

We do, of course, have to find ways to protect civilian lives, which is something that we on the Conservative side have absolutely called for and are committed to. The lives of innocent Israelis who were taken, civilians who were deliberately targeted and innocent Palestinians have equal value. That is why we have been very clear: We have called for safe zones, a humanitarian corridor and an ability to evacuate foreign nationals. All these things should occur, because it is the responsible thing for Canada to advocate for.

We also have to make sure that none of the issues that are going on, whether in Israel or Gaza, happen here in Canada. We have to combat any hate in this country. In speaking to my friends in the Muslim community and the Jewish community, there is a lot of fear right now here in Canada, and the government has to take the lead on this. There are people who are afraid to go to their place of worship, whether it is a mosque or a temple. The government has a responsibility to ensure that Canadians feel safe in their places of worship, which is why we are calling on the government to do more to ensure that this protection takes place.

I know that I speak for all members in this chamber about the solemnity and seriousness of this situation. We also always have to remember, despite what we hear from some of our colleagues in the NDP, that Israel has the right to defend itself, and it is doing that in a way to minimize civilian casualties. On the Conservative side, we support Israel's right to defend itself.

• (2155)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. He touched on a few points that I also feel very strongly about.

I believe the member mentioned the importance of our government taking action in order to help Canadians feel safe in their communities, and I could not agree with him more. As I mentioned, that is a priority, of course, of our government. However, does he not feel that this should be the priority of every single member of this House of Commons? Every elected parliamentarian should feel that it is also their responsibility to ensure that communities come together, that hate is tamped out and that we here in Canada can live peacefully and safely regardless of our origin or religion.

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Mr. Kyle Seeback: Mr. Speaker, I agree 100%. It is something we all have a responsibility to do. It is why I have conversations with my friends in the Muslim community and have conversations with my friends in the Jewish community. We all need to work together toward that.

However, there are some things the government can do. It could rapidly disburse funds to religious organizations to beef up their security, because there is a feeling of insecurity right now. As much as we would hope that would not happen here in Canada, those are some of the things I am hearing. That member can speak to her government to make sure that happens.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his speech. I enjoy working with him from time to time on committees.

I just asked a question a moment ago, but they were unable to come up with an answer. Right now, Gaza is blockaded, and under international law, humanitarian corridors should be set up. Not only should they be set up under international law, but they must be.

The Conservatives are of the same opinion as the Bloc Québécois, and they are calling for the same things as the Bloc Québécois, the NDP and even the government of the day. Everyone is calling for a humanitarian corridor, but unfortunately there is none right now. A lot of pressure is starting to build on the Gaza Strip and, of course, on its people. This is endangering the well-being of the entire region. We can see that certain countries are looking to get involved, given the lack of a humanitarian corridor.

In my colleague's opinion, what is preventing Israel from setting up a humanitarian corridor?

[*English*]

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Mr. Speaker, I suspect part of the reason there is not a humanitarian corridor is Hamas. It will do everything it can to prevent such a humanitarian corridor from functioning effectively. However, it is something we are absolutely calling for. We are on the same page on that.

• (2200)

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I join my hon. colleague in condemning Hamas. I also noted in his speech and appreciated that he talked about protecting lives. He is also likely aware that in recent days there have been 6,000 bombs dropped on Palestinians, and almost 3,000 Palestinians have been killed. In light of this, at what point, if any, would he join in calling for a ceasefire?

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Mr. Speaker, it is not my position to tell a sovereign nation when its right to defend itself ends. What I do know is that Israel is attempting to minimize any civilian casualties. However, it does have a right to defend itself. We all agree in this chamber that Hamas needs to be eliminated, and that is what Israel is trying to do. We on this side support that effort.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague works with me on the Canada-China committee, and I actually was in his riding recently.

He spoke a bit about international law and the right of Israel to defend itself. We know that former International Criminal Court prosecutor Ocampo has said that there is potential for what is happening in Gaza to be a humanitarian genocide. Would the member be open to having all crimes committed at this time investigated by the ICC or the ICJ?

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Mr. Speaker, I am not going to speculate on what she is suggesting. What we do know for sure is that Hamas committed despicable war crimes, and it livestreamed them. For that, Hamas needs to be eliminated.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, October 7, 2023, is a day now permanently pierced into history, when the world witnessed evil in its purest form. Israelis were wrapping up the festival of Sukkot when sirens rang out. Israel was under violent attack. Like many Canadians, I was horrified to wake up to the news, images and videos coming out of Israel. This deliberate, coordinated attack by Hamas terrorists was despicable, unjustified, and I condemn it unequivocally.

Israel has the right to defend itself, just as Canada would if this attack were carried out on our soil. This should not be difficult to say, but some Canadian politicians and some in the media could not find the moral courage to say so. We have seen statements put out by both Liberal and NDP politicians that were so outrageous and morally bankrupt they had to be walked back or deleted.

The CBC instructed its employees to avoid referring to Hamas as terrorists. Our own state broadcaster ignored the fact that Hamas was put on the terrorist entity list by the Government of Canada in 2002, describing Hamas as “a radical Islamist-nationalist terrorist organization”.

We have seen reprehensible celebrations of these terrorist attacks right here in Canada, including, shamefully, in my own community in B.C. On Friday, in my community, a rabbi's home was vandalized with eggs and a swastika was drawn on his window. This is disgusting and unacceptable. This hate should not be tolerated in our country, full stop.

I condemn these celebrations and condemn the ideology of hate that has no place in Canada. There is no moral equivalence between Hamas terrorists who slaughter innocents, savagely rape women and children, behead babies and use their own people as human shields, and Israel exercising their right to defend themselves. This is a time for moral clarity.

I hope the CBC is paying attention when I say that Hamas is not a militant organization, a resistance or an activist group. Hamas is a sadistic, barbaric, terrorist death cult with no respect for human life. There can be no negotiating with Hamas. They must be defeated and destroyed. Their enablers must be exposed for the vile anti-Semites that they are. This includes state sponsors of terrorism, including the dictatorship in Tehran.

I have seen first-hand the strength of the Israeli people and how Israelis live under existential threat from Hamas, funded by Iran and other hostile actors in the region. Now this threat is reality.

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My heart breaks for the families who have been destroyed, especially the families of the seven Canadians who were ruthlessly murdered. Last night in South Surrey, I attended a rally in support of the Jewish community and spoke to friends of Ben Mizrahi, a 22-year-old British Columbian murdered at the music festival. He was using his training as a medic with the IDF to help people who were wounded in the attack. He was trying to save lives when he tragically lost his own.

For those still in danger, we must do everything we can to bring them home safe. As we continue to watch the horrific events unfolding in Israel, there are concrete actions that Canada can and must take.

First, Canada must criminalize the IRGC, the terrorist arm of the Iranian government. Today again, the Liberals blocked the passage of a Conservative bill that would have taken this necessary first step.

Second, there are Canadians missing and presumed to be among the hostages. The Government of Canada must demand the immediate release of our citizens and all hostages taken by Hamas.

Third, Conservatives are calling for a full review of all foreign aid programs to ensure that no Canadian tax dollars are going to support terrorism.

Fourth, we must protect Canadian places of worship. Every person of faith has a constitutional right to worship here in Canada. “Never again” is a phrase associated with the atrocities of the Holocaust. Never again is now. Jewish people around the world are remarkably resilient. They choose to believe the promises of scripture that better days and peace lie ahead. However, they should not be continuously forced to prove their resilience by malevolent forces against their very existence.

I am proud to stand with our friend and ally, Israel.

● (2205)

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague knows that the Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre of the Government of Canada has a national terrorism threat level. When Parliament Hill was attacked in October 2014, which was the last terrorist attack here on Canadian soil, it was set to medium, which is that a terrorist attack could occur.

Does the hon. member not think it is a good idea for the Government of Canada to update Canadians about the threat level that communities like the Jewish community, like the Muslim community, might be facing and either to reaffirm the threat level at medium or to upgrade the threat level to high, a likely chance of an attack occurring, in order to either reassure Canadians or arm them with the information they need to protect their religious and cultural communities?

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned about the threat level here in Canada and in the United States. We know that we are seen as one North American entity by a lot of the bad actors in the world. We are referred to as the little Satan with the U.S. being the big Satan. We know there are people among us here who would do harm. I think it is essential that the Government of Canada assess the present threat level and inform Canadians.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think everyone in this House recognizes that adherence to international law is key and that international law needs to be applied equally.

Would the member agree that collective punishment is an example of being against international law?

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Mr. Speaker, I agree that international law should be observed, but we are talking about extraordinary circumstances. We are talking about a surprise attack on a sovereign nation in the most brutal and horrific manner where innocents were slaughtered. They were not soldiers. They were people in their homes having Shabbat dinner or asleep in their beds. Babies are no threat to anyone.

I understand Israel's right to defend itself, and it must choose how and when to do so. It is making every effort, from what I can see, to warn those who were not involved to go to safety.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on the question raised by the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

It is clear that international law was violated by Hamas. This, I think, we agree on. Would the hon. colleague not also agree that it would be inappropriate for any state to violate international law in response and to do everything possible to protect the lives of civilians?

● (2210)

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Mr. Speaker, I believe that Israel, many times in the past, has been under violent attack from aggressor states all around it. We must remember that Israel is a very small country with vast aggressor states around it that mean to do it harm, which have vowed to push Israelis and the state of Israel into the sea.

In these circumstances, I think that Israel has always tried to follow international law, absolutely. I believe it will do so again.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to know something. Obviously this terrorist organization, Hamas, could not have organized a terrorist operation of this magnitude without support from people with means. We are talking here about the funded Iranian group, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Does my colleague agree that the House has a duty to condemn this group and recognize it as a terrorist organization?

[English]

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Mr. Speaker, I personally and all of my Conservative colleagues have called for the IRGC to be declared a terrorist organization by the government, so that it could not organize here in Canada or raise funds here in Canada. On the Liberal side they have gone so far as to call it a state sponsor of terrorism.

Again, this is not a drill. This is reality. Iran sponsors terror throughout the region and, in fact, probably elsewhere outside the Middle East. We need to see it for what it is, call it out and stop the flow of funds to terrorist organizations like Hamas.

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Toronto—Danforth, my friend within my party.

This debate, this moment and this week have been extremely difficult for all who are watching what is happening overseas. It has caused fear, trauma, anger and hurt. These are emotions that are flowing through all of us. These are emotions we have to recognize. These emotions are legitimate and valid. It is important that we take stock of them.

On Saturday, October 7, I attended a Shabbat lunch with a rabbi in my riding. It was in his home, which is also a synagogue. That morning, the full scale of what happened, with the escalation of violence and the terror caused by Hamas, was not fully realized. However, we sat together, and the rabbi said that they were honoured by guests from outside of the community and that their Sukkot is complete when they welcome those from outside the community. We are all part of the puzzle. We are all part of the human family. We complete each other. We all have a role to play.

One week after that, and then some, a lot has happened. We have seen terrible things within Israel and terrible violence within Gaza. People died and people are dying now, as we speak. It should disturb us deeply. It should keep us awake at night. Why is that? Is it because lives are being lost right now? We know that is not the end of it. We know violence will continue to be unleashed. Will this solve the question we are all trying to solve, which at its core, at its root, is to build a safe and peaceful environment within the Middle East for both Israelis and Palestinians?

Take it here, home to Canada. We have seen this manifest within our communities. I was speaking with a rabbi in my riding earlier today, and he was telling me how children stayed home on Friday because of a threat that came from overseas. Children did not go to school, because they were worried.

In my own family, my sister-in-law wears the hijab. This morning, as she was driving my nine-year-old niece, her daughter, to school, she was accosted. Two different people within my riding gave her the middle finger. One followed her. She thought it was too unsafe to complete that drive. She returned home. Things are happening within our communities. We have to recognize this. It is critical that we do so.

We should have vigorous debate within the House and even within our communities, but there are limits. There are bounds, and we must know those bounds and recognize those limits. To get to

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the nub of the issue, the core of it, how do we not find ourselves in this cycle that has continued for so long? We must, in the end, choose to ensure that everyone in the region lives in peace and dignity, and that happens only through the creation of viable states for both Israelis and Palestinians, with a viable state for Palestinians too. Once everyone in the region can live in peace and security, and when our neighbour can live in peace and security, only then will we live in peace and security.

• (2215)

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I know my colleague cares deeply about his constituents and the community.

Like him, I have been hearing horrific tales and stories about people. The mother of one of my colleagues was speaking Urdu, and my colleague had to tell her mom to stop speaking that and to go home, because she was so worried there would be violence perpetrated against her. The entire Jewish community is afraid. The entire Palestinian community is afraid. I am deeply worried that there is going to be an increase in violence in this country, that we are going to see an increase in hate crimes and that people are going to get harmed.

I wonder if the member could talk about how he sees his government taking action on this and what can be done to protect people.

Mr. Sameer Zuberi: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question from the member from across the aisle.

We need to recognize that a lot is happening within our communities. It is important for every member of the House to understand that. We need to bring people together, as difficult as that is. We must do so as leaders. Within the chamber, we are all leaders in our own right. Within our communities, we must do our utmost to bring people together, as difficult as that is. We have to also allow people to work through what they are experiencing. We have to be there and respect that people are hurting.

• (2220)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech. We have worked together on a number of human rights issues, and that is exactly what we are doing again this evening.

I might disappoint some people this evening and this might sound glum, but I doubt there are many people in Israel or Palestine who are watching us right now. I am trying to determine what we can actually do, what impact we can really have on what is happening right now. One thing is possible. Canada could exert pressure to create humanitarian corridors. I truly believe that this could be possible if my colleague's government were prepared to take action. I am sure my friend would like to see that happen.

Does he know whether that is happening? If not, will my colleague put pressure on his own government to make it happen?

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Mr. Sameer Zuberi: Mr. Speaker, I think that dialogue is very important. We need to have conversations and build bridges with other countries to promote peace.

[*English*]

We also have to promote a viable solution.

[*Translation*]

It is very difficult to have this conversation today because of the war that is currently taking place. However, it is absolutely necessary that we maintain this objective.

[*English*]

It is absolutely necessary that we create a society and a world better than what we see at this moment.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the member, since he is part of the ministerial party, about a question I asked one of my colleagues earlier.

There is a lot of fear, as he has mentioned, in both the Jewish and Muslim communities across Canada, that they may be attacked individually or that their cultural, religious or educational institutions may be attacked. The government's integrated terrorism assessment centre has assessed Canada's national terrorism threat level at medium since October 2014. Does he not think it would be useful for the integrated terrorism assessment centre to indicate to the public if the level remains at medium or to assess it at a different level in order to reassure Canadians or better equip them to ensure their safety?

Mr. Sameer Zuberi: Mr. Speaker, there is certainly a spike happening right now in discrimination. Anti-Semitism, anti-Palestinian discrimination, anti-Arab discrimination and Islamophobia are happening within our society and communities. In America, we saw that a six-year-old Muslim boy was stabbed to death over 20 times. I am deeply concerned about the future, not only overseas but also here. We need to bring the temperature down and be there for our communities.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tonight I am going to take more of a personal approach to this debate. I am going to be speaking as a Jewish woman and a Jewish mother here in Canada about what the past week and few days have been like.

On the day of the mass murder and kidnappings by Hamas in Israel, like many people, I tuned to the television. I felt horror and fear. Me and my daughters were watching TV on a constant loop, and we watched every piece come out. We were on social media, and I will get back to that because that was not a good place to be. The whole time we were so focused. There were so many innocent Israeli people killed, people we could relate to, such as people in their homes or at a concert, and it was so much emotion for us.

Perhaps the feeling that had me struggling the most over this past week was disappointment, and the disappointment comes from the reactions we saw around us on day one and two from neighbours, friends and commentators on TV. They all jumped from the expression of sympathy and empathy to talking about context, and that was so hard because we were listening to people saying that violent

action against innocent Israeli people, largely Jewish people, could all be explained if we just talked a little bit about history. It hurt to hear that. It made me sad.

It is important to say that so many people around us, and I am speaking for me, my daughter and other people I saw, were not able to just stop the clock for a moment to mourn and support. That left me and a lot of people like me feeling vulnerable. I am taking this moment to talk to people who, like me, just needed that moment to process, to be believed and to be comforted. Surely we can do that for each other without having to delve into historical context. I saw that this hurt was felt by a lot of people who saw some pretty churlish things on social media. It could be a very difficult point.

I will start by saying that what Hamas did was one of the most unimaginable, awful things by murdering and kidnapping over 1,000 people in a single day. Hamas must be brought to justice. However, I want to be clear that when I am speaking against Hamas, I am not talking about the Palestinian people. This is an important thing right now in where we find ourselves because I find too many people are conflating the two, and they are not the same. One is a terrorist organization and one is a people, and many of those people are now paying a heavy price for the actions taken by the terrorist organization of Hamas.

I am concerned about the safety of the people in Gaza. I know so many Canadians, like me, in our communities who are worried about friends and family and people in Gaza right now. The fact that people around me were so quick to jump over from fear, anger and grief does not justify people skipping over that when we are talking about the situation of the Palestinian people in Gaza. We must call for the release of the hostages who are being held by Hamas. We must allow for humanitarian support corridors.

I want to get back to talking about the people here at home to make sure that we take this moment because it has been a really difficult week, and I hear them. Jewish people in our communities who are concerned about their safety, and concerned for their children to be wearing the Star of David out there, I hear them, and I am with them. We can be there for each other. For Palestinian people and Muslims in our community who are concerned about their children being harassed or attacked, and concerned about safety and being visible in our communities, I hear them and see them, too. We can come together in this moment, and we can show why Canada is such an amazing place to live.

While I feel and have felt a lot of sadness and disappointment, I also feel great hope and strength from the community around us.

• (2225)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for sharing some very important personal reflections that I think are very valuable for the House to consider.

I want to ask a question on a somewhat different aspect of this debate. It is a question I have asked a few government members. It is about the role of the Iranian regime in supporting Hamas and supporting other terrorist organizations that threaten Israel.

Up until now, it has not been the position of the government to list the IRGC as a terrorist organization. I know there are some members of the government who have individually expressed support for the idea of listing the IRGC as a terrorist organization. This is another example. We have seen many examples in recent years of IRGC violence.

Does the member think there may possibly be a change coming in the government's position on listing the IRGC as a terrorist organization?

• (2230)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, as the member noted, I was not really focusing in my speech today on the fundamentals of international policy and foreign policy.

When I was in Mel Lastman Square last week, I saw many Iranian people who were feeling vulnerable about the things happening back in their home country. We have certainly been there to support “Women, life, freedom”, as we say, to support women in Iran.

I do not think I have to delve deep into what the answers are for foreign policy today, but I will say this is very much about showing support for Canadians of Iranian heritage who may have been feeling very vulnerable over the past year.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her insightful speech. Her remarks were very refreshing. I would like to ask her whether she believes there is room to take a step back or for nuance in this debate.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate that question. That is exactly what I was trying to say. I think that sometimes we try too hard to come up with answers right away. From time to time, there are things that we really need to think about. We need to be aware of what impact the things we are saying may be having on others around us. I therefore appreciate that question because sometimes we need to take a moment to think about those around us.

[*English*]

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by sharing how much I appreciate that the member for Toronto—Danforth spoke from her heart tonight during such a difficult time for her as a Jewish Canadian.

In her comments, she spoke about empathy for Palestinian people. As she likely knows, there are hospitals, for example, in Gaza right now that are on the brink of running out of backup generator power. Can she speak to her reflections on what can be done to protect innocent lives in Palestine?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, I noted in my comments that humanitarian support in the corridors is essential. I think everyone needs to know that innocent individuals are protected and that we are ensuring, wherever we can, that they have the support they need, and that stands. We can always help by protecting one another more.

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Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I too want to thank my hon. colleague for the strength she brings to this debate. Knowing her background as a Jewish Canadian, I cannot even imagine this, so I appreciate that.

She spoke a lot about the local impact. I come from London, where we are still dealing with a lot of the impacts of what happened to our London family. To move forward, I have been asking about concrete actions we can take in this place and that the government can take to continue to support all of our communities when we are dealing with such tragedy and acts of violence and hatred.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Mr. Speaker, I think that part of it is also showing and evidencing civility, thoughtfulness and caring among ourselves as parliamentarians. I think that this can go a long way toward setting an example back home in our communities, listening and being there for each other. Sometimes it is about the different programs and sometimes it is also just about making sure that we can be there for one another.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time.

I come to this debate tonight as a Christian, as the grandson of a Holocaust survivor and as someone with deep love for my many Muslim friends.

The three great Abrahamic faiths have many points of unity. We share our commitment to the singular worship of one God, a belief in a moral framework that flows from the Ten Commandments, an appreciation for the role of reason in religious life and an attachment to the place we all call the Holy Land.

In the midst of these tumultuous times, there are those who believe conflict between the Abrahamic faiths is inevitable, but I do not agree. Those who assert some inevitability of conflict lack both memory and imagination. They fail to recall centuries of fruitful co-operation between members of these faith communities, and they fail to perceive opportunities for a bright future.

There is a bright star at the end of this dark tunnel. That star is one in which Israelis and Palestinians, Jews, Muslims, Christians and others live side by side in peaceful democratic pluralistic and prosperous states, a two-state solution in which each reflects the legitimate national aspirations of Israelis and Palestinians.

Israel has established peaceful relations with many Muslim majority nations, most recently through the aptly named Abraham Accords, but disrupting these efforts at peace is the violent extremist and colonialist regime in Tehran. While more and more actors in the Middle East are moving toward peace, the Iranian regime is trying to be a spoiler, supporting and enabling many different terrorist organizations.

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Hamas terrorists, recognized as such by successive Canadian governments, have militarily conquered and have terrorized the people of the Gaza Strip for a decade and a half. Hamas has not sought to govern the Gaza Strip in any meaningful sense. Rather, they have sought to turn the Gaza Strip into a staging ground for terrorist operations into Israel.

Hamas has shown capricious disregard not only for the lives of Israelis but also for the lives of Palestinian civilians living in Gaza. During the last round of fighting between Israel and Hamas, the foreign affairs committee heard that over 15% of the rockets launched by Hamas, intending to kill Israeli civilians, actually landed in Gaza on the heads of Palestinian civilians.

The committee also heard at the time about how a vital humanitarian corridor into Gaza was closed after being subject to a Hamas mortar attack. I asked officials why Hamas would intentionally target a humanitarian crossing. Canadian government officials told the committee:

In terms of the reason...obviously the intention and the pressure on all parties Hamas may not have wanted alleviated instantly, to keep the pressure on and keep sending the message.

In other words, the testimony of this expert was that Hamas weaponizes the pain of the Palestinian people for their own twisted political ends.

In the present context, I want to call for and underline the importance of humanitarian access.

Palestinian civilians should be able to access the things required to meet basic humanitarian needs. There should be a corridor for bringing essential humanitarian supplies into Gaza, and there should be a secure safe zone area or areas for civilians to take shelter and access essential humanitarian goods. The international community should work together to establish this essential humanitarian access.

Israel has a right to defend itself by targeting Hamas terrorists who have attacked it, and all steps should be taken to minimize harm to civilians.

Hamas must be called out for how they intentionally, constantly, put Palestinian as well as Israeli civilians in harm's way. The latest fighting began after Hamas launched a horrific terrorist attack, killing over 1,000 Israeli civilians in the most brutal ways imaginable and taking well over 100 hostages. This was the largest mass killing of Jews since the Holocaust.

As the descendent of Holocaust survivors and the descendent of some who did not survive, this is deeply personal for me. There can be no equivocation about the horror of what happened or about the need to hold the killers responsible. No other country, after facing such an attack, would be expected to contemplate an immediate ceasefire without first securing freedom for hostages and bringing perpetrators to justice.

I hope and pray that Israel's legitimate pursuit of its own security will lead to the least possible loss of human life in the short term but also in the long term. A long-term future of peace and security for Palestinians and Israelis is likely not possible until the tyrannical control of the Gaza strip by Hamas terrorists ends.

Palestinian self-determination starts with Palestinians being able to choose who governs them and choosing a government within constitutional constraints that puts the well-being of the Palestinian people first. While more and more Muslim-majority nations are pursuing peace with Israel, the Iranian regime is enabling and using terrorist proxies to attack Israel and to undermine the sovereignty of other nations in the region.

That is why I will continue to push this government to list the IRGC as a terrorist organization and shut down their operations here in Canada. That is why I will continue to support the "Women, Life, Freedom" movement. The success of the Iranian freedom movement would deprive terrorist groups throughout the region of material and strategic support.

As those protesters say, "No solution but revolution". I stand today with Israelis, Palestinians, Iranians and people of all faiths and backgrounds who desire three simple things: to live in freedom from tyranny and oppression, to protect their family and to practice their faith. This is the best of the Abrahamic faith traditions that we share, the commitment to freedom, family and faith that must unite us all.

● (2235)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I always appreciate my colleague's speeches, which are both passionate and, above all, intelligent, even if we do not always agree.

However, tonight we agree on one point. I think the whole House of Commons and every party agrees that it is absolutely necessary, and urgent, to establish a humanitarian corridor. Everyone here tonight agrees on that.

That said, no one is able to give me an answer. How is it that Israel has not yet set up this humanitarian corridor? I have had only one answer: It is because of Hamas.

With international pressure, with the parties that are all in agreement here tonight, with the 338 parliamentarians who agree with establishing such a humanitarian corridor, I think we can agree that Israel must absolutely take action and quickly.

What does my colleague think?

● (2240)

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I think we all absolutely agree with the importance of having a humanitarian corridor. In terms of the logistics around it, all of us need to be working on that solution. In particular, the governments of the world need to be working on that solution. Of course, the different actors have a role to play, but it is not as simple as Israel deciding there is going to be a humanitarian corridor. There has to be negotiation, likely involving Egypt, and a willingness by Hamas to allow such a corridor to be established.

I will be honest: How could I know all of the particulars of those ongoing negotiations? However, we should keep the pressure up to highlight the importance of that humanitarian corridor and push for all actors involved to do what they can to make it happen as quickly as possible.

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise as a voice for the great people of Calgary and for our vibrant Jewish communities. In the solemn silence of the Sabbath, violence and terror ensued last Saturday. The chosen friends whom I have had and the chosen family I get to make, as for so many people from across Israel, began to text as they learned and watched the documented evidence of atrocities. They watched babies being thrown into cages and seniors being dragged across the street. They heard news of young people revelling in joy, song and love being slaughtered. They watched wanton destruction by terrorists roaming the streets of the country I have come to love in the many times I have had the honour to visit. Now, seven Canadians lie dead.

I am here just to say a few things. The first is that Israel has the right to exist. The Jewish people, as indigenous to the land, through the modern state of Israel, tell the story of the most remarkable indigenous revival on Planet Earth. The world's recognition of this Israeli legitimacy, this Zionism, is long overdue. Terror runs across the streets of that great country, that amazing, remarkable democracy.

Its legitimacy is being challenged once again, which brings me to my second point: Israel has the right, and indeed the obligation, to defend itself by itself. In 1948, the world's establishment argued against its existence, saying that it was less permanent than other nations are. This is logic that strays dangerously close to anti-Zionism and, through it, to actual anti-Semitism. Time and time again, Israel has proven them wrong, against great odds, fighting to preserve its state and proving beyond any doubt its ability to defend itself and its capital.

In most instances, such strength would be taken as an example of Israel's permanence, yet each time, the Jewish state is forced to sue for peace and grant concessions to its enemies. These enemies have only one goal: to destroy the state and eradicate the people. We stand with the reservists and security services that bring order to Israel by weeding out hundreds of Hamas terrorists, by rescuing hundreds of innocent hostages and by ensuring Hamas is dismantled and never capable of doing this again.

Third, anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism. At rallies sprouting up across our land, extremists celebrate rape, murder and kidnapping by Hamas, calling for actual incitement of violence against our treasured Jewish communities. Extremists' celebration of actual hate crimes and war crimes constitutes an affront to the peace and freedom of all Canadians, especially our Jewish communities.

Hamas is responsible for all the misery, murder and chaos across Israel and Gaza. There is no equivalence. Hamas is responsible for the deaths we see on the streets of Israel and for the loss of every innocent life to come. Gaza has not been occupied for more than 18 years. For 18 years, it has been part of a Hamas terror factory backed by a clerical military dictatorship in Iran. It is time to dismantle all of it now.

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In this terrible test, when the calls for appeasement and restraint come, when it is hard to stand with Israel, I will pay attention to those who actually do. Under attack by land, by sea, by air and by a firestorm of rockets, and with infiltrators kidnapping and killing innocent civilians, there is no equivalence to be made. Hamas is responsible.

This is hard for me, because I spent a few years living in the desert under bombardment from Iranian rockets, and I know what it is like. In the hours and weeks, in the dark months ahead and in the trying times of our defining age, may the blessings of the memories of those who have been murdered over this last week, of those who have been sent to gas chambers and of those who have survived through the millennia fortify us to get this job done, because *Am Yisrael Chai*.

• (2245)

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, the member for Calgary Heritage spoke about difficult times in the months and weeks ahead. I want to share some of the words of a critical care physician in Gaza right now. These words are, "The situation is catastrophic". The hospital he works in is currently powered by a generator, having lost electricity for the past five days. He says, "Once the fuel inside the hospital vanishes, we will face a bad situation. We will turn into a big mortuary, a big grave."

Can the member speak to what he feels needs to be done to protect lives in Palestine right now of people who are in the midst of this kind of devastation?

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar: Mr. Speaker, 24,000 litres of water have been stolen by Hamas. Hamas has been constantly subjugating humanitarian supply chains and requisitioning them to support its own terror apparatus in this region. Hamas is what is holding the peace and safety of Palestinians back, and not some morally equivalent argument about international institutions. At the end of the day, when we care about the prosperity and the peace that the Palestinian people deserve, what needs to happen is that Hamas must be defeated once and for all.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have heard that there are about 150 Canadians in Gaza right now. We also know that the hostages who have been seized by the terrorist organization Hamas are in Gaza right now. We also know that 50% of the population in Gaza are children, who have had nothing whatsoever to do with the horrific crimes committed by Hamas. Does this member believe that those people, those Canadian citizens, those people who have been held hostage against their will by the Hamas terrorist organization and those children deserve to receive punishment?

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar: Mr. Speaker, Hamas is holding those people hostage. Hamas is using these innocent civilians as a means to shield its terror apparatus, and it has no desire, no plan and no stated objective to ever stop. The people in Hamas proved, just one week ago, to what extent they will commit wanton acts of murder against innocent civilians. They have proven over the last 18 years how ready they are to sacrifice Palestinians for their own demented cause. Therefore, Hamas is responsible for the safety and the security of those Palestinians and Hamas is responsible for all that is to come.

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Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for Calgary Heritage on his excellent speech. Like many Jewish Canadians, I have taken great comfort from the debate tonight and general unanimity in the House that Israel has the right to defend itself within international law because it was attacked by a terrorist entity and we are all better off if that terrorist entity is destroyed.

There tend to be places where Israel is treated differently from every other country in the world, by some people. I wonder if the member might extrapolate a bit about how this is taking place in this context.

● (2250)

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar: Mr. Speaker, Israel has always been held to a separate standard compared to other states. For some reason, when Israelis and Jews and those who live within its sovereign borders are attacked, they are immediately compelled to restrain themselves and find ways to be more civil, even though, as a democracy and as a professional military, they go above and beyond the standards that are required, compared to what most countries do. Therefore, we find that Israel is constantly singled out as a country internationally.

Its Jewish people are often identified as colonial settlers when in fact they are indigenous people who have revived the state and set an example in modern times. We have seen how Israel is seen in our academia, in our non-profit community and in many other places as somehow subjected to a different standard and to anti-Zionism. In campuses across the country, we have seen this distortion of facts and the reality of the actual truths of what modern Israel is built upon. I thank the hon. member for the opportunity to point out how unfairly Israel is characterized across the world.

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Willowdale.

Let me start by extending my sympathy to the families of the victims of the heinous terrorist attack that was visited upon Israel by Hamas, killing approximately 1,400 individuals, including, to date, five Canadians, wounding 3,500 individuals and seeing 200 hostages currently held, including many Canadians.

October 7 was the single worst day of casualties visited upon the Jewish people since the Holocaust, and only hours after the hundreds of rockets were launched by Hamas into Israel, I received my first call from one of the community leaders in my riding of Eglinton—Lawrence. He was desperate. He was extremely anxious about families that were stuck in Israel.

Very quickly we sprung into action and started to connect Canadians who were trapped with Global Affairs in the lead-up to the evacuation effort. I want to take a moment to thank the members of the Canadian Armed Forces and Global Affairs for the tremendous work they are doing, even now, in getting those Canadians home safely.

I have been spending an inordinate amount of time in my community visiting Jewish day schools, going to a retirement home, Baycrest, playing some piano and singing Hatikvah with the community. There is no way to convey the depth of despair and anxiety

the Jewish community is feeling, not only in Eglinton—Lawrence but right across the country, in their homes, at work and when seeing their kids go to school, whether it is elementary, secondary or on university campuses, by virtue alone of their Jewish identity. This is wrong.

I also want to take a moment, of course, to say that our hearts go out to the victims in Gaza. We abhor the loss of any innocent life, Palestinian or Israeli, regardless of nationality. Israel is indeed working with allies to establish the humanitarian corridors that are necessary to get aid to Gaza and to make sure that people can flee and get to safety by giving them a head-up.

Israel is doing this because it is a democracy. Hamas is not. Israel has regard for human life. Hamas does not. Lest it needs to be said it again, Hamas has deliberately and wantonly murdered innocent individuals, including five Canadians. Hamas has killed Canadians. Hamas continues to hold Canadians hostage, despite our protests and our demands to release them. There can be no greater affront to Canadian sovereignty than the actions of a terrorist organization, as recognized under Canadian law.

It is for this reason that Israel has every right to defend itself, its people, its security and its sovereignty. Here at home, we are continuing to exhibit leadership by ensuring that we see hostages released as quickly as possible, by ensuring that Canadians who are stuck get home as quickly as possible, by ensuring that we deliver humanitarian aid to those who need it the most and by emphatically fighting against anti-Semitism, which in the words of Irwin Cotler is the “canary in the mineshaft of global evil”.

I am sorry to report to this chamber, but the canaries are dropping like flies. When Jewish children in my community are afraid to wear the Star of David, that is fundamentally wrong. I can think of no more fitting day than today to see the passing of the torch from Irwin Cotler to Deborah Lyons with her appointment as Canada's new special envoy. She is committed to ensuring that we teach Canadians and everyone about the Holocaust and the Shoah and that we fight the scourge of anti-Semitism together. That is the cause that all members in this chamber and indeed all Canadians should be united behind.

A Canada that is safer for Jews is safer for Muslims, is safer for Hindus, is safer for Sikhs, is safer for the gay community and is safer for the trans community. It is safer for all Canadians. That is the cause around which we should be united. It is with that closing note that I conclude my remarks.

● (2255)

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I think we all agree on in this place is that Hamas has done something unspeakably horrific to Israel and the Palestinian people. I think we can all agree that the Palestinian people are not Hamas. That is not who they are.

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I would ask whether the member, who has a great deal of experience in public safety, agrees with the statement that all crimes committed against civilians should be investigated by the ICJ.

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Mr. Speaker, I would certainly agree that Hamas not only does not speak for the Palestinian people but also represents the greatest hurdle to peace in Gaza and the region. That is why it is imperative that we recognize that it is a precondition of peace that there is no terror. There is one organization, on October 7, that committed an act of terror, and that was Hamas.

What we seek now is justice for those who have fallen and, obviously, building back toward a path to peace. However, there can be no peace in the wake of terror, and we will continue to pursue justice.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Hamas, the perpetrator of this attack, is a listed terrorist organization here in Canada. However, Conservatives have been calling for the IRGC, affiliated with the Iranian regime, the enabler of so much terrorism in the region by Hamas, by Hezbollah and other actors, also be listed as a terrorist organization. This attack by Hamas terrorists is another crime that we can ultimately lay at the feet of the support and enabling by the Iranian regime.

The member is a former minister of public safety and made the choice as minister to not list the IRGC at that time. I wonder if he could reflect on why he chose not to list the IRGC and if he thinks that the new minister should proceed with listing the IRGC now.

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Mr. Speaker, let me begin by saying without any equivocation that, like Hamas, the IRGC is a terrorist organization, which is why this government designated it under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act for the purposes of ensuring that Canada cannot be a safe haven for any terrorist activity that would be facilitated by the IRGC.

We stand with the Iranian diaspora here and will continue to do whatever is necessary to protect Canadians, both here and abroad, as a result of any action committed by any terrorist, be it the IRGC, Hamas or any other terrorist group.

• (2300)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague on his speech.

We agree that a humanitarian corridor must be urgently set up to save civilians. To be a player, one must work with other players. Unfortunately, Canada is not at the table where decisions are being made by certain players. I am thinking about France, Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States and Italy, who met to speak out against the situation and to find solutions to the crisis that Palestine and Israel are in right now. Canada was not at the table.

I would like my colleague to explain how he thinks his government can establish its credibility on the international stage and take its place not just as an observer, but as a player.

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Mr. Speaker, Canada has demonstrated its leadership when it comes to human rights. There are many examples, but the most recent is the \$10 million that the Minister of

Foreign Affairs has already announced. That money, that federal resource, will, I hope, be used by those who need it most. Yes, there is a lot of work to be done to save lives in Gaza, Israel and the region, and Canada is there and will be there for the long term.

[*English*]

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the course of the past week we have all witnessed untold carnage. A moment of relative calm in the Middle East was punctured by a devastating wave of violence and rage. We in this House must be emphatic and unequivocal. The violence unleashed by Hamas on hundreds of innocent Israeli citizens amounted to nothing short of terrorism in its most gruesome form. Nothing could possibly justify violence of such a vile nature or such devastating magnitude.

On October 7, children were torn from their beds, grandmothers were murdered in cold blood at bus stops and young people full of life and energy were gunned down at a music festival.

Allow me to say that I am heartened by the emergence of a clear consensus in this House that recognizes that Israel has a right to fully defend itself. Israel's efforts to retrieve hostages in Gaza, to dismantle the chokehold Hamas has on Gaza and to hold the perpetrators of this violence to account must be staunchly supported by Canada. After all, this was not only an attack on our friends and loved ones in Israel, but on Canadians. Five Canadians were assassinated by Hamas, while three Canadians remain unaccounted for. Many more Canadians have found themselves stranded in the region and, as of this evening, 10 Canadian Armed Forces flights have departed Tel Aviv with approximately 1,300 Canadian passengers aboard.

However, since this war commenced and the full siege of Gaza took effect, the death toll from this war has claimed 4,000 lives. That is why I fervently hope that our Israeli friends are vigilant and exercise prudence in dismantling the Hamas apparatus of terror and violence in the Gaza region. May they be guided by the wisdom of minimizing deaths and paving the way for durable peace in the region. That is why our Prime Minister earlier this evening stated that he fully supports Israel's right to defend itself in accordance with international law and insisted that humanitarian law be upheld. I would remind all members of this House that the imposition of measures that deprive civilians of goods essential to their survival is prohibited under international humanitarian law. We should all strive for the establishment of an immediate humanitarian corridor that can provide life-saving assistance to the residents of Gaza.

Let me be clear: Hamas should not be conflated with the Palestinian people. While the vast majority of Palestinians aspire to live in dignity, Hamas is tethered to violence and terror.

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Last, I would like to make a concluding remark on how events in Israel and Gaza have affected Canadians at home. I have had the opportunity to speak to many individuals who are aching because of the impact of the unfolding violence. I know that it has taken a profound, emotional toll on many. I have personally spoken to Jews, Christians and Muslims who are concerned with the safety of their friends and relatives. Whether their loved ones reside in Israel, the West Bank or Gaza, all are repulsed by the carnage they have personally witnessed and the constant sirens that, in panic, their loved ones have had to endure. That is why all Canadians should be mindful and considerate of the palpable pain being experienced by many Canadians of differing faiths. In such difficult circumstances, no one experiencing heartache should have to bear the additional burden of being harassed or having to feel ostracized.

By now, we have all heard of sickening instances of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in our midst. Let us strive for tolerance and empathy within our diverse Canadian tapestry and ensure that we stand together in support of peace and the well-being of all our citizens. I am confident that our shared Canadian values of inclusivity and respect for one another's differences are our greatest assets in times of uncertainty and unrest.

• (2305)

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I keep raising this issue in the hope that the government will respond. We know, as the member mentioned in his remarks, that both the Jewish and Muslim communities in Canada are living in fear of an attack. The government's integrated threat assessment centre has assessed Canada's national terrorism threat level at medium, where it has been since October 2014. Does he think that it would be a good idea for the Government of Canada's integrated threat assessment centre to give Canadians, including those in the Jewish and Muslim communities, an update tomorrow about the threat level so that Canadians can be assured the government is assessing the situation and ensuring the protection and safety of Canadians?

Mr. Ali Ehsassi: Mr. Speaker, it is truly a great privilege to work with the member on the foreign affairs committee.

As to the question asked, I have every confidence that our government is vigilant and is constantly aware of what those threats are. What I was speaking about today was the pain that many Canadians have been enduring over the course of the last seven days. That is something we have to be mindful of and it is something we should all be concerned about. We should do everything within our power to make sure we are pulling together and that we are there for each other.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his speech and reiterate his unequivocal condemnation of the terrorist acts committed by Hamas, which have shocked the entire world. They certainly shocked me and shocked all Canadians. I also want to echo his call for the respect of international law and his empathy for the innocent people in Gaza and what they are going through right now, as well as for the innocent people of Israel. Unfortunately, violence begets violence. As we have heard in the debates this evening, in terms of respect for international law, these are extraordinary times.

Does my colleague not think that it is precisely in times of crisis, in difficult times, that we must be guided by our principles, especially principles as fundamental as respect for international law?

[*English*]

Mr. Ali Ehsassi: Mr. Speaker, that is a very insightful question. Yes, I would say that part of the reason the bonds of friendship and the amity exist between our country and the state of Israel is that we are democracies. Democracies are constantly aware of the fact that their actions and everything their governments undertake are underpinned by the values that inform their constitutions.

Yes, even at a time of war, I think it is incumbent upon all countries to make sure that they are adhering to the principles of humanitarian law. I know full well that our country does. We have numerous experts who are engaged in this process. It would do everyone well if they strictly adhered to the principles of humanitarian law.

• (2310)

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I work with my colleague on the foreign affairs committee.

On October 14, the president of UNICEF, Catherine Russell, said, "The situation for children in Gaza is catastrophic, with hundreds of children reportedly killed. UNICEF calls for an immediate ceasefire, compliance with the rules of war and humanitarian access. All children, everywhere, must be protected at all times."

Would the member agree that a ceasefire is in the best interests of the children in Palestine right now?

Mr. Ali Ehsassi: Mr. Speaker, yes, I do agree with the member.

As we watch the situation unfold, we should all be concerned about the fact that Palestinians within Gaza are going through a very difficult time. That is precisely why many Canadians here are concerned.

We should remind our good friends in Israel to make sure that they are proceeding with dismantling Hamas in a fashion which respects the rules of humanitarian law, minimizes casualties and provides room for assistance to be shepherded into Gaza.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there is only one way for me to start my intervention tonight, and that is by taking a moment to reflect on the victims of the violence over the last few days. I am talking about both Israeli and Palestinian victims, on Israeli soil and Palestinian soil and elsewhere in the world. I will come back to that second aspect.

Alongside my colleagues in the House who have spoken with one voice, I, too, send my condolences to all those who have lost a loved one in the violence. My thoughts go out to those who have been kidnapped and injured, and to all those who still fear for their lives. Yes, it has been said many times already, but it cannot be said too often.

Similarly, everyone in the House has stressed the importance of condemning the actions of Hamas. Again, it bears repeating. Again, it cannot be overstated. Hamas is a terrorist entity. Canada has designated it as such, and the Bloc Québécois supports that designation. Indiscriminate attacks against Israeli civilians, women, men, the elderly, children and babies, are in no way justifiable.

From the perspective of a Parliament that is speaking with one voice, I commend the leader of the Bloc Québécois for taking the initiative to ask for periodic meetings between the leaders of the different parties in the House so that they can ensure that the different political entities' messaging is as aligned as possible and that the current conflict does not become a source of partisan polarization.

Speaking of messaging, I admit that one of my biggest fears right now about what is going on in Israel is that the positions taken by various members will be polarizing. I hope that, here in the House, we will do our best to avoid taking a black-and-white view of the conflict. On the contrary, I hope that we will all be able to have a nuanced discussion.

Again, I commend all parliamentarians who spoke this evening. They all denounced the fact that there are civilian victims on both sides. They all denounced the actions of Hamas, and they all called for a humanitarian corridor to be established in order to avoid causing more civilian casualties. Listening to this evening's speeches, we could sense the members' genuine empathy for all those who are suffering because of this conflict, regardless of their origins or their religion.

This all-encompassing, unconditional empathy can only come from a nuanced discourse, which I hope will help us set an example for the public and put a stop to demonstrations of hatred directed against either group. Unfortunately, we have seen such acts in France, and in the United States, for example, where a six-year-old child was just murdered. We saw it again earlier today in Belgium. They are all collateral victims of the polarization of the situation. The onus is on every single one of us to condemn the hatred that exists outside Israeli and Palestinian territory. We must not fan the flames.

There was a Radio-Canada article this week with the headline *Sale temps pour les pacifistes*, hard times for pacifists. It recounted stories of long-standing friendships, unlikely friendships between Israelis and Palestinians living in Quebec, friendships driven by the desire to see the two nations one day live in peace. Unfortunately, these friendships are currently being put to the test. Clearly, it is because of the situation on the ground in Israel and Palestine, but it is also because of the hateful demonstrations happening elsewhere in the world that deserve condemnation. The longer the situation in Gaza drags on, the more civilians will lose their lives, and the more I fear that polarization will get worse, bringing even more hatred in its wake.

We all know that it is futile to make any demands of Hamas. A terrorist organization that uses its own people as a human shield has no regard for civilian lives. It has committed unspeakable massacres. War may be an ugly thing, but it has rules, and Hamas has not complied with any of them. Its attack in no way resembled a

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military intervention. It was pure carnage, a wanton act of brutality calculated to sow terror.

That is why, this evening, members are primarily addressing their requests to the Israeli government, urging it to set up a humanitarian corridor.

• (2315)

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said earlier this week that Israel has the right—indeed it has the obligation—to defend itself against these attacks from Hamas and to try to do what it can to make sure that this never happens again, but he added that the way Israel does this matters. As democracies, we are held to higher standards.

Tonight, the Israeli government is being called upon to respect the rules of international humanitarian law, as any democracy must do.

For one thing, the protection of civilian lives is obviously at stake. If nothing is done in the short term, the complete siege of Gaza with no possibility of delivering aid will inevitably result in more loss of life. Because of the blockade, electricity cannot be produced at Gaza's only power station, which has cut the supply of drinking water. Forced to drink sea water, Gazans will see their mortality rate rise sharply.

Without a humanitarian corridor, medical personnel no longer have access to medical equipment to treat the wounded, and the wounded no longer have access to pain medication to ease their suffering. Even though breaks in the bombardments are announced on stretches of roads intended to evacuate civilians, the absence of telephone and Internet networks in the Gaza Strip means that people are not necessarily notified in time for these breaks, or may not be notified at all.

It is also unlikely that the people of Gaza can travel the required distances within the allotted time. Children and seniors cannot travel very quickly, and injured people who are hospitalized and babies in incubators, for example, cannot easily be moved. Adding to these difficulties is the fact that Hamas is holding back the people of Gaza and preventing them from leaving, once again using them as hostages and human shields. The Israeli government cannot ignore these factors when considering its respect for international humanitarian law.

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Also, if the Government of Israel refuses to set up a corridor, I am concerned that the resulting losses will serve to breed more hate. As it has been mentioned, Hamas must be eradicated from Gaza because, otherwise, there will never be any political peace in the region and it will be impossible to negotiate a two-state solution. It is one thing to wipe out Hamas's military capability, ensure that its leaders are eliminated and annihilate its power for physical destruction, which is the objective announced by the Government of Israel, but we also need to ensure that the very idea of Hamas, its disembodied form, is eradicated. If civilian casualties continue to multiply in Palestinian territory, that will only fuel the beast. Hamas, although it cares nothing for civilian life, could fuel the narrative of non-compliance with international humanitarian law in order to breed hate for Israel. It would not be the first time. We might then fear that October 7 was just the beginning or that the unfortunately all-too-familiar cycle will start all over again in four or five years.

Israel has just experienced a tragedy of immeasurable proportions. I cannot even begin to imagine the pain. Tonight, for the sake of the civilian lives that may yet be spared and the possibility that the region may one day live in peace, Canadian parliamentarians are calling on the Israeli government to abide by international law and establish a humanitarian corridor.

• (2320)

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by thanking my colleague from Saint-Jean for her nuanced speech and her empathy. That is so important at times like these. My question is about the fact that another young Palestinian is killed every 15 minutes. When the member thinks about that, how appropriate does she think it is to call for a ceasefire? Should it happen now, or at some other time in the future?

Ms. Christine Normandin: Mr. Speaker, I think that any measures that will spare civilian lives must be considered and, ideally, implemented by Israel, because Hamas cannot be expected to do so.

I nevertheless remain realistic. If we want to prevent this from happening again in the future, if we want to entertain the prospect of peace, Hamas also must be eliminated. If there were some way to do this without any loss of human life, it would have been done by now. That is why I am calling for Israel to conduct the strictest possible analysis of everything that can be done to minimize civilian casualties in accordance with humanitarian law.

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her intervention in the House today. I am sorry, but I am not going to speak in French. It is a very late night and the topic is very difficult for me.

One of the things that I have been thinking about is that today we have been talking about how Hamas needs to be defeated. I know that the member is on the defence committee. We have babies in incubators in Gaza. We have doctors who refuse to leave those babies because, obviously, the children are trapped there, and they know they may die.

The people who are most able likely to leave the territory are in fact members of Hamas, the very terrorists we should be trying to target. The people least able to leave Gaza right now are the elderly,

the infirm, the children, the babies and people in the hospital. I am struggling to understand why anyone in this place thinks that bombing Gaza right now would not cause more harm to those people than to the terrorists.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Edmonton Strathcona for her question and for her always rousing pleas on behalf of civilians and all those who are in difficult situations, who are experiencing war. I know she cares a lot about that, and I thank her for her work in that regard.

I do not claim to have an answer for her, unfortunately, and I think that it would be wrong for anyone, particularly any outsider, to claim that they have an answer to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which did not start just a few days ago but has been going on for a long time now.

In this context, I cannot imagine, as an outsider myself, coming in and imposing a solution. That is why I was careful not to do so in my speech. I was careful not to impose a solution but to instead suggest limits for a government. I want to make the distinction here between the Government of Israel and the people of Israel because, right now, as we know, the government is more right-wing than it has ever been.

We can hope that, in the near future, both Hamas and the Government of Israel will have to make changes. In that context, I was careful not to suggest a solution. I think it would be presumptuous on my part to do so. Instead, I chose to make suggestions that would set limits on the actions taken by Israel. What we are asking Israel to do is to minimize as much as possible anything that could lead to the loss of civilian life. If that involves a ceasefire, then all the better.

I hope that the analysis will be done because I would like to believe that Israel, unlike Hamas, takes absolutely no pleasure in killing innocent civilians. That is why I am not responding directly to my colleague's question. I am sad to do so because, personally, I was hoping for a ceasefire. However, I am not in a position to impose a solution to a very complex conflict.

• (2325)

Mr. Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I too want to thank my colleague for her nuanced speech, nuance that is sorely lacking when we look at the state of public discourse on this unspeakable strategy that has unfolded in the Middle East since October 7.

I just want to make a few comments before asking my question. I think that my colleague is exactly right when she says that we must eliminate Hamas, of which far too many Israelis and Palestinians are victims. They have been stuck with this terrorist group for 17 years now without any opportunity to make a choice. The Palestinians are paying the price for this terrorist group, Hamas.

I also believe that she is exactly right when she says, in her response, that Israel has a heavy responsibility with respect to the methods it resorts to and that it must also respect international humanitarian law. We see that with 3,000 victims in Gaza and more than 1,000 Israeli victims: Violence breeds violence. I think we need to be careful to ensure that the actions that are taken do not further widen the gap that has been widening for decades.

I have a question for her. I will echo what Jean-François Lépine said on the show *Tout le monde en parle* on Sunday evening. He said that if there is one thing that has come out of what is happening in Israel and Gaza, it is that the status quo cannot work. There needs to be a two-state solution, two viable states.

Does my colleague agree with that statement?

Ms. Christine Normandin: Mr. Speaker, the short answer is yes. From the outside, the two-state solution is the one I see as the best, but, once again, this is with all the nuance and reserve one must have when perceiving the conflict from the outside. As has been said several times this evening, the two-state solution is not possible as long as Hamas still exists, hence the importance of eliminating Hamas.

To build on a point from the previous question, one of the fears associated with an immediate ceasefire, for example, is that the problem will simply be put off until later. If steps are not taken to eliminate Hamas and ensure that there is fertile ground for political negotiations, which cannot happen with Hamas, human lives may be saved in the short term, but the body count could be even higher in the long term. This is a perfect example of a catch-22. There is no ideal solution to the current conflict. If there were one that would eliminate Hamas while preserving all human lives, it would already have been implemented.

I feel a bit pessimistic with that answer, but at the same time I am perhaps somewhat realistic as well. Unfortunately, realism cannot

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go by the wayside when we are looking at situations such as this one here tonight.

● (2330)

Mr. Mike Morrice: Mr. Speaker, tonight, several of our Jewish and Muslim colleagues have shared their concerns about the rise in anti-Semitism and Islamophobia here at home over the past week.

What does the member for Saint-Jean think about that? Can she share her thoughts on what the Government of Canada can do to address this reality?

Ms. Christine Normandin: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned a little bit in my speech, I think that two of the actions that can be taken have already been taken by parliamentarians. The purpose of the question was to determine what parliamentarians can do. On the one hand, we must condemn the situation, which we have done unanimously. We must condemn the hateful demonstrations that occurred in various places and the individual hateful comments that are made by the public. We must transcend the debate and lead by example, which I believe we more or less achieved this evening. For the most part the remarks were nuanced and the violence was condemned, and there is a will to protect all civilian lives, regardless of whether they are Palestinian or Israeli and regardless of their religion. I think that is a step in the right direction.

The Speaker: I would like to thank the member for Saint-Jean and all members who took part in this evening's debate.

It being 11:31 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 53.1, the committee will rise.

(Government Business No. 29 reported)

The Speaker: Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 11:32 p.m.)

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