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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, November 6, 2023

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)
[*English*]

LOWERING PRICES FOR CANADIANS ACT

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP) moved that Bill C-352, An Act to amend the Competition Act and the Competition Tribunal Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to rise today to speak to my private member's bill, the lowering prices for Canadians act.

There is too much corporate control in Ottawa. The corporate-controlled Conservatives set up a system that continues to benefit wealthy CEOs. The big lobby Liberals continue to protect the interests of those greedy CEOs. We have seen multiple opportunities that both of those governments had to go after these greedy CEOs who exploit Canadians, but they did nothing to take on their greed. As a result, people are struggling.

The Liberals tried to ask nicely of the CEOs and the read-grocery-flyers tactic to bring down prices, and that failed. In fact, that was not to bring down prices; it was to stabilize prices. We know that the corporate-controlled Conservatives will never take on the greed of these CEOs. We want to crack down on the power of the greedy CEOs, bring more power to Canadian consumers, families and workers, and that is exactly what my bill, the lowering prices for Canadians act, would do.

Right now, we have two Canadas. In one Canada, corporate CEOs of large grocery stores have made record profits, and I will go through some of those profits. The three largest grocers, Loblaw's, Sobeys and Metro, made a combined \$3.6 billion in profits in 2022. The CEO of Loblaw's, Galen Weston, compensated at \$11.79 million per year, was deemed to be underpaid even though that was 431 times higher than the average salary of a worker at his company.

What is the reality for the rest of Canadians? Food prices are up by 30%. We have record usage at food banks. Workers at those big grocery chains cannot even earn enough to grocery shop at those very same chains. This is a rigged system, rigged by Liberals and

Conservatives, and we want to change that. We want to tip the scales back in favour of working people, back in favour of the consumer, and that is exactly what our bill, the lowering prices for Canadians act, would do.

The establishment Liberal Party and the corporate-controlled Conservatives refuse, again and again, to do what is right.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Last week, you reminded us that we were not to use any nicknames for different parties. I take exception to being called a "corporate-controlled Conservative". No one controls me.

The Speaker: I thank the member for raising this issue. Indeed, I did make that statement, but quite quickly it was brought to my attention by some hon. members that the adjectives used were considered to be fair game. Therefore, I have relented in pursuing that point.

I thank the hon. member, and I would encourage all members to try to be judicious.

Continuing debate, the hon. member for Burnaby South.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear again. The establishment Liberals and the corporate-controlled Conservatives both had the opportunity to take on the powerful interests of these CEOs, but they did not and have not done it.

Like the majority of Canadians, I believe that corporate greed is driving up the cost of food. That is what Canadians believe, because they know it to be true. However, the corporate-controlled Conservatives and establishment Liberals will not do anything about it. We will. That is what our bill is about, giving more power to consumers and less power to greedy CEOs.

[*Translation*]

Canadians have a major problem. While they are struggling to pay for groceries, Loblaw's was making excessive profits of \$1 million a day in 2022. What is even more frustrating is that the Liberals and the Conservatives think that is acceptable. The Liberals are protecting the profits of CEOs by sitting back and doing nothing. As for the Conservatives, it is simple. They want to put more money in the pockets of CEOs.

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I have had enough of this system that favours the ultrarich. That is why I introduced the lowering prices for Canadians bill, which will give less power to CEOs and more respect to Canadian consumers.

[*English*]

Both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Conservative Party have private chefs and folks who go grocery shopping for them. Therefore, maybe it is not a concern for them, because they do not realize the struggles of everyday Canadians. However, for everyday Canadians things are tough. If they do not have a private chef like the Leader of the Conservatives or the Prime Minister, things are tough.

Things are tough for people like Ambyr, who I recently met. She broke down in tears because, after doing her household budget six times, she still could not figure out how to balance the rent, the cost of putting gas in her car to get to work and the cost of groceries. Something had to go. She has a good job, is working hard and doing everything right, but she is still falling further behind.

It does not have to be this way; it should not be this way. It is this way because corporate-controlled Conservatives and big lobby Liberals have set up a system that benefits the rich CEOs and hurts the working people. We are going to change that. That is why we brought forward our bill, the lowering prices for Canadians act, that would force those corporate-controlled Conservatives and Liberals to support our motion that would benefit working people and ensure that the CEOs pay what they owe. We would take on their corporate greed.

The Leader of the Conservative Party is not who he says he is. He says that he is someone who cares about working people, but that is not the case when we look at his track record and at who runs the Conservative Party. It is interesting to know that 50% of the governing body of his party is made up of lobbyists for greedy CEOs. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the Conservatives continue to side with greedy CEOs and end up hurting working people. That is who they are. That is who they are governed by. That is who their leader is.

In fact, let us look at the increase in prices when the Conservatives were in power. It turns out that food prices went up by 25% when they were in power. Let us break that down: ground beef went up by 128%; coffee went up 89%; and apples, and I know the Conservatives love apples, went up by 43%. What went down in that same period were the taxes those corporate grocery stores paid. The reality is that the Conservatives gave massive tax giveaways to the richest corporations, hurting Canadians and benefiting their rich friends.

It does not have to be this way. That is why we are putting forward our bill, the lowering prices for Canadians act, which would bring down prices for Canadians, take power away from those greedy CEOs and give it back to the working people.

• (1110)

[*Translation*]

Under the Liberals, the cost of groceries increased by 30%. Instead of taking real action, they keep on wasting people's time.

When I was in university, I had to provide food and shelter to my younger teenage brother. I had to work hard at minimum-wage jobs. At today's prices I do not know what I would have done. The average family with young teenagers faces impossible odds. That is what motivates me to fight for people.

My bill on reducing prices for Canadians will increase fines on companies that abuse consumers and give the Competition Bureau more power to protect people. It will give less power to CEOs and more power to consumers. It will allow for more competition and better prices for people.

[*English*]

With the lowering prices for Canadians bill, we have an opportunity to see where the Liberals and Conservatives stand. Do they stand with their rich CEO friends or will they stand with working class Canadians? Will they stand with workers, families and people who are having a hard time buying groceries?

For eight years, we have seen where the Liberals have stood. For eight years, they have shown very clearly that they continue to protect the ultrarich.

We know where the Conservatives stand, because 50% of the Conservative Party's governing body is made up of corporate lobbyists for greedy CEOs. They work hard to protect the interests of their rich CEO friends. Let us see where they stand. When the Conservatives were in power, they gave \$66 billion in tax giveaways to the richest corporation, which ended up hurting Canadians and families.

Let us see where they stand now. In March 2022, the Liberals and Conservatives opposed our efforts to make greedy CEOs, like Galen Weston, pay what they owed and bring down prices for Canadians when it came to their groceries. I invite the Liberals and the Conservatives to stop listening to their CEO friends, start listening to working Canadians and support our bill to bring down prices for all Canadians.

Canadians deserve a break. We have seen how high the cost of living is, and Canadians are hurting. Our bill would tip the scales back in favour of Canadians. It would increase penalties for corporate grocery stores that engage in price fixing or price gouging. Our bill would help support smaller independent grocery stores by stopping the anti-competitive behaviour of these large corporate chains. Our bill would increase consumer protections and give the Competition Bureau more power to crack down on the abuses by these large corporations. Our bill would also stop mergers, which end up hurting Canadians, like the merger of Rogers-Shaw, which reduces competition, increases prices and means a loss of jobs.

Everywhere we go, we hear Canadians saying they are paying more. This is our opportunity to put a stop to it. I challenge the corporate-controlled Conservatives and the big lobby Liberals to stand up for working Canadians instead of their CEO friends and support our bill.

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• (1115)

[*Translation*]

I am tired of seeing people struggle while CEOs are rolling in dough. Food banks are busier than ever. Big grocery stores are making massive, record profits. Inflation means that people are not eating as well, and that is causing health problems. Meanwhile, the Liberals are telling people to look at the flyers if they want lower prices. They are mocking Canadians. We have to change that.

My bill will increase penalties for consumer scams, help small grocery stores by protecting them from the anti-competitive tactics used by big chains, give the Competition Bureau more power to crack down on abuses such as price gouging and stop mergers that reduce competition and hurt Canadians, like the recent merger between Rogers and Shaw.

It is time to lower people's bills. That is exactly what our legislation will do.

[*English*]

I want to close by talking about a serious problem. In Canada, there is a massive lack of competition. Whether we talk about banking, cellphones or grocery stores, there are massive oligopolies that basically control these markets. In each of these areas there is a handful of companies that control the market and it means that Canadians do not have real competition and do not have real prices that are fair for them. Compared to prices around the world, we are paying some of the highest prices when it comes to our cellphone fees. Our grocery prices are skyrocketing. It is a direct result of these oligopolies that Conservatives and Liberals have allowed to exist.

As a result of greedy corporations making huge profits, Canadians are struggling. When we ask Canadians, they agree. They believe the number one reason driving up the cost of groceries is corporate greed. I believe we need more competition and not less. I believe we need more protections for consumers and not more power for CEOs. That is exactly what our bill would do.

Contrary to the corporate-controlled Conservatives who want to give CEOs a free ride and the big-lobby Liberals who want to keep on helping out their CEO friends, our bill would take away power from the CEOs and put power back in the hands of working people, put power back in the hands of consumers and ensure that prices are lower and prices are fair. That is what our bill, the lowering prices for Canadians act, would do.

This is an opportunity to see where the Liberals and Conservatives stand. Do they stand with the CEOs or with working people? Do they stand with our bill, which would reduce the abuse of consumers; or will they continue to allow CEOs to make profits off the backs of Canadians? We will see very shortly where they stand.

• (1120)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the fourth party mentioned the big-lobby Liberals and how they were involved in greed. I would like to remind the leader of the fourth party that his partner, the Prime Minister, is the one who spent time at the cottage of Galen Weston.

Given the shambles, incompetence and corruption that we have in the federal Liberal government, there is a possibility that the New Democrats could become the official opposition one day. Should that happen, would the leader of the fourth party eschew having a cook in his house at Stornoway?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, what we are up against right now is that Canadians are struggling with the cost of their groceries. We are proposing a bill that would bring down the price of food for Canadians. Instead of focusing on the private chef of their Conservative leader or the Prime Minister, I am focusing on making sure that prices are lower for Canadians. Our bill would increase protection for consumers and take away power from the CEOs. Will the Conservatives stand with workers or will they continue to stand with the CEOs, like their board that governs their party would like them to do since it is made of 50% corporate lobbyists for these greedy CEOs? That is the real question.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting to hear my colleague, the leader of the NDP, talk about wanting to introduce a bill to help bring down the cost of groceries. As I just mentioned, we know that everyone is frustrated about the cost of groceries. It is nice to see him take an interest in the price of groceries.

I am somewhat puzzled by the fact that the same party leader is a partner in a coalition with the government opposite, which has said that there is no longer a problem. The minister, the member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain, in the Shawinigan region, said that he looked at the flyers for the weeks before and after Thanksgiving and that he had solved the problem.

If that is the case, why do we even need such a bill? I would like him to comment on whether the problem has been solved or not.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals clearly do not have a plan because they said people should go look at the flyers to see that prices are coming down. In addition, the minister stated that he did not know if the plan was working or not because the CEOs have a secret plan. Obviously the Liberals are acting like they are doing something because they are plummeting in the polls. That is why we are tabling our bill.

This bill will force the big CEOs of those grocery chains to do what needs to be done to bring prices down by giving the Competition Bureau more power with stronger, firmer penalties. This will bring down prices and increase competition to help Canadians. The question is, will the Liberals and Conservatives support this bill that will help consumers and disempower the CEOs?

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[English]

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, it is refreshing to see somebody stand up and talk about the cost of living and not blame it all on the price on pollution. However, one would think that, if all these grocery stores are making so much money, there would be an unholy competition to drop prices to get more customers into the store and get more market share.

I am wondering if the hon. member has thought about doing the deeper dive and going to the producers of the food. We have seen shrinkflation, and we have seen a lot of things happening a layer below the grocery stores. I am wondering if he has thoughts about that aspect.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, we have just heard from a member from the Liberal Party who, instead of agreeing with our bill, which would take power away from CEOs, is trying to defend the CEOs of these large corporate grocers and saying that maybe it is not their fault. We know with clarity, and the Competition Bureau has confirmed, that the large corporate grocery stores are indeed experiencing a massive increase in their profit margins. They are making more money than ever before, and their greed is driving up the cost of food.

Our bill would strengthen the rights of consumers and take away the power from these greedy CEOs. Will the Liberals and the Conservatives stand with CEOs or working Canadians? That remains to be seen.

• (1125)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and address the issue that the leader of the New Democratic Party has brought to us this morning in the form of a piece of private member's legislation.

It is interesting to look at Bill C-56, a government piece of legislation. I think some of the principles are there. I look forward to hearing the feedback from my friends in the New Democratic Party with respect to Bill C-56. I believe that Bill C-56 is going to be able to make a difference.

Before I get into that, I think it is important for all of us to recognize a few facts. One is that Canadians are hurting in a very real and tangible way. We recognize that. If we compare inflation and the price of groceries in Canada to other places around the world, Canada is doing fairly well, but that does not mean that we just accept that. It is important that we continue as a government to look at ways to bring more stability to the prices of groceries, to even have an impact on reducing the cost of groceries indirectly, which is still important, and directly, provide that support to Canadians. An example of that would be in the last budget. In the last budget we had a grocery rebate. I believe over 11 million people directly benefited from that. That put more money in the pockets of people during a difficult time, ensuring that they would have that additional disposable income.

I would suggest there are many benefits throughout the budget that help Canadians with disposable income, such as the national child care program, the national dental care program, both brought

in by this government, again, with the idea of ensuring that disposable income, which could go toward groceries, would in fact, be helped.

More specifically, in regard to the bill itself, when we think in terms of the big five grocery chains, Loblaws, Metro, Sobeys, Walmart and Costco, our government called them from the minister's office here in Ottawa and had them make a presentation to the standing committee in a genuine attempt for more accountability. That was relatively unique. We want to ensure that there is a healthier sense of competition and that consumers are not being taken advantage of, as we know that can take place. In fact, not that long ago, colleagues will recall when Canada Bread company was caught price fixing. Over the last couple of years that allegation was established and the company taken to court. I believe there was an agreed-upon fine somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$45 million to \$50 million. That was because the government does take this issue seriously.

Bill C-56 deals, in good part, with ensuring there is a healthier sense of competition. Let me give an example. They call it the efficiency debate. Members might recall that Shoppers Drug Mart used to be a stand-alone independent company, producing literally hundreds of millions of dollars in sales throughout the country. They used the issue of efficiency partly to justify the merger of Loblaws and Shoppers. That was the last real significant merger that we saw in the grocery industry. There is no doubt that Loblaws and Shoppers benefited immensely by that, using that particular argument. The ones who lost out were the consumers because there is less competition when two large companies form one, based on the issue of efficiency.

• (1130)

As much as the Conservatives criticize the Liberals, I will remind my friends across the way that the same thing happened while Stephen Harper was prime minister. It was the Conservative government that approved that particular merger. In good part, it was based on the efficiency defence. That is why Bill C-56, which I believe the Conservatives are filibustering, would change the game. I am not 100% sure they are filibustering it, but I would be surprised if they were not. We will have to wait and see, and maybe do a little more research on it. Suffice it to say that Bill C-56 would change the game, because we can no longer use the efficiency argument. We need to have more of a focus on Canadian consumers, and we would see that in some of the changes in the bill.

In Bill C-56, we would see more of an empowerment of the Competition Bureau, giving the bureau additional money and resources to conduct investigations to ensure we have healthier competition in a wide spectrum of areas. The best way to keep corporations more responsible, to prevent price-fixing and some of the shenanigans that take place, which ultimately shaft consumers, is to ensure there is healthier competition. That is why we looked to the Competition Bureau to give the legislation more authority, not only from a legislative perspective but also as a budgetary measure. As a government, we have invested more, into the tens of millions of dollars, so the bureau would be in a better position to conduct the investigations necessary to protect our consumers.

Over the last year, I have been invited to grand openings in the community, and one thing I really appreciate is that it is the small businesses of Canada that provide the backbone to our economy and that are so important to the whole idea of competition. I look at some of the ethnic grocery stores. I am a little reluctant to use the word “ethnic”, so I will say “community-based grocery stores”. Look at the impact they have in the community by providing additional competition, not to mention some wonderful alternative foods. In my community, there are a Punjabi grocery store and a Filipino grocery store that emphasize products from those two communities. Superstores nowadays are starting to broaden their selections, which I suggest has a lot to do with competition. Superstores will start to lose more and more of their market if they do not diversify the types of products they offer.

The same principles apply with regard to prices. We would encourage all opposition members to look at Bill C-56 as legislation that can and would make a difference for the consumers of Canada, for all of us because we are all consumers. The government is focused on having the backs of Canadians, in supporting Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be part of it and in boosting up individuals who need to be boosted, while, at the same time, ensuring that the wealthiest 1% pay their fair share. It is one of the very first actions the government took in 2015; we raised the taxes of Canada's wealthiest 1%. We have the backs of Canadians and will continue to do so through legislation and budgetary measures.

• (1135)

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada has a competition problem. I think we all know this; it has been repeated over and over today in the House. After eight years, Canadians pay the highest prices in the world for almost every good and service they can imagine. Canadian monopolies are making money on the backs of hard-working Canadians. It is not corporate greed; it is government incompetence driving these changes with the unwillingness to change the Competition Act, as well as the carbon tax driving up the prices of almost every good and service.

We can look at all of it. Canadians pay the highest cellphone bills on the whole planet. We pay three times as much as the Australians and twice as much as people do in the U.S. and in Europe. For Internet, we pay some of the highest fees. When it comes to rural Canadians, seven million Canadians, 60% of them do not have high-speed Internet. When it comes to trying to get high-speed Internet, most of them get it from the sky, from Starlink and Xplore, which are owned by American companies. With banking, six banks control 80% of all the mortgages in Canada. For airlines, 85% of all of them are controlled by two companies in Canada.

We are talking about the highest grocery bills. A 50-dollar basket in Canada is only \$35 in the United States. A decade ago, we used to have eight Canadian grocery companies, which has now been whittled down to only three Canadian companies and two American companies that control 80% of all the groceries in Canada. Even for beer, we have InBev, Molson Coors and Sapporo that account for 90% of all the beer sales in Canada. What a travesty that this is controlled by three companies.

If we look at the top 20 Canadian companies, the average age of those companies is 110 years. The average founding year for Cana-

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dian companies is 1914. In the U.S., the average age is 80 years, and the average founding year is 1944. Of the top five biggest companies in Canada, our oldest is RBC, which was founded in 1864. In the U.S., it is in Microsoft, which was founded in 1975. We have major monopolies that have controlled all Canadian markets. They control everything Canadians buy. After eight years of the government, the Prime Minister, coupled with the NDP government, is just not worth the cost, literally, for almost everything Canadians buy.

Why do we want competition? Competition is freedom. It is freedom of choice. Families can decide where to put their money, their hard-earned tax dollars. That always means better service. It always means lower prices. However, to have freedom, one needs to have courage to change the rules and to break up the trust to stand up for Canadians' wallets.

The Competition Act is the culprit. It is outdated. It was meant to be based on an industrial 1960s-style policy that was meant not for competition in Canada but for competition in the world. We wanted Canadian companies to get as big as possible in order to be able to compete internationally. That meant we made sure all our big companies, starting from the founder, the Hudson's Bay Company, which was the original monopoly, were as big as possible and ensured those companies could compete. However, at the invention of free trade and as we have gone global in the world, we have never changed the Competition Act, so the Competition Act, in fact, protects only large companies. It protects them to get bigger, and at the end of the day, Canadians pay the highest fees on the whole planet.

After eight years, here are the mergers that have been approved by the Competition Bureau. Air Canada was approved to buy Air Transat. Rogers was approved to buy Shaw in 2022. Westjet bought Sunwing, which was approved in 2022. Bell was approved to buy MTS. Superior Propane was approved to buy Canexus. Superior Propane was approved to buy Canwest Propane. Sobeys, in the grocery market, was approved to buy Farm Boy in 2018. Tervita bought assets from Babkirk Land Services in 2015. The most egregious, to me, is happening right now. It is RBC, which has been approved to buy HSBC. RBC, Canada's number one bank, with 21% of all the mortgages, has a hard time getting new clients. When it looked to buy new clients, of course it looked at the deal with HSBC, which had 800,000 mortgage holders, and said “Is this not a great deal?” and that it would love to buy it. Why would it not, with 800,000 mortgage holders? The Competition Act, based on outdated rules, said that this company was going to get bigger and saw nothing in these rules to stop the merger.

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● (1140)

Let me tell members what this merger would do. Of those 800,000 mortgage holders, HSBC has 10% of all Vancouver mortgages and 5% of all Toronto mortgages. When we look at the housing markets in the world, Toronto is the number one hottest market in the world. Vancouver is the third-hottest market. The approval of this merger would effectively mean that, when we look at prices for mortgages, the lower mortgages by the scrappy competitor, HSBC, would be bought wholeheartedly by RBC. We will want to compare those numbers. RBC, last week, had a posted variable mortgage rate of 7.15%, HSBC at 6.4%. That is a basis point difference of 75 for a mortgage market, which may not have meant anything three years ago when interest rates were really low. However, when interest rates go higher, that means that a family in Toronto or Vancouver with a half-a-million-dollar mortgage would be paying, per month, \$312 more, based on the fact that this competitor would be gone.

The Competition Act favours monopolies; it says so in the purpose statement. Part of the change in this is the courage to change the rules. Conservatives were the ones who came up with eliminating the efficiencies defence, the defence that allows, in the Competition Act, any big companies, regardless of their size and regardless of the merger, to be able to merge based on efficiencies. A lot of times, they were job markets or job losses. I know that the removal of the defence is a good idea because it was my idea, my private member's bill, which was introduced in the House on June 12, when it was read for the first time. It was scheduled to go the second time and the government first took it with Bill C-56. Now, of course, the efficiencies defence removal is coming under this private member's bill. Of course, this is a good idea. Conservatives are looking forward to presenting more good ideas as we look to tackle the Competition Act.

It comes down to one thing: do we stand up for the people or do we stand up with monopolies? When we look at the monopolies across Canada, we certainly have to be brave in terms of looking at how to tackle those.

When we look at grocery prices and grocery stores, only three Canadian companies, three Canadian grocery chains, own two-thirds of the whole market. They are Metro, Shoppers and Sobeys. We can look over the years at how that was able to occur. In 1986, Safeway was able to buy Woodward's. In 1990, A&P was able to buy Steinberg's. Sobeys bought IGA. That one is the most egregious to me. The Independent Retail Grocers Association is not independent; it is owned by Sobeys. We have Loblaws buying Safeway. Metro bought A&P. Loblaws bought Provigo. Amazon has bought Whole Foods. Metro has bought Jean Coutu. Sobeys has bought Farm Boy and Longo's. There is no competition in Canada; there are only oligopolies.

When it comes to the grocery sector, we also have another item, another piece, that makes it completely uncompetitive; that is the carbon tax. The carbon tax has added on for the farmer. The medium farm in Canada pays \$150,000 in carbon taxes and gets no rebate, meaning it passes that cost on to the consumer. Truckers get a carbon tax added on to the price of fuel. They do not get a rebate, so that gets added on to the price for consumers. Cold storage facilities and warehouses all get a carbon tax added on to their heat bills

and to their bills to freeze food and keep it cold. All of that gets added on for consumers. When the carbon tax gets added on one, two, three, four or five times, the food goes up one, two, three, four or five times. That is why, when we compare Canadian grocery prices to American grocery prices, Americans pay less; it is because they have no carbon tax.

Large monopolies should not be able to merge with one another. The large monopolies should not be able to gobble up other, smaller competitors. That is the key we are missing in the Competition Act. When we have large competitors competing internationally, that is one thing. When we have Canadian monopolies buying small competitors just so they can get bigger, just so that they can make more money on the backs of hard-working Canadians, that is wrong. To break that up and to change the Competition Act takes courage, and that is what we want to do as Conservatives on this side of the House.

Competition is freedom of choice and freedom of courage. Let us have the courage to change the Competition Act and to create competition for a change, for my home, your home and our home. Let us take competition and bring it home.

● (1145)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this weekend in my riding I was at the Saint-Janvier Optimist Club, whose mission is to work for youth and children. I want to take this opportunity to commend Linda Cardinal and the entire team who work very hard for children.

Attending this type of event always allows us to reconnect with people, the business community and community organizations, and I find it interesting that we are talking about competition in the House today because I heard people talking about that on Saturday evening. I was at that event with people from the Mirabel Chamber of Commerce, who came to see me to tell me that every year, there is a gala for entrepreneurs in Mirabel, but that this year the gala will not be held because the entrepreneurs are in over their heads, because businesses are extremely worried as they wait for extensions and flexibility for their emergency loan and because for some members the survival of their business is potentially at risk.

If we want to increase competition and stimulate entrepreneurship, and if we want people who enter stores and businesses to be able to shop—we talked about mergers and acquisitions that reduce the number of businesses in the market—then we need to make sure small and medium-sized businesses can survive and breathe and enjoy some flexibility. I find it mind-boggling that, out of all the parties that have spoken today, not one so far has asked the government to extend the deadlines and show flexibility when we know this would immediately increase competition.

I ask the government once again to show some flexibility. What it has shown to date is complete disregard for our entrepreneurial base. The government says it has shown flexibility, that it took measures during the pandemic and invested significantly. Yes, but the current economic circumstances are exceptional, as they were during the pandemic. Times are tough. This must be extended.

That said, it is true that we have a bill in front of us that is good for competition. It is time we started talking about our competition regime. What does this bill do? It increases penalties for some anti-competitive behaviour. We need tougher, more meaningful penalties. It changes the competition regime for Canadian businesses, big multinationals, when they merge with or acquire other companies, so that consumers and the price they will pay are considered in the Competition Bureau's decision-making process. It allows the Competition Tribunal to issue additional, broader orders so that mergers, acquisitions and so on can be more easily prevented. It extends the limitation period for the review of mergers and acquisitions from one year to three years.

These are good measures given our ailing competition regime. We talked about this during the debate on Bill C-56. Around the world, when there is a major merger or acquisition, competition authorities ask two general types of questions. The first is, how will this make things more efficient? Will these businesses, which are expanding and increasing market concentration, operate more efficiently? That is a legitimate question. The second type of questions is, considering that consumers will have fewer places, fewer stores where they can shop, do they risk being fleeced? Could they end up paying more? Could there be an increase in the cost of living? Do consumers risk being held hostage by this smaller number of larger businesses?

Canada's system is unique in the world in that the Competition Bureau is not allowed to ask this second type of questions. As a result, in certain markets, such as grocery stores, we have seen market concentration, merger after merger, acquisition after acquisition. It is now at the point where there are three major grocery stores in the market, not including Walmart and Costco, even though Canada is a G7 country. When the minister invited representatives from these big companies, they were all able to sit around a small coffee table, in 10 square feet. That is just one example of the disease plaguing our competition system.

• (1150)

HSBC Bank Canada is the perfect example. It is selling its subsidiaries around the world because it needs cash. What is happening? HSBC is selling its subsidiaries and, obviously, it is the biggest, strongest player that is most likely to buy that bank, especially since we know that the mortgage market is struggling and some banks are vulnerable. The system is already vulnerable.

The Competition Bureau is keeping an eye on that to determine whether there are efficiencies to be had. Of course, there are efficiencies to be had. We do not have to have a honorary doctorate, like the member for Trois-Rivières, to know that. The biggest bank is going to buy the portfolios of customers from other banks. It will own the mortgages and will be able to close branches and reduce the number of players in the market. HSBC will likely not have any storefront locations after the merger or acquisition. It will be the

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same bank with the same customers. It will provide the same loans, with the same employees and the same systems.

The Competition Bureau allows this because it will save money. However, not even the Competition Bureau is authorized to check on whether this will reduce competition, and consumers are the ones who end up paying. What is interesting is that the government even recognized that. With Bill C-56, the message is that Canada's competition regime needs to be changed, because consumers have been getting shafted at every turn for decades.

The Competition Bureau allowed this to happen under the old rules. This has made it to the desk of the Minister of Finance, who is about to sign it. If I were the Minister of Industry, I would really feel like I was a laughingstock. It is imperative that this transaction be put on hold until we see whether Bill C-56 passes, depending on the will of Parliament, so that the Competition Bureau can reissue a notice under the new rules of Bill C-56, taking the consumer into account. That is why it is so important to review our competition system.

Bill C-352 looks at supply chains, which is a good thing. We experienced this during the pandemic. We know that when there are mergers and acquisitions, transactions often involve head offices elsewhere and there is a risk that foreign suppliers will replace local suppliers. A few years ago that was not seen as dangerous. However, with the closures during the pandemic, we realized the extent to which consumers' buying power in Quebec and Canada could be weakened by supply chain disruptions in the event of a major shock to international trade. We have come to realize that, sometimes, it is good insurance to have local or national suppliers. It is a very good thing.

Furthermore, we will be able to give the Competition Tribunal some power to cancel mergers and acquisitions. We realized after all that, because the Competition Bureau's advisory opinions are not always perfect, consumers were being cheated far more than people thought. Some trial and error is involved here, and, often, when the Competition Bureau has not taken everything into account, when circumstances have changed, the consumer ends up paying.

They say that a transaction will be cancelled if it takes the new company that merged or made an acquisition to a 60% market share. That could be at 30%. We are not sure where these figures come from, but we think this deserves to be properly assessed in committee and, perhaps, be amended. That said, the bill does leave the tribunal a lot of latitude to take other criteria into account.

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There is also the dominant market position issue. Until now, companies with a dominant position have been prevented from forcing their competitors to not do business with some suppliers. A number of practices have been blocked, but nothing prevents these companies from abusing their dominance and charging prices that are too high. We know that when a company gains market power, when it becomes a monopoly or comes close, its first reflex is of course to raise prices excessively high, because the consumer has no other place to shop. The consumer is stuck with one brand, one company. In some regions, there are very concentrated markets where the consumer is stuck with one company.

What this bill shows is that the competition regime is in serious need of reform. Most of all, it shows that Canada's competition regime has been favouring business and capital, not consumers, for decades. With today's cost of living, the importance of putting consumers at the centre of our thinking, at the centre of our approach, is not lost on anyone.

● (1155)

I would therefore like to thank the leader of the NDP for introducing this bill. We will be pleased to debate it in committee.

[*English*]

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am quite pleased to rise today and contribute to the debate on what I take to be an important bill. I want to thank the NDP leader for having brought it forward. It gives voice to the elephant in the room, which is the role that corporate profits are too often playing in making life hard for Canadians.

Earlier we heard from the member for Bay of Quinte who said that it is not corporate profits. However, we know that this is not the case. It is more of what we often hear from the Conservatives, which is making excuses for corporations that are gouging Canadians in a very difficult time.

What I like about this bill is that it does not accept that we should be quiet about corporate profits or suppress debate on the role of corporate Canada in attacking the pocketbooks of Canadians. Instead, it says that we should do something about it.

What am I talking about when I talk about the role of corporate profits? Since 2019, corporate profit per unit of production in Canada is up by 50%. For every unit that we produce, the amount of money that goes into corporate profit is up by 50%. That is from Jim Stanford at the Centre for Future Work. Over the last number of years, since 2019, profits have grown three times faster than wages have.

Sometimes we hear from right-wing economists that wages are really what is driving inflation, and workers should lower their expectations and get used to the idea of having less-powerful paycheques. We hear this whether they are friends of the Conservative Party or the Liberal Party or whether they hang out at the Bank of Canada. However, nobody is telling that to corporate Canada, except the NDP. Corporate paycheques are getting a lot more powerful, three times faster than the wages of Canadian workers.

In the period from 2019 to 2022, if we dig down by industry, we would find obscene levels of additional profit. In the oil and gas

sector, we saw a 1,000% increase in profits. Let us just think about that and the reality that Canadians are living. More and more Canadians than ever before are lining up at food banks. Meanwhile, oil and gas companies are charging just about everyone in the country in some way, shape or form, whether it is when they fill up at the pump in order to fill their car to get to work or whether it is when they turn up the heat at this time of year in order to heat their home.

It is not as though Canadians have a choice to do without oil and gas in the current economy. Therefore, to see the companies that are the gatekeepers of that important resource getting 1,000 times more in profit is a significant issue for a lot of Canadians, and it is part of the reason so many Canadians are standing in food bank lines across the country.

What could we do about it? One of the remedies is competition. Historically, that has not been Canada's forte. In big industries, where the cost of getting in is very high and capital-intensive, we tend to see oligopolies form in Canada. This is true in telecommunications, oil and gas, and the grocery sector.

We need strong regulation in order to be able to try to create the kind of competition that could lower prices. What have we seen instead? Just recently, respecting the Rogers-Shaw merger, the Competition Bureau wanted to get more information, but it actually does not have the power to compel companies to hand over information. That is a broken piece of the puzzle. Then, even though the Competition Bureau advised against that merger and went to the Competition Tribunal to make the case, it lost the case in front of the tribunal. Just to add insult to injury, the tribunal ordered the Competition Bureau to pay \$13 million in costs for its trouble.

Who ends up footing the bill for that? The taxpayer does; the very same Canadians who are struggling because telecommunication companies are charging among the highest rates in the world then have to dish out another \$13 million. This is because their own Competition Bureau had the audacity to challenge telecommunication companies and demand that they show that this would actually benefit consumers and was of the opinion that it would not.

What have we seen since the Rogers-Shaw merger? We have not seen lower prices. In fact, we got a call from a guy in B.C. just looking for a sympathetic ear, who was saying he was now getting double billed. He had been sent a SIM card by Rogers, and until he took the time to figure out how to switch the SIM card, activate the new one and do all the things, he was getting a bill from Shaw and a bill from Rogers. That can be a real pain in the arse, and he had not gotten around to it yet. How are people supposed to make ends meet when a company is charging them twice for the same service?

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• (1200)

There is a high level of corporate gall, and it is why New Democrats are concerned about empowering the Competition Bureau to get the information it needs in order to give meaningful penalties to companies trying to skirt the law. These are just some of the things this bill would do. It is about trying to create a culture of more corporate accountability.

There are issues with the government sometimes. We raise issues with what the government does all the time in this place. However, contrary to what the Conservatives often try to portray, it is not just government that is the problem when we look at the track record of corporate profits in the last three or four years, and even before that. In a period of declining corporate tax rates, we have seen corporate profits go up and up.

Is that money being reinvested into the Canadian economy? No. In fact, I hear Conservatives themselves complain about the lack of business investment and productivity in Canada over the last 20 years. That period coincides with the Conservatives getting their way on the corporate tax rate and with a less regulated economy.

If the so-called solution is producing results that are not what we want, it is time to rethink the solution. The member for Burnaby South, the leader of the NDP, has begun some of that work in this bill, and I urge all members in this House to support it.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member. When we come back, he will have three minutes to finish his thoughts.

[Translation]

The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired, and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

NATIONAL SECURITY REVIEW OF INVESTMENTS MODERNIZATION ACT

BILL C-34—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

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

That, in relation to Bill C-34, An Act to amend the Investment Canada Act, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration of the report stage and one sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration at third reading stage of the said bill; and

That, 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on the day allotted to the consideration at report stage and on the day allotted to the consideration at third reading stage of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

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

The hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets.

• (1205)

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question for the minister is in relation to the amendment we are debating now at report stage. We are dealing with section 15, which basically takes cabinet out of the beginning of the process and says the minister only has to go back to cabinet at the end of the process if a national security review says there is a problem. If not, the minister does not have to go back.

Does the minister not believe that we get better decision-making by having all cabinet colleagues involved in the decision-making, not just an individual industry minister making that choice?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a time to think, a time to debate and a time to act. I am pleased to report to Canadians watching at home, and I am sure there are many on this Monday morning, that not only the bill but also the amendments have received unanimous support from all parties in this House.

I am a bit surprised to see, even today, the hidden agenda of the Conservatives to block this bill from going forward, because, as we can see from the record, all parties have agreed to it and all the amendments have been agreed to. We should be in a place today where we can say to Canadians that we take national security seriously and that we want to act in the interests of Canadians.

That is exactly what we are proposing today. We want to move to a vote so we can better protect Canadians by having more tools in the tool box. I would say that my colleagues on both sides, and my respected colleague, would agree with that because the whole purpose of this bill is to have more tools in the tool box. We live in a time of a lot of uncertainty and geopolitical challenges. We welcome foreign investment, but obviously we want to make sure we have the tools in the tool box to protect Canadians.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister can provide his thoughts on this. The Conservatives often talk about the issue of foreign interference. Here we have legislation that looks at it from a different perspective, an economic perspective. That is one of the reasons it is important to see this legislation ultimately pass. I would be interested in his comments on that and why the Conservatives continue to not want to see the legislation pass, which is to the detriment of Canadians as a whole.

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Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of things in this bill that would help Canadians. Members should think about that. We are going to reduce the net benefit threshold review, which is something a lot of members in this House have been asking for. We are going to expand the jurisdiction of the ICA to include asset sales. At this time, we need these kinds of provisions. We are going to have stronger penalties. We are going to have more tools. Imagine, for example, being able to accept undertakings or prevent a transaction from going forward as the government is studying it in the interests of Canadians. Think in the context of IP.

The last time this bill was amended, and members should hold on to their seats, was in 2009. That is the last time it was looked at. If we think about the lapse of time and how the world has changed, obviously we need to act.

This House has had a lot of time to look at this. We introduced the bill on December 7, 2022, so members can imagine that Canadians at home are anxious to see every member of this House acting quickly in order to protect their best interests.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the member that perhaps many people in this House are wondering about. Why do the Conservatives continue to obstruct important business from moving forward, even when it is legislation they support? Can he share his thoughts on that? How do we move forward to get things happening in the House in the timely manner we need to see?

• (1210)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I like the question. I wish I could answer it. I do not know, honestly, because Conservatives agreed to the legislation and the amendments. They support them, yet they do not want to vote.

I am glad Canadians are watching. They must be wondering at home why the Conservatives agree but do not want to vote. What is the logic of that? The only thing I can find is that they want to obstruct the work of Parliament. They want to delay everything. They will not even allow Bill C-56 to pass, which we talked about before, to make sure we reform competition.

They say that Canada should work at the speed of business, and look at them this morning. What about the speed of business? What about voting on something they want? Find the logic in that. Folks watching at home are wondering why Conservatives agree but do not want to vote for it. It is very tough for me to understand that. I am sure my kids, who are watching at home, would ask how that is possible. That is the real question we are asking. Why do they not do what is right for Canadians? They supported the amendments. They support the bill. We had 44 witnesses. We had 20 hours of debate in the House, 11 meetings at the INDU committee and 20 hours of witnesses.

As I said, there is a time for debate, but there is also a time for action. The time for action is now.

[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I commend the minister on his intervention.

Bill C-34 is certainly well intentioned. We also recognize the work that was done in committee, which enabled us to add to the bill the concept of sensitive sectors, including intellectual property and data banks that contain personal information.

However, the bill is still incomplete and that is the problem. If we were to apply the new rules proposed in Bill C-34 to the projects submitted in 2022, only 24 of the 1,255 projects would be reviewed. That is not even 2% of all the projects. I would like my colleague to explain whether he agrees that we need to lower the review threshold to cast a wider net and have better rules that will make it possible to review all the projects so as to protect the local economy and prevent any loopholes in foreign investments.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, my colleague knows how much I respect him. He is one of the members of the House that always contribute to the debate.

The problem is that the Bloc Québécois supports this bill, and people likely do not understand the situation. The Bloc Québécois supports the amendment. Everyone has spoken and everyone has voted in favour of the bill and the amendments. We are asking our colleagues in the House today to put it to a vote. Everyone is in agreement. The members from my colleague's party are in agreement. They voted in favour of the amendments and the bill.

Today we are saying that we need to work in the House in the interest of Canadians. People watching us in the galleries and at home are wondering why we have not started voting. That is the real question today. I do not believe I have heard any of my colleagues give us a good reason not to vote when everyone is in agreement. Today's debate is all about moving the bill forward.

[English]

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives put forth several amendments, two of which were rejected. One would have required the minister to conduct a national review by changing “may” to “shall” to ensure a review is triggered whenever the review threshold is met. The other would have made the act retroactive.

How does the minister expect the government to ensure our national security is in place if we cannot go back to see which companies got in under the wire and may be doing Canadian companies harm?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to answer that question.

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The hon. member would know that what we are doing with this bill is giving more tools. That was the discussion at committee, I would say respectfully. Let us look at that. There were 11 meetings at INDU and over 20 hours at committee. Not one but 11 significant amendments were voted on by everyone. Everyone agreed that this bill needed significant amendments and everyone voted for them.

What we are debating today is not the essence of the bill. Everyone is looking at this and we all agree, so we are just saying let us vote on it. That is what the record of the committee says. This is about national security. We are not talking about any kind of thing. We know that economic security is national security.

I have enormous respect for our colleague, who is asking a good question, but that debate happened in committee and members voted for it. Now we have a bill that is ready to be voted on at report stage and then at third reading. I know that, because our colleagues voted for it at committee, in their heart they want to vote for it. Let us not allow politics to block national security, because that is too important for Canadians.

• (1215)

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am entering this debate because I have seen the Conservatives over and over again think of different tactics to delay progress on virtually anything in this House. They will bring forward successive concurrence debates to delay progress of other matters in this House, even though those debates are being actively dealt with at committee. Therefore, here we are.

What I am hearing from the minister is that on this issue, the very questions the Conservatives are raising have been discussed extensively at committee, yet they are still in this House trying to block passage of the bill. Under what circumstance is it justifiable for all of us as parliamentarians to be in this House to obstruct the work that needs to be done on behalf of Canadians?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, it is a very good question. The obstruction tactics that we see from the Conservatives are hurting Canadians. I like the way the colleague put it. There have been two concurrence motions for when we brought this bill forward. For folks at home who are at watching and wondering what a concurrence motion is, it is a delay tactic, which is what is happening.

There were over 20 hours of debate in the House, 11 meetings at the INDU committee, with over 20 hours debate at the committee, and 44 witnesses. On the basis of that, everyone agreed, and we all voted for the amendments. Everyone agreed. We are at a time when Canadians are scratching their heads, and I understand my colleague because I am scratching my head too, thinking that, if everyone agrees, why do we not do the right thing.

We asked the opposition to stop obstructing when it comes to national security. I have heard colleagues ask, “Why do you not act at the speed of business?” I will turn the question around: Why do my colleagues not act at the speed of the business? People are watching. Businesses are asking, “What? You don’t want to vote on something you agree upon? What kind of democracy is that?”

In a democracy, we need to debate, but there is a point when we need to act, and the time to act is right now.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will leave it to the minister to convince the public of the need for his gag order. We are debating a closure motion, but we are wondering why we are even doing that. The Liberals are only imposing closure because they already know that someone is going to vote in favour of it, and that is likely the NPD, which is part of their coalition.

My question will instead focus on the bill. I think that there is a missed opportunity in Bill C-34, and since I have the floor, I want to speak to that problem. The minister is here, so why not?

Bill C-34 modernizes the entire issue of national security to tighten the rules in that area. That is not a bad thing in the current geopolitical context. However, the government left out a major component that it would have been only natural to include in this bill. We have often raised, in the House and in public debate, the issue of modernizing the Investment Canada Act, particularly the economic interest component of it.

When a major investment is made in a business here or in a new business, or when a foreign entity purchases an existing business, how is it that the review threshold is as high as \$1.7 billion? When this government took office, there was a review threshold of \$300 million. That means that, now, with the exception of cases where there is a threat to national security, the government does not even take an interest in files until the review threshold reaches \$1.7 billion, as opposed to \$300 million.

Does the minister not think that is rather high?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, my colleague knows that I have a lot of respect for him. I find we do a lot of work together.

The current debate is to decide whether we proceed to a vote. My Bloc Québécois colleagues had the opportunity to debate the bill. We heard from 44 witnesses for a bill on which everyone agrees. People are watching us. They see that we debated the bill for 20 hours in committee, and that everyone was in agreement. We are looking at each other, and we all agree. All we are asking today is to move forward to a vote, since we are all in agreement.

As my colleague said, this is a critical time in the world. We want to have more tools in our tool box so we can protect national security. Members agree on that. This not a matter of alliances. This should be a unanimous vote, and my colleagues should co-operate and agree to vote, since they are in agreement with the bill. This is what we are talking about today.

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We want to work at the speed of the industry, and we want to protect it. I believe that our colleagues from Quebec and the Quebeckers who are watching us understand that the minister needs tools. We want to protect the aerospace and semiconductor industries in Quebec, we want to protect our domestic industry. We want to make sure, for example, that any foreign buyouts are subject to a modern regime. The last time the regime was updated was 14 years ago.

I think people watching at home are saying that even the Bloc Québécois members should vote in favour of moving forward. We all debated the bill, and we are in agreement. It is time to vote.

● (1220)

[*English*]

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister keeps arguing that we have debated this enough and that all of these amendments were voted on at committee. Getting back to the question that my colleague for South Shore—St. Margarets asked, there is one question that was not voted on at committee, and it is perhaps the most important one. It has to do with ministerial discretion. That was not voted on at committee, which is why we brought it back to the House.

My colleague for South Shore—St. Margarets asked a very direct question, and the minister did not answer it. I think Canadians who are watching these proceedings deserve an answer. Does the minister not think that the country would be better served by all of cabinet undertaking the security review, rather than one minister from a particular region where certain interests are served?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to answer the question again. There were 11 meetings at committee to talk about that and 20 hours of debate. This has been debated at committee. People had the chance to debate it, but now that the debate is taking place in the House and everyone agrees, it is time to vote.

Canadians watching at home are saying there were 20 hours of debate in 11 committee meetings and 20 hours of debate in the House. Members had the chance to debate it, and they said that they agree with the amendments. Now they are asking why the government is asking them to vote on it. It is to protect Canadians' national security and make sure we have modern tools in the tool box.

There are real questions, which I know Canadians are asking. What is the hidden agenda of the Conservatives? Why would they want to block legislation? Why are they blocking Bill C-56, which would reform competition? Why are they blocking amendments to the Investment Canada Act?

When it comes to national security, members need to forget their political affiliations and do what is right for Canadians.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, this debate is not on the merits of Bill C-34, but on the use of time allocation once again. On principle, I will vote against time allocation always because this is the place where legislation gets debated.

Many members of the House are not members of the industry committee. I am not allowed to be a member of the INDU commit-

tee. I have very strong views on Bill C-34 and national security considerations on takeovers of Canadian companies, but will not be allowed to speak to this because, yet again, the guillotine is being brought down. The Harper administration did this time and time again, and the opposition knew it was wrong then. The Liberals promised that they would not, and now it is routine. Time allocation is put on almost every bill.

The hon. minister knows the high opinion I hold of him. I want to be able to discuss this legislation. I was the first MP in the House to identify that the takeover of Aecon by the People's Republic of China should have had a national security review. For a long time, I was the lone voice. We finally got it, and the deal was turned down.

I care about this stuff, and I really think every member of the House has a right to participate in debates. Time allocation defeats that right.

● (1225)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, the member knows how much I like her, and her contributions to the House are well known to all members.

We actually want debate. There were 20 hours of debate in the House, 20 hours of debate at committee, and 11 meetings at committee with 44 witnesses. I agree that we need debate, which I believe in, but there is also a time when we need to act.

My colleague from the NDP said it best earlier when she said that the Conservatives consistently, systematically and regularly use delay tactics so the House cannot move bills forward. That is not democracy. In a democracy, we need to debate, we need to think and we need to make sure every voice is heard, but the duty of every member, at one stage, is to vote. We need to vote on bills so they can move forward, go through the Senate and hopefully get royal assent.

As I said, there comes a time in a democracy, and in the House, when we need to move forward, particularly when it comes to national security. I would not know how to explain to Canadians that members are in agreement, but they do not want to vote. It is very difficult mentally to understand that. They would ask, if we agree, why would we not vote. That is why people sent us to the House: to vote. Members should vote, and then we will move on in protecting the national security of Canadians.

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[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain. I know that he runs his department with passion. I will speak briefly of the issue of closure motions in a minority government. As the closure motions keep on coming, we wonder if the government really understood the message it got from voters. They wanted it to reach agreements in the context of a minority government. Imposing one gag order after another is not what I would call taking into account the fact that it is a minority government.

We voted for Bill C-34, but as my colleagues said, there are a few blind spots. In particular, the last update to the Investment Canada Act dates from 1985. I was not very old in 1985. That was some time ago. I would like to hear my colleague comment about how this would have been a great opportunity to update it completely in order to protect our domestic head offices, not just address the issue of national security. We could have extended the scope of the act to include that.

Hon. Fran ois-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I understand my colleague's argument, but legislation must move forward even in a minority government. I think that my colleague would agree that, once the debate has taken place and members are in agreement, they call for a vote. Instead, we are seeing the Conservatives move all kinds of motions to prevent us from voting. In a democracy, it is important to vote. Debating is important, but it is also important to vote. We are asking to go to a vote. Action is urgently needed.

I remember appearing before the committee. My Bloc Qu b cois colleagues are in favour of the bill. My Conservatives colleagues are as well. That is what people at home do not understand. The other parties agree with it. When we had the debate, when we had the opportunity to express our opinion on the bill, 11 major amendments were agreed to by all parties. That proves democracy is working.

In a minority government, we also have to be able to pass legislation, especially on national security. That is important. Everyone agrees that we need tools in our tool box. Everyone is saying we need to do the right thing. We are doing that together. We are moving forward in good faith. I have a great deal of respect for my colleagues.

Today, what we are saying is that, at some point, we need to vote. That time has come.

[*English*]

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people from Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo. I must say that this minister has given us a master class in how to talk out the clock today.

The NDP-Liberal government has moved time allocation 37 times this Parliament alone. In the period up until Tom Mulcair, the NDP only supported time allocation 17 times, so now the NDP has done it over double the amount of times. What has its members gotten? The NDP say they want pharmacare. They have gotten nothing from the Liberal-NDP coalition.

Therefore, my question is this: Given that the Liberals have given the NDP government nothing, the government of no democratic principles, what are they promising them, since the NDP is getting nothing for truncating debate, which is what we are dealing with today?

• (1230)

Hon. Fran ois-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's contributions in the House. I am sure the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo like him. I am sure they are watching the TV today and saying, "Hold on a minute. We are all in favour of debate, but once we agree, can we vote?" That is the question. People have agreed on the amendments. I am sure people watching are thinking that we all agree. They want democracy. They want debate. They want robust debate to make sure. However, once there is agreement, we need to vote at some stage.

In this case people have agreed, and we need—

The Deputy Speaker: We have a point of order from the hon. member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley.

Mr. Marty Morantz: Mr. Speaker, I know the member to be a good person and an honest person, but he is saying that we have agreed to something that we have not agreed to. I do not think that is appropriate. It has been very clear that we have not agreed, particularly on the amendment to clause 15.

The Deputy Speaker: That is debate, I believe, unless we could have some clarification that it actually went against the rules.

Continuing with questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader has the floor.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that there is a genuine consensus of agreement in the legislation and the principles of the legislation, yet the Conservatives continue to want to prevent the House of Commons from being able to pass legislation with all forms of filibustering. A good example of that is Bill C-56, something that we debated earlier today as part of a private member's bill where members on all sides were talking about the importance of competition. However, Bill C-56 is yet another victim of Conservative filibustering.

I wonder if my friend and colleague could provide his thoughts in regard to the filibustering that takes place, which hurts Canadians.

Hon. Fran ois-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, this will allow me to respond to the point of order that was made. There was agreement by all parties on 11 significant amendments to the bill that we are talking about.

Government Orders

I value the contributions of my Conservative colleagues. I value them. That is why I went to the committee. We took on border amendments. We agreed that the best way to have good legislation in this country is to have work being done at committee, to listen to witnesses and work together. They know me. I am a very open-minded person. We accepted not one but 11 significant amendments to this bill. Everyone agreed that those were the significant amendments we needed to move forward. That was the agreement of the committee.

I think the question of the member is relevant. Once that was all done, after 44 witnesses, 20 hours of work at committee and 20 hours of time used in the House, there comes a time when people at home will say we need to move on and vote. That is exactly what we are asking for today with this motion.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is nothing but a bunch of myths from the Liberal minister. He bragged earlier that he had dropped the threshold; he did not. I brought that motion in, and Liberal MPs voted against it. I brought in the amendment to the committee that put bribery and corruption in. Liberal MPs voted against it. The only reason it is through is because the opposition put it in.

The whole point of report stage is to allow for further amendments. The minister has ignored for a half hour the call to say yes or no to whether he thinks cabinet should be eliminated from the process of reviewing foreign investments. His bill would remove cabinet from that process and put it solely in the minister's hands.

Why, for a half hour, has he decided not to answer the question? Will Liberals support our amendment at report stage to return cabinet decision-making to the Investment Canada Act, yes or no?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, the member knows how much I like him and, I will say in front of everyone in this House, his contributions. I may have had half an hour, but he had 20 hours of work at the committee to put forward his amendment. During these 20 hours, not one but 11 significant amendments were adopted by everyone. This was the Liberals, the NDP, the Bloc and the Conservatives. They had 20 hours in committee to do that, and they came and said they agreed this was the best way forward for this bill.

I welcome his contribution. I thank him for what he does in making sure he improves legislation. However, after 20 hours, someone at home would think that they must have done the work they needed to do. What we are saying today is we need to vote. That is what the motion is about today.

• (1235)

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Speaker, he still has not answered the question. Yes or no, will he vote to return cabinet decision-making to the Investment Canada process? Why does he think he is so important he is allowed to ignore his colleagues in that role in making those decisions?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, yes or no, will my colleague vote for the motion? That is the real question, because they had 20 hours of debate. The good people in his riding are wondering. If he agrees, how will he vote? Like I said, there is a time for debate and there is time for action. The time for action has come now. This is about national security. This in the interest of

Canadians. I want every member of this House to support the motion.

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

If a member participating in person wishes that the motion be 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. Ryan Williams: Mr. Speaker, we would humbly like a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1320)

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

(Division No. 440)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
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
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fillmore
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Gainey	Garrison
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gould	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Ien
Jaczek	Johns
Jowhari	Julian

Government Orders

Kayabaga	Kelloway	Généreux	Genuis
Khalid	Khera	Gill	Gladu
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk	Godin	Goodridge
Kwan	Lalonde	Gourde	Gray
Lambropoulos	Lametti	Hallan	Hoback
Lamoureux	Lapointe	Jeneroux	Kelly
Lattanzio	Lauzon	Khanna	Kitchen
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier	Kmieć	Kram
Lightbound	Long	Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	Kusie	Lake
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)	Lantsman	Larouche
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Lawrence	Lehoux
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada	Lemire	Leslie
Masse	Mathyssen	Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
May (Cambridge)	McDonald (Avalon)	Lloyd	Lobb
McGuinty	McKay	Maguire	Majumdar
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod	Martel	May (Saanic—Gulf Islands)
McPherson	Mendès	Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
Mendicino	Miao	McLean	Melillo
Miller	Morrissey	Michaud	Moore
Murray	Naqvi	Morantz	Morrice
Noormohamed	O'Connell	Morrison	Motz
Oliphant	O'Regan	Muys	Nater
Petitpas Taylor	Powlowski	Normandin	Patzer
Qualtrough	Robillard	Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Rodriguez	Rogers	Perkins	Perron
Romanado	Rota	Plamondon	Poilievre
Sahota	Sajjan	Rayes	Redekopp
Saks	Samson	Reid	Rempel Garner
Sarai	Scarpaleggia	Richards	Roberts
Schiefke	Serré	Rood	Ruff
Sgro	Shanahan	Savard-Tremblay	Scheer
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Schmale	Seeback
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Singh	Shields	Shipley
Sorbara	Sousa	Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
St-Onge	Sudds	Small	Soroka
Tassi	Taylor Roy	Steinley	Ste-Marie
Thompson	Trudeau	Stewart	Strahl
Turnbull	Valdez	Stubbs	Thériault
Van Bynen	van Koeverden	Therrien	Thomas
Vandal	Vandenbeld	Tochor	Tolmie
Virani	Weiler	Trudel	Uppal
Wilkinson	Yip	Van Popta	Vecchio
Zahid	Zarrillo — 174	Vidal	Vien
		Viersen	Vignola
		Villemure	Vis
		Vuong	Wagantall
		Warkentin	Waugh
		Webber	Williams
		Williamson	Zimmer — 150

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Caputo
Carrie	Chabot
Chambers	Champoux
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	Desbiens
Desilets	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Findlay
Fortin	Gallant
Garon	Gaudreau

PAIRED

Members

Drouin	Godin
Joly	Liepert — 4

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

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

Government Orders

REPORT STAGE

The House resumed from October 30 consideration of Bill C-34, An Act to amend the Investment Canada Act, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise today to speak to Bill C-34, which would update the Investment Canada Act. This act is designed to do two main things. The first is to ensure that foreign investments in Canada have a net benefit to Canadians. The second is to ensure that foreign investments are not detrimental to our national security.

Many Canadians, especially Canadians of my age, might know this act better by its former name, The Foreign Investment Review Act. In its early days in the 1970s, it was brought in to deal with a rash of foreign buyouts, mainly American, of Canadian companies.

The Foreign Investment Review Agency approved about 90% of the transactions it dealt with, but was criticized by both Liberals and Conservatives for actually doing its job by blocking some proposals that did not show a benefit to Canadians.

Therefore, Brian Mulroney brought in the Investment Canada Act in 1984. He replaced the Foreign Investment Review Agency with Investment Canada, saying that he wanted to welcome foreign investment. True to his word, under his government, Investment Canada did not block a single foreign investment transaction, not one. The Liberal governments that followed Mulroney, under Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin, had the same record, not one application blocked.

The Harper government was a different story. Harper blocked the sale of British Columbia-based Macdonald, Dettwiler to the American company Alliant based on both financial and critical technology arguments.

On the other hand, in 2012, the Harper government allowed the \$15-billion sale of Canada oil company Nexen to the China National Offshore Oil Company, owned by the Chinese government, and the \$6-billion sale of Progress Energy to Malaysia-based Petronas. However, the same day, Harper changed the Investment Canada Act to block state-owned foreign investment in Canadian oil and gas companies, essentially closing the barn door after the horses had left.

Therefore, legislation regarding regulating foreign takeovers of Canadian companies has changed from time to time over the past decades. Foreign investment trends have changed as well. The share of U.S. investment in Canada has declined over the past few decades, but it still leads the pack followed by the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Japan, China, Germany, Brazil, France and Bermuda, although, I suspect the high placement of Luxembourg and Bermuda reflects more where Canadian companies are hiding their profits than real sources of investment.

However, it is clear that we need to keep up with the times in regulating foreign investment, and Bill C-34 is another example of that.

Information and data are the new oil, and earlier versions of the Investment Canada Act were essentially blind to that. The bill before us introduces a pre-implementation filing requirement for certain investments to give earlier visibility to situations where there is a risk that a foreign investor would gain access to sensitive assets or information immediately on closing.

I have talked to numerous tech companies over the past few years. One story I hear repeatedly is that small Canadian tech companies work hard to develop a new technology, say in hydrogen energy development or AI advances. However, when it comes to expand their companies to really get their product to market, they need investment. Too often in the Canadian tech ecosystem, these companies simply get bought out by bigger companies from the United States, Europe or China. With those sales go the intellectual property that represents the core of their company's value.

The present version of the Investment Canada Act allows companies to report takeovers after the fact. However, if critical intellectual property is involved, it is usually too late to stop the transfer of that information, if we find out about the transaction 30 days later, for instance. It is not like the old days when the main value of a company was in the factories it owned. This new pre-implementation filing could help put a stop to that where necessary.

There are several other improvements that provide more flexibility for the minister to act and better manage the entire process.

What would make the act even better? First, the act should mandate the review of an acquisition by a state-owned enterprise of a company previously reviewed by the ICA, and I would like to spend some time on a story that illustrates why this is needed.

There is a company called Retirement Concepts that owns and operates a number of seniors residences in British Columbia, long-term care homes. One of them is the Summerland Seniors Village just outside the federal riding I represent but within the provincial riding I live in. When I first sought to enter politics 10 years ago, I was involved in a provincial election in that riding.

● (1325)

The Summerlands Seniors Village was involved in a tragic story of a local family that lost both its mother and its father in 2012 to poor care and accidents. I met with members of the family and heard the heart-wrenching story of neglect that had taken the lives of their parents.

Government Orders

After that incident, the provincial government demanded that Retirement Concepts hire more staff, but managers claimed that no one was applying. I am guessing that a combination of low wages and overworked conditions had a lot to do with that.

In 2016, Chinese insurance giant Anbang, then a privately held company, bought Retirement Concepts, a transaction that was reviewed and okayed by the federal government's investment review process. Less than a year after that purchase was okayed, the Chinese government seized the Anbang company and jailed its chairman for fraud. Perhaps it knew something that the Canadian government missed when that review was carried out.

Suddenly, we have the Chinese government owning a company that is one of the largest providers of long-term care in Canada and certainly the largest in B.C.. Not only is it one of the largest providers of long-term care, it is known to provide very poor care at times for our seniors.

In fact, in 2020, the provincial government in British Columbia had to seize management control of four care homes run by Retirement Concepts because of the continuing problems with poor care. It returned that control just over a year later, but it is an indication of the general lack of priority Retirement Concepts had placed on the care of seniors.

At present, there are no provisions in the Investment Canada Act that would allow Investment Canada or the minister to be able to review the subsequent acquisition by a state-owned enterprise of an ICA-approved takeover or merger by a foreign private company. We have to change this.

The NDP put forward an amendment that would allow for the review of a takeover by a state-owned enterprise. This can be done by establishing the power to require a mandatory divestment of all Canadian assets by entities in these specific circumstances.

As an aside, in the case of long-term care homes, the NDP is very much in favour of a move to a future where seniors' care is given the same respect that all health care gets, a future where no long-term care homes are owned by private companies that put profit ahead of the well-being of our seniors.

This is an example of where we could and should take a big step in that direction.

Another factor to consider in investment review is to prevent the loss of publicly funded research and development from leaving the country, resulting in the loss of jobs and, basically, the theft of taxpayer dollars.

A company called Nemark received \$3 million dollars from the government's automotive supplier innovation program. However, in 2020, Nemark closed its plant in Windsor, where those funds had been used to create new products for General Motors, and transferred that technology and those jobs to its operations in Mexico.

An NDP amendment, passed in committee, would allow for the review of a foreign takeover to consider the intellectual property whose development was funded by the federal government and to issue remedies to retain the benefits in Canada. Therefore, a situation like that of Nemark would not happen again.

I do not have time today to go over all the improvements this bill would bring to the foreign investment space in Canada or to go over all the improvements that we had hoped it would bring but fell short.

In this new world, where ideas and data are often more valuable than the natural resources we have so long relied on for our wealth, we need a new regulatory framework to protect our industries, our workers and our companies. Bill C-34 is a step in that direction.

● (1330)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, could the member provide his thoughts in regard to the idea that this is a modernization? It has been a number of years since the legislation has been changed to the degree that is being proposed today. Because of technological changes over the past decade, changes to the legislation are badly needed. That is one reason why we hope to see Bill C-34 pass as quickly as possible.

Could he comment on the importance of getting this passed before Christmas?

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my speech, things have really changed since this was last updated in, I think, 2009 or 2012. Before that, when I was young, this whole regulatory system was brought in because manufacturing plants were largely going south of the border.

Things have changed. Canada is a leader in several aspects of real high-tech research and development. I mentioned hydrogen. There is fusion and AI that we hear a lot about. These are things that move very rapidly, and almost all the value in the company is not in the offices it has or its labs but in ideas and intellectual property. This is something that has really changed. One thing we need to do is change the regulations to protect that from leaving Canada.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was interested in the member's speech, particularly because 30-year NDP House leader Stanley Knowles would not have been impressed with the NDP voting for closure and eliminating debate in the House once again.

Aside from that, this report stage debate is specifically about our amendment to the bill to return the cabinet decision-making process to the beginning and the end decisions on whether an acquisition by a foreign entity poses a national security review.

The hon. member's colleague from Windsor West has done some good work on this bill as well. Will he and his party be supporting our amendment at report stage?

Government Orders

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, I think there is something to be said for both methods, whether we simply require ministerial decision-making or we want it to go to cabinet. Having the minister being the decision-maker in this case adds some nimbleness to it, and there is something to be said about nimbleness and a quick decision. Some of these transactions are happening very quickly in the financial markets. We all know how quickly they can happen.

I have not been part of the committee discussions, so I do not want to presume to say where we will end up on this. However, I can see both sides to that story. I will wait to see what happens.

• (1335)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I see that the NDP has once again decided to support a government gag order. I find this odd because, in general, the role of the opposition parties is to challenge the government. Their role is to try and determine whether the government is doing a good job, to ask questions, to try to improve things.

We get the impression that the NDP is just rubber-stamping everything that the Liberals come up with. I question the usefulness of having a party like that in the House of Commons, if it votes in favour of everything the government tables.

Is there any critical thinking happening at all on the NDP side, or are the New Democrats completely blinded by a fear of ending up in an election or holding the Liberals to account?

[*English*]

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, if the member had been concentrating and looking at the past voting records in this Parliament, he could see the NDP voting against the government on a number of occasions. We are still strongly debating with the government on issues, and this bill is an example of that. We thought the bill did not come up to the standards we would have liked. We put forward several good ideas for amendments in this bill, and some were accepted.

We are always focused on improving the lives of Canadians and improving the field for Canadian businesses. That is what we concentrate on. When it is time to move on, it is time to move on. We see parties such as the Conservative Party do nothing but block everything. We have had three concurrence motions in the past week, which are just designed to waste time. We have to move along and get things done. This bill is very much needed, and we are happy to support its movement through Parliament.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill C-34, an act to amend the Investment Canada Act, at report stage. I will get into the particulars of the bill shortly, but before I do, let me say that in a little more than an hour and a half, Liberal members across the way will have a choice. They can vote for our common-sense Conservative motion to axe the tax on all home heating, or they can do the bidding of their boss, the Prime Minister, and sell out their constituents.

These are Liberal MPs from Ontario, Alberta, Manitoba and British Columbia. We will see whose side they are on, because their colleagues from Atlantic Canada, including the member for Avalon,

received an exemption for Atlantic Canadians on home heating oil. However, it seems that all other Liberal MPs are so useless that their constituents, including my constituents, Albertans, have received nothing. We will see whose side Liberal MPs, including the member for Edmonton Centre and the member for Calgary Skyview, are on very shortly.

With respect to this legislation, when it was presented in the House at second reading stage, it was a modest bill. It was, frankly, inadequate in terms of strengthening the foreign investment review process, which takes into account the net benefit for Canada, as well as national security considerations. However, the good news is that the bill has been significantly improved thanks to four Conservative amendments that were adopted at the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology, although opposed by the Liberals.

I would submit that the most important of those amendments is to require a mandatory security review for investments by foreign state-owned enterprises in which Canada does not have a trading agreement with the countries.

This legislation marks the first major revamp of the Investment Canada Act since 2009. It goes without saying the foreign investment environment has changed considerably in that time, with foreign bad actors, including Beijing, posing an increased threat to our security and sovereignty.

PRC firms work closely with Beijing's military and intelligence apparatuses to gain information about foreign companies, as well as to acquire their technology. Professor Balding, who testified at the industry committee in 2020, indicated that PRC firms are actually given a list each year of foreign assets to acquire, underscoring the threat posed by Beijing.

The fact that we have this increasing threat demonstrates that the Investment Canada Act is long overdue for an update. However, for the past eight years, the Prime Minister has been asleep at the switch, while Beijing has attacked our sovereignty, security and democracy on his watch.

Beijing has used its embassy and consulates to interfere in our elections and to target sitting members of Parliament for daring to speak up and call out Beijing's egregious human rights violations, including the genocide being perpetrated against Uyghur Muslims as we speak. This regime has set up illegal police stations to harass, intimidate and repatriate Chinese Canadians, and it is spreading disinformation on a mass scale to divide Canadians.

• (1340)

In the face of that, the response of the Prime Minister has been to do nothing, to turn a blind eye. Indeed, the only concrete measure that the Prime Minister took was to expel one Beijing diplomat, but only after he got caught for keeping the member for Wellington—Halton Hills in the dark about how he and his family were targeted by a diplomat at Beijing's Toronto consulate.

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For the past eight years, Beijing has effectively been given the green light to acquire vast amounts of farmland. It has gained a foothold with respect to critical infrastructure and strategic resources, including minerals. Even worse than that, we have a government, under the Prime Minister's watch, that has refused to undertake national security reviews and has given the green light to Beijing-controlled enterprises to invest in Canada and acquire Canadian companies, to the detriment of Canada's national security. In so doing, it has also caused irreparable damage to Canada's reputation among our Five Eyes allies.

One egregious example of that, and I stress that there are many examples I could cite, was when the Beijing-controlled Hytera sought to acquire the B.C. communications technology company Norsat, which worked with National Defence Canada, Public Safety Canada and the Pentagon. Our U.S. ally said to put a pause on this takeover by Hytera, but the Liberal minister of the day, in his infinite wisdom, ignored the U.S. and gave the green light without any security review.

Last year, Hytera was charged with 21 counts of espionage by the U.S. This underscores the degree of recklessness on the part of the government to give the green light, not to mention the damage it has done to our reputation with our most important ally, the United States.

As bad as that is, one would think that after a company such as Hytera was facing 21 espionage charges in the U.S., it would be enough for the government to decide not to do business with Hytera. However, one would be wrong; it was not enough for the current Liberals. Eight months later, the Liberals gave the green light for a contract with the RCMP to sell technology to protect sensitive RCMP communications equipment for espionage from a subsidiary of none other than Hytera, a company charged with 21 counts of espionage. One cannot make this stuff up. It is scandalous incompetence with real national security implications.

In 2020, to make it appear that he was actually taking Beijing's interference seriously, the minister of industry announced a policy of enhanced scrutiny for investments from foreign state-owned enterprises. No sooner had he announced the policy than he disregarded it, giving the green light to another Beijing state-owned enterprise to acquire a mining company that operates the largest lithium mine in Canada. Now, all that lithium is controlled by Beijing.

In closing, let me say that when it comes to protecting Canada's national security from authoritarian states such as Beijing, the government cannot be trusted. The good news, however, is that this bill would require the reckless government to undertake the security reviews that it should have taken but did not. On that basis, it is a much stronger bill going forward, thanks to the Conservatives and no thanks to the Liberals.

• (1345)

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to the member's speech. Perhaps he could explain further the extent to which the government has failed to take Canada's national security seriously and necessitated this. The review is long overdue and the threat environment has changed, but this bill, if passed, would in some ways force the government to do

things that it ought to have had enough sense to do in the first place.

Could the member comment?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, it is going to force the government to do what it needed to do and had not done before by lowering the threshold from \$512 million to zero with respect to investments from foreign-controlled enterprises. This is a government that announced a policy. The minister announced a policy in 2020. What good is a policy if the policy is not followed? That policy had no teeth and the minister was not sincere about seeing it through, so this bill is an improvement.

I will say that there were other amendments that Conservatives supported but these Liberals opposed, that would have gone a long way to strengthen the bill, including the fact that Beijing acquires companies and investments, sometimes through third party entities. We have supported an amendment that would have allowed for a proper review where those assets were then sold to a Beijing or other foreign state-controlled enterprise. The Liberals voted against it.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am not a part of this committee but my colleagues do a really good job of passing on information around what is happening. I am wondering if my colleague can speak a little bit more around the amendment that was put forward by the NDP to clause 8, which speaks to the importance of reviewing a foreign investment or takeover to consider the intellectual property whose development was funded in part, or in whole, by the federal government and to issue remedies to retain the benefits in Canada. My understanding of this was that it was to ensure that the effect of the investment on the use and protection of personal information of Canadians is at the forefront of this legislation.

I am wondering if the member can speak to this amendment and share a little bit further information around the importance of protecting the personal information of Canadians.

• (1350)

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, in short, Conservatives fully supported that amendment around IP. It is an amendment that would have strengthened the bill but the Liberals did not support it. They did not support that amendment and they did not support our amendments.

As far as the Bloc Québécois goes, I believe the Bloc opposed the amendment. I would say in regard to this bill that the Liberals have been soft on national security issues and standing up to the likes of hostile states such as Beijing. By contrast, the Bloc has not been much better. It has been all over the map and completely incoherent.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to respond right away to my Conservative colleague, who is criticizing us for not supporting their amendment to Bill C-34.

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The Bloc Québécois did not support the Conservatives' amendment to Bill C-34 because it was too broad. It was so broad that it included just about every investment not originating with one of the Five Eyes countries, the Commonwealth allies or certain major countries in the world. Unfortunately, my colleague may not be aware of this, but Quebec accounts for 40% of European investments in Canada. The amendment would have discouraged a whole lot of investments.

We suggested another solution. We suggested lowering the review thresholds, which had been raised so high that we ended up with a net benefit review threshold of \$1.7 billion. In 2015, that figure was about \$300 million. Why has the review threshold skyrocketed like this, and why do the Liberals seem to think that is okay?

I would like to know if the Conservatives are okay with it too.

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the issue of undertaking reviews, the amendment that Conservatives put forward was specifically targeted at countries that we do not have trade agreements with. For those countries that we do have agreements with, and that includes the European Union and most European countries, that automatic review would not apply.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today we are talking about Bill C-34 at third reading stage. I feel like I am going back in time because even though I am not a member of the committee that studied Bill C-34, I had the opportunity to speak to it at second reading. That was on February 8, if I am not mistaken. I find it fascinating to see what has changed in the bill between February 8 and now, or rather, what has not changed in Bill C-34.

At the time, we said that it was an interesting bill that would enhance security, for example in terms of foreign investments in sectors where we feel that national security might be jeopardized or in danger. We said that we agreed.

However, we also said that we should take the opportunity to examine another thing while studying Bill C-34, an act to amend the Investment Canada Act, which includes a mechanism for initiating a study or review of an investment when it exceeds a certain threshold, in order to determine whether the investment is of net benefit to Canada. That is what Bill C-34 says. We thought we should go a little further than just considering the issue of national security and also question the effectiveness of this legislation in terms of protecting our head offices.

When a foreign entity comes to Canada and says that they want to buy a certain brand or company for a lot of money, and when that purchase would have an impact on our entire supply chain, our infrastructure, our habits and our competition system, one of the first things we should instinctively do is look at whether it is a good investment or not. Unfortunately, that was not included in Bill C-34 at the time. It is still not in Bill C-34 today. There are mechanisms, but they are weak. They are extremely weak.

Back when I was elected in 2015, the review threshold was set at \$300 million. That was okay, because at least some reviews were being done. Maybe it might have been better if it were lower, but a

threshold of \$300 million would already capture many businesses. The government could say that a review would be done to see if allowing a foreign business or investor to buy a business worth \$350 million, \$400 million or \$600 million would be of net benefit to Canada. I thought it was a good thing. There was a baseline.

The problem is that, since the Liberals took office, the threshold has jumped. Today, it is no longer \$300 million. It is \$1.7 billion. I challenge anyone in the House to go search online and find a Quebec business worth more than \$1.7 billion. There really are not many. There are maybe a handful, no more than 10 for sure.

In theory, a wealthy investor, or several wealthy investors, from any country in the world could swoop in and buy everything, or nearly everything, and the government would not make a peep because each of the transactions is less than \$1.7 billion. According to the government, that would not be a big deal. That is the reality of this government's laissez-faire attitude. What is worse is that the government has exacerbated the situation over the years, saying that things are fine that way.

In Quebec, we take the notion of national interest to heart. It is important to us. However, in a self-proclaimed postnational state like Canada, nobody even knows what a nation is anymore. How can the government know what is in the national interest if it does not even know what a nation is?

The problem relates to a significant difference between the economies of Quebec and Canada. It may be an underlying factor in the government's non-response or hands-off approach to this issue. Canada has a branch-plant economy, which means that, naturally, a foreign company that sets up shop in Canada will often have a Canadian head office. The company will do all the buying, but it will keep a head office in Canada and manage its Canadian interests from there. It might well belong to someone who is 1,000 kilometres outside the country, but that is no big deal because the company still has a small head office here. Where is the head office usually located? It will be located in Toronto, not in Montreal, Quebec City, Shawinigan or Boucherville.

● (1355)

That is sad because many entrepreneurs in Quebec are working hard to build a strong ecosystem. We decided to build an entrepreneurial economy, rather than the type of branch-plant economy that is part of Canada's vision, if it even has one.

The Bloc Québécois has a constructive vision. We simply want to know what is happening. We want investments to be reviewed. We are not saying that we are against investment, but we want to at least know whether an investment is in our interest before it is authorized.

*Statements by Members***WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION FORUM**

I am very disappointed. The fact that the government is not even thinking about this is problematic. The government does not even want to know whether investments are in our interest or not. If the transaction is less than \$1.7 billion, the government closes its eyes, signs on the dotted line and everything is good. That approach is not working and, unfortunately, we are going to have to resolve that problem. If Canada does not want to solve this problem within the framework of the Canadian Confederation, then an independent Quebec will certainly be able to solve it when it has all the tools at its disposal to make its own decisions.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS*[English]***BANGLADESH**

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this past summer, I visited Bangladesh, where I met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and other government officials. I also visited Hindu temples, Buddhist monasteries and a church, and I met dozens of religious minority community leaders. I met many business leaders as well.

With stability in the country and certainty in economic policies, Bangladesh has seen excellent economic growth for several years, thus lifting millions of its citizens from poverty. Foreign investment in infrastructure projects like special economic zones is further boosting the economy and creating much-needed jobs.

At this important time, I call on Canada to lead western democracies in supporting and strengthening Bangladesh so it continues to protect religious minorities and maintain stability. This is required to ensure that Bangladesh achieves much-required economic growth.

* * *

● (1400)

ARTISANAL MINING IN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all of us here have at least one cellphone, and there is a very good chance it contains component parts dug up by artisanal miners under deplorable conditions in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Artisanal mining is mining done by hand by subsistence miners. In the DRC, this often includes children and pregnant women working in tunnels that frequently collapse.

In our shame regarding these abuses, but also in our insistence on having our technology, we have compounded the mistake by letting our strategic rivals dominate Congolese mining production, while still buying from them. Morality and strategic sense require us to engage with Africa's artisanal mining sector. We must work to allow adult artisanal miners to earn a living wage for their family in safer conditions, including by cutting out the many middlemen who exploit workers.

The future of the world will be shaped by who controls the DRC's vast resources, and that control should not be in the hands of colonial powers, past or present, or even of local elites, but finally in the hands of the Congolese people.

Ms. Joanne Thompson (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, “trailblazers”, “change-makers” and “visionaries” are just a few of the words to describe the participants in the Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Association's Women in Construction Forum.

The NLCA knows that to literally build the future of this province we all need to be at the table or the work site and is putting in the work to ensure increased representation. The government is also committed to this through the Canadian apprenticeship strategy, which proudly aims to support a trades workforce that is skilled, inclusive, certified and productive, through funding, grants and more.

I want to congratulate everyone at the Women in Construction Forum again for their great work.

* * *

*[Translation]***GALA DE L'ADISQ**

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, these are troubled times for Quebec culture, but yesterday's ADISQ gala showed just how vibrant and diverse French-language music is in Quebec.

Among the winners were greats like Ginette Reno and Michel Rivard, who won an award for his show *Le tour du bloc*. What a great name. Félix awards were also handed out to well-versed artists such as Daniel Bélanger, Les Cowboys Fringants and Alexandra Stréliski, as well as to Innu artist Kanen and the Acadian band Salebarbes. The awards show spanned multiple genres and generations, from Ginette to Fouki. Overseeing it all was Louis-José Houde, who is bowing out of hosting duties after 18 fantastic years.

Not only was it a night to honour the winners, it was also an opportunity to see Quebec's entire musical family deliver a colourful celebration. It was a reminder that, in 2023, every song sung in French and Innu is a song of resistance. Bravo to our artists, and long live Quebec culture.

* * *

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Remembrance Day. On that day, we are asked to give thanks to veterans, their families and members of the Canadian Armed Forces. It is a time to honour those who gave their lives in the line of duty, who paid the ultimate price.

Wars are currently raging in many parts of the world. We should be eternally grateful to those who fought for our freedom. We should also recognize and thank the soldiers and personnel on peacekeeping missions around the world.

Statements by Members

I would like to thank all the local branches of the Royal Canadian Legion, including Nickel Belt branches 564, 503, 179, 553, 225 and 336 for being pillars of the community.

[*English*]

Please, keep our heroes in our hearts on November 11 and every day. Participate in a Remembrance Day ceremony. Lest we forget.

* * *

• (1405)

CARBON TAX

Mr. Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the current Liberal-NDP government, Oxford families are struggling to eat, to heat their homes and to house themselves.

After tanking in the polls, the Prime Minister is panicking and has admitted that his carbon tax is punishing Canadians. He decided to temporarily pause the carbon tax for some Canadians in some places. His flip-flop will leave 39 million Canadians out in the cold, but the Prime Minister does not seem to care. The polls are driving his policies, and he is focused on saving his job. His own minister admitted that Canadians get relief because they vote Liberal.

The government should stop dividing Canadians and stop playing politics. It is time the Liberal member for Cambridge and those Liberal members from Kitchener and London do what is right, admit that the carbon tax is not worth the cost and vote in favour of our common-sense Conservative motion that would keep the heat on and take the tax off for all Canadians.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the last 30 days, I have been listening to and consoling residents in Mississauga—Erin Mills and across Canada for the deaths of thousands of innocent Palestinians and Israelis. I really join them in their pain, their grief and their calls to action in the chamber. Parents are having to explain to their kids why they are seeing death and horror in their social media feeds. There are children too afraid to wear religious symbols at school. There are neighbours grieving the deaths of loved ones who lived in the region, and they feel silenced from publicizing their pain. There are also faith leaders fearing for the safety of congregations and asking police to stand watch while they pray.

I hear the calls from Canadians for a humanitarian ceasefire, the release of civilian hostages and a dedicated humanitarian corridor. We must work harder to achieve a just and lasting peace for all Palestinians and Israelis for the sake of humanity.

* * *

NATIONAL PAIN AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week marks National Pain Awareness Week, a time to raise awareness about chronic pain, the severe impact it has on people's lives and the resources available to support those living with pain.

One in five Canadians suffers from chronic pain, a health condition with major impacts on physical and mental health. When pain goes unmanaged, it can have a significant effect on a person's everyday life, including working or going to school. It can also lead to significant health issues such as depression and higher risk of substance use. Family, friends and sometimes even health workers might not understand what someone is going through.

If someone lives with pain, they should know they are not alone. This week, let us have those important conversations and raise awareness of the impact of chronic pain on friends and neighbours.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, everything just keeps getting more expensive. Take the average rent in this country. Just one year ago, the average rent eclipsed the \$2,000 mark, but now, a year later, the average rent in Canada is \$2,149 a month. That is an 11% increase and the highest that rent has ever been in this country. Toronto and Vancouver still have the highest average rent, but other cities across the country are starting to feel the pain. The average rent in Calgary is now \$2,181 for a two-bedroom unit. That is a 13% increase. Montreal's average one-bedroom rent is now \$1,784, which is an increase of more than 14%.

The current NDP-Liberal coalition just keeps raising costs on Canadians, and it is clear that the Prime Minister is just not worth the cost.

* * *

HELP A GIRL OUT PROGRAM

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about an important issue that affects women and girls. It is an issue that is often shrouded in silence and shame: period poverty. It is the lack of access to sanitary products and facilities that prevent women and girls from participating in essential activities, like attending school, and has a profound impact on their futures. In Canada alone, 34% of women and girls have had to give up something else in their budget in order to afford menstrual products.

Today, I would like to highlight a champion: Yanique Brandford, founder and executive director of Help A Girl Out. Her reusable pad program is relieving period poverty sustainably. HAGO works with grassroots organizations, such as Compassionate York Region in my riding, that sew these reusable pads. Yanique has incredible community support. I was recently at a fundraiser. The federal Liberal government also helps, and I am so proud of that.

Period poverty is a barrier to female prosperity that needs to be addressed. I thank Yanique for tackling this global problem responsibly.

* * *

• (1410)

CARBON TAX

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's plan to quadruple taxes on essentials is a heavy blow to Canadians, but the government has chosen to spare only 3% of Canadians, in a crass, calculated move. The Liberal temporary pause on the tax for home heating oil is a mere gimmick that will not provide relief to 97% of Canadians. Even the top-up for rural Canadians will not cover the cost of a Big Mac value meal each month. It is time to call these measures what they are: empty gestures that will not truly assist struggling families.

Let us not forget that just a year ago, Liberal MPs voted to keep the tax on home heating. The rural affairs minister's response was heartless, implying that the only way to get relief from Liberal taxes is to somehow elect more Liberals.

The common-sense Conservative promise is straightforward: no gimmicks and no temporary measures. Conservatives pledge to axe the inflationary carbon taxes for good and bring lower prices home to Canadians. It is time for real relief. It is time to axe the tax.

* * *

CARBON TAX

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, winter is coming, and Manitobans are hot under the collar as the Prime Minister is leaving them out in the cold by ignoring their calls to scrap the tax from their home heating fuel. However, he did decide to pause the pain of 3% of families in areas where he was plummeting in the polls and where his MPs were revolting. The Liberal rural affairs minister said if people in the Prairies wanted a pause on the tax, they should have elected more Liberals.

There are a few Liberal MPs in Manitoba, but not even one of them is willing to stand up for our province. Today, the MPs for Winnipeg South and Saint Boniface—Saint Vital can do the right thing and vote to scrap the carbon tax from their constituents' home heating. Instead of worrying about what the Prime Minister thinks, they should care more about the hundreds of thousands of people that each is supposed to represent.

I challenge the MPs for Winnipeg South and Saint Boniface—Saint Vital to scrap the Prime Minister's poor judgment and vote this afternoon to take the carbon tax off so their constituents can keep the heat on.

Statements by Members

BUCKAM SINGH

Mr. Parm Bains (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I joined friends and colleagues from the House for a remembrance ceremony at Mount Hope Cemetery in the Waterloo region to commemorate the service of Private Buckam Singh. His grave is one of the only resting places of a Sikh Canadian soldier from World War I.

In 1907, Buckam Singh Bains came to Canada at the age of 14. In 1915, he enrolled in the Canadian Expeditionary Force and served in the 20th Infantry Battalion. Buckam Singh served in the fields of Flanders and was wounded twice. After recovering in hospital, he returned to Canada where he would pass away in 1919 and where he was laid to rest with full honours. Every Remembrance Day, we should all pay our respects at cenotaphs from coast to coast to coast and commemorate those who made the ultimate sacrifice for the freedoms we enjoy.

It is a privilege for me to stand in the House today to recognize Private Buckam Singh Bains, a great uncle from my ancestral village of Mahilpur, Punjab; tell his story of shared heritage and patriotic duty; and unite Canadians in commemoration of courage and service that shaped the history of Canada. We will remember all of them.

* * *

VETERANS' WEEK

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as we enter Veterans' Week, I want to take this opportunity to thank the members, past and present, for their dedicated service. We know both from history and today that the cost of conflict is far too high. All too often, we, as Canadians, think of their service during this time of year, rather than recognizing it every day. After years of working for both serving members and veterans, I understand that the dedication to service is high. Their thoughts always focus on the "us" rather than the "I".

This year, I am particularly thinking of service women and veterans who are women. I know they have served and that those realities, both past and present, are all too often left invisible. They participate in Remembrance Day services wearing their medals and civilian gear, and are asked, "Are those your father's, husband's or son's medals?"

This year, let Canadians recommit to seeing veterans, all of them, and to acknowledging and appreciating their service. I thank all the women who have served or are serving. I see them. Lest we forget.

Oral Questions

• (1415)

[Translation]

CARBON MARKET

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we rarely have the opportunity in this House to call attention to good environmental news, but here is some. Washington State, in the United States, wants to join the carbon market between Quebec and California. This will go a long way toward creating the North American market that Quebec dreamed of when it created this ecological tool 10 years ago.

The Canadian provinces should consider following Washington's example. Joining the Quebec and California carbon market is not only the right environmental decision, it is also why Quebec is exempted from the federal carbon tax. If the provinces are fed up with Ottawa's carbon tax, they can ditch it in a heartbeat. Even better, they can ditch it for a system that gives the public more of a break and focuses on the big polluters.

I am extending the invitation once again. Instead of just whining, why not do something?

* * *

[English]

CARBON TAX

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberal government has admitted that its carbon tax makes it harder for Canadians to afford to heat their homes. The Liberals said that only people who elect Liberals will get a break. However, Canadians who cannot afford to eat or heat and house themselves know that the Prime Minister is just not worth the cost.

People in Ottawa have elected seven Liberal MPs and, of course, our common-sense Conservative leader, so today the question is this: Will the Prime Minister allow his seven Liberal MPs to vote to take the tax off so that Ottawans can keep the heat on? Ottawans and all Canadians should know that under the Conservative leader and Canada's common-sense Conservatives, we will vote to axe the tax on gas, groceries and home heating because the Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

* * *

FOOD DONATION

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really enjoy the opportunity to visit gurdwaras. One of the most common words I hear at the gurdwara is *seva*, which means to serve, to be a volunteer. That brings me to Khalsa Aid Canada. What a wonderful organization it is. Let us think about what it says: "Recognise the whole human race as one".

Over the last weekend, in Winnipeg and across Canada in many different jurisdictions, it served groceries to international students. In Winnipeg, we have had groceries provided to the Main Street Project, the Bear Clan on Selkirk Avenue and Winnipeg Harvest.

It is a wonderful way to *seva*. It is a community that adds so much value. If anyone wants to drop off some groceries, they should feel free to go to 1563 Logan Avenue.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers have long known that this Prime Minister is not worth the cost, but the Bloc Québécois just does not get it.

It seems that the Bloc Québécois wants to radically increase taxes and they even support the idea that taxes should apply differently from one region to another. Now we are learning from La Presse that the Bloc Québécois has assured Liberal ministers that it will keep the Prime Minister in power for another two years. This amounts to another costly coalition.

What concessions did the Prime Minister make to the Bloc Québécois to be able to stay in power for another two years?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government was proud to follow Quebec's example when it comes to child care and early learning centres.

Our government is also very proud to follow Quebec's excellent example when it comes to climate action. Quebec was the first province to put a price on pollution.

We are very happy to work with all Quebecers on environmental issues.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question was for the Prime Minister who is hiding and is not worth the cost. My question had to do with the Bloc Québécois decision to vote in favour of keeping a tax Canadians' home heating.

Today we find out that the Bloc Québécois's wish to drastically increase this Prime Minister's carbon taxes was not a coincidence. The Bloc MPs gave the Prime Minister assurances that they will keep him in power in a costly coalition for two years.

What concessions did the Bloc Québécois get to keep this incompetent, costly Prime Minister in power?

• (1420)

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition wants to talk about Quebec. Quebecers have other priorities.

The Leader of the Opposition wants to take Quebec backward when it comes to fighting climate change. He wants to take Quebec backward on fundamental rights, on women's rights. He wants to take Quebec backward by putting assault weapons back on the streets.

It is very clear that the Conservative leader wants to bring Quebecers and Canada back to the Stone Age.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is in Ottawa today, so the question is for him.

He is panicked now and put a pause on the carbon tax for 3% of Canadians in ridings where his polls are plummeting and his MPs are revolting. Also revolting were the comments of the Liberal rural affairs minister, who stated that other Canadians would have had a pause in the pain if they had elected more Liberals. However, northern Ontarians did elect Liberals.

Will the Prime Minister allow a free vote for his northern MPs on our common-sense motion to keep the heat on and take the tax off?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have explained to the Leader of the Opposition through many different question periods over the past number of days, home heating oil is two to four times as expensive as natural gas. It accelerated by 75% in 2022. We have put in place a plan that will enable people to get off heating oil and have free heat pumps. It will save them up to \$2,500 a year. It will make things more affordable, and at the same time it will allow us to fight climate change. That is true for the 270,000 households that use heating oil here in Ontario.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the question was for the Prime Minister, who first was dividing and now is in hiding. He wants to quadruple his tax, but now he has had to back down and give a pause to the pain for 3% of people in ridings where his polls are plummeting and his MPs are in full revolt against him. His minister of rural affairs said that if people in other regions want the same pause on the pain, they have to elect Liberal MPs. However, many did. We have a Liberal MP in Calgary and one in Edmonton.

Will they be allowed a free vote on the common-sense Conservative motion to take the tax off and keep the heat on?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important to have thoughtful public policy prescriptions that address issues around affordability in a long-term way, but that also address the issue of climate change. I would say the only person hiding in this chamber is the leader of the official opposition, who is hiding the fact that either he does not believe in climate change or he does not think it is very important. He has not spoken the words “climate change” since he was elected, and he has no plan. At some point he needs to tell Canadians what his plan is to address the climate crisis.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am right here while the Prime Minister hides and divides. Why would he not hide? After all, he is in panic mode. He first promised to quadruple the tax on everyone, and then after I beat him in that debate, he decided to back down and lift the tax off 3% of people for a short period of time.

His rural affairs minister said that if other Canadians wanted the same pause from the pain, they needed to elect more Liberals. Well, Thunder Bay elected two Liberals, and it is a very cold place. Will the members from Thunder Bay be given a free vote on our motion to take the tax off and keep the heat on?

Oral Questions

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me tell members who is missing in action when it comes to protecting Canadians and their affordability, and I am talking about the affordability of life for our seniors. It is the Conservative leader. It took him 29 days to speak up for the Canada pension plan, but none of us should have been surprised because last year, he sought to eviscerate that plan, which is so important to every single Canadian, by seeking to freeze contributions.

We cannot trust Conservatives with our pensions or anything else.

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• (1425)

[Translation]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last week, TVA had to lay off a third of its employees. That means that 547 people who work in Quebec television are losing their jobs just like that. This is a disaster. If it happened at TVA, it is going to happen elsewhere too. This is definitely going to happen again. We will not turn a blind eye and say that the new Broadcasting Act or Bill C-18 is going to fix everything.

The question is simple. Will the government stand by while our television slowly dies or will it review everything to save conventional television?

Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by saying that my thoughts are with the workers and their families who are affected by this terrible news as the holiday season approaches.

We know that the media has been in crisis for over a decade. Unfortunately, the world of telecommunications and the world of journalism in general have been undergoing major changes since the advent of digital platforms. Obviously, we will continue to work with our Bloc Québécois and NDP colleagues to do everything we can to address this issue because journalism is our cultural industry. It is essential for our democracy and our society.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, our television is the medium through which information is shared with the people. It is the medium through which our culture is shared. Our television reminds us who we are, what we can create and what makes us unique, things that the streaming services of this world like YouTube, Netflix and Disney+ will never be able to do. Our television is produced by us and for us. It is in grave danger. As we watch it slowly fade to black, we are waiting for Ottawa to wake up. Time is running out.

What will it take for the government to wake up?

Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I share my colleague's concerns.

Oral Questions

That is why we first introduced a bill to modernize the Broadcasting Act in 2020. Unfortunately, since 2020, the Conservatives have been obstructing efforts to modernize our audiovisual landscape and news media. Still today, they continue to say that we want to censor Canadians when we really want to promote quality journalism across the country and a creative industry that is vital to our democracy and all of society.

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[English]

HOUSING

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for three decades, Liberals and Conservatives relied on the private market, and now the average rent for a one-bedroom is \$2,500 a month. The government's own housing advocate is calling for more community housing that fits people's budgets, and the Bank of Canada says that investing in social housing would not be inflationary.

The Conservative leader is calling investment in social housing a "Soviet-style takeover". He is in it for wealthy investors.

The Liberals are failing Canadians. Will the Prime Minister stop siding with Conservatives and commit to doubling Canada's social housing stock?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree wholeheartedly with my colleague about the Conservative leader's rhetoric about "Soviet-style" housing to describe co-operatives. It mirrors the same approach he took over the course of the summer when he labelled a Niagara woman's home a "shack". Dismissing the living quarters of ordinary Canadians is entirely inappropriate.

I further agree with the NDP member that we need to continue to make the kinds of investments that will build more social housing for low-income families. We got back into this game with the national housing strategy after 30 years of absence. We are going to continue to build more homes so that everyone can afford a roof over their head.

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INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, people in Newfoundland and Labrador could certainly use some help when it comes to their costs, with 77% saying that they are living paycheque to paycheque, but we continue to get answers that are not a commitment to doubling that social housing stock or to recapitalizing funds that the government has already created to build social housing.

Even when it does not cost money, the government will not lift a finger. We stood by as we watched the Competition Bureau fight tooth and nail against the Rogers-Shaw merger. The government turned around and approved it. It now has a chance to support our initiative to strengthen the Competition Act. Will it do it?

● (1430)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member and members of the House will have an opportunity to do something for

Canadians. I have asked the Leader of the Opposition to do one thing for Canadians, which is something that he does not do very often, but that one thing is to vote for Bill C-56. Canadians will be happy to learn that Bill C-56 would reform competition by giving more power to the competition commissioner, removing the mergers that are harmful to competition and removing the clauses that are hurting competition.

We want more competition and lower prices in this country.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP voted 16 times in favour of the carbon tax. Its leader has supported quadrupling the tax on the home heating of every single Canadian, but after working-class union households have been abandoning his party for the Conservatives in droves, he has now flip-flopped. That has involved the courage of admitting that he was wrong.

Will the Prime Minister show the same courage and admit that he, just like the NDP leader, is dead wrong and vote for our common-sense motion to keep the heat on and take the tax off?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find it helpful to deal with the people who are closest to the problem. In Atlantic Canada, the Ecology Action Centre is based in Halifax, and it released a statement that I think is prescient to the debate going on here. It says:

Energy poverty and climate change represent a direct threat to working-class people in Nova Scotia. As a society, we must work together to ensure households with low incomes can transition away from expensive fossil fuels to technologies like heat pumps that are cheaper, better for our health and afford us the comforts associated with heating and cooling. Policy-makers are finally rising to meet the challenge.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the Prime Minister is just not worth the cost. Now he wants to quadruple the tax on home heating, gas and groceries. He has now decided to pause the pain for the 3% of families in the areas he is plummeting in the polls and his MPs are revolting.

The Liberal rural economic development minister said that, if people in the Prairies wanted a break from the carbon tax exemption, they should have elected more Liberal MPs. The people in Sudbury did elect a Liberal. I visited there last week and people there want to know why their MP has been unable to get them a pause on the pain.

I have a simple question for the Prime Minister: Will he allow a free vote for the member for Sudbury on our motion to take the tax off and keep the heat on?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to Canadians that people are serious in bringing forward policy prescriptions, not simply tag lines.

We have put into place measures that will address a critical affordability issue. Home heating oil is two to four times as expensive as natural gas. It went up 75% during 2022.

There is an opportunity to reduce the energy cost for people on an ongoing basis, all while addressing the issue of climate change, something that the Leader of the Opposition clearly does not believe in. It is something that is important for Canada. It is important for the 270,000 Ontario homes that currently heat with heating oil.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, they are in complete carbon tax chaos over there. Their pause on the pain does not apply to 97% of Canadians, and it punishes those who use cleaner Canadian natural gas or propane to heat their homes. What did the Liberal rural affairs minister have to say? She said that, if people in other areas want the pause too, they should elect Liberals. The people in North Bay did elect a Liberal MP.

Again, I ask this of the Prime Minister: Will he allow a free vote so the member for North Bay can vote on our motion to take the tax off and keep the heat on?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said last week, it would be great if, in the House, we could have debates about how we fight climate change, not whether we fight climate change, because in 2023 it is really not an option. It is an existential threat, and we are living in a climate emergency.

Canadians know how important it is to fight climate change, and they know that on this point, the Conservatives have absolutely no plan. When one does not have a plan for the environment, one does not have a plan for the economy. Conservatives continue to be risky and irresponsible, and they are certainly not worth that risk.

• (1435)

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Liberal-NDP government, the Prime Minister's carbon tax is making it impossible for Canadians to heat their homes this winter. That is especially true right here in soon-to-be-frigid Ottawa. There are 12 Liberal MPs here, a cabinet minister, three privy councillors and four parliamentary secretaries, but, according to the minister from Newfoundland, all of these MPs were not effective enough to get their communities a pause on the pain of the carbon tax.

Will Liberals make things right and stand with us today to axe the tax, or will they vote again with the Prime Minister and leave Ottawa residents in the cold?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there was a time when Canadian Progressive Conservative voters could rely on members of the Conservative caucus for leadership on fighting climate change. In fact, the member for Wellington—Halton Hills

staked his entire Conservative leadership campaign on it. He said, “The right way to do it is to price carbon through a revenue-neutral carbon tax”. He staked his entire Conservative leadership campaign on that. Sadly, he lost.

However, I agree with him saying, “If we don't have a [plan] to reduce emissions, we cannot win the next election.” That was true in 2019. It was true in 2021, and it is true today.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister can pause the pain for some Canadians, then surely he can do it for all Canadians. The Liberal MPs should be demanding that, but they are missing in action, just like the MIA Liberals from the GTA such as that member. Their communities want relief from this costly coalition, but they have been hiding for a week, so I will give them the chance to show up now.

Will the Prime Minister allow the members whose phone numbers start with 905 a free vote to take the tax off so their communities can keep the heat on?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what my hon. colleagues continue to forget is that this policy applies right across the country. Whether people are in the GTA, northern Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba or anywhere else in this country, the price on pollution has been removed for those who use home heating oil.

It would be good if the Conservatives actually focused on the facts and allowed us to debate climate change and how we are going to fight it, not if climate change is real or not.

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is planning to quadruple the tax on heat, gas and groceries, but he decided to pause the pain for the 3% of families in areas where he is plummeting in the polls and his MPs are revolting. The Liberal rural affairs minister said that, if others wanted the pause, then they should have voted Liberal. People in Nickel Belt voted for a Liberal MP, yet they are not seeing a pause in this tax.

Will the Prime Minister today allow the MP for Nickel Belt a free vote to vote with Conservatives to take the tax off and keep the heat on for people in northern Ontario and right across the country?

Oral Questions

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am so proud to be a northern Liberal member of Parliament because I work everyday with constituents who are telling me that we need to take faster action on the climate. This is because we are losing acres of forest and seeing droughts, even in northern Ontario, which are making it harder to grow food and to grow our economy.

My constituents expect me to advocate for a clean environment, and that is exactly what I will do.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about immigration targets. I would like to quote a document that reads, “from 2026 onward, pin the annual immigration target to...500,000 immigrants...if Canada's population is around 40 million as currently projected.”

Members may think that I am quoting the Liberal plan released last week, but I am not. These are the words of the Century Initiative by McKinsey. The cap on the numbers announced for 2026 is literally McKinsey's plan from the start.

When will the federal government adjust the targets to match immigrant integration capacity instead of blindly following the advice of McKinsey, a private company that literally manages immigration to Canada?

• (1440)

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find that comment strange. It keeps cropping up among Bloc Québécois members. They are so far out in left field that maybe they should take the weekend to go speak with some farmers and see if they need workers, because they do. These workers come from other countries. They should talk to Quebec businesses that need foreign workers. These workers come from other places. The Bloc should be working with us.

We are working with Quebec, and sooner or later the Bloc Québécois needs to get it.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, not only is Ottawa following McKinsey's lead, but it is doing so completely blindly. McKinsey officials themselves have confirmed that their immigration target did not take integration capacity into account.

I would like to quote the former CEO, Dominic Barton, who said in committee last year that “the focus...was just on economics. It wasn't thinking about the social context. It was on productivity.”

Capping immigration targets at 500,000 means blithely taking advice that ignores integration capacity. Last week, the government promised to respect that capacity.

Will the government review its targets?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have never spoken to McKinsey. However, I have spoken to Canadians who want more people from

abroad, who want more immigrants to come here to work in factories, to work in the fields, in areas represented by the Bloc Québécois. Clearly, we need immigration.

Five hundred thousand is a reasonable target. That is for three years. It has nothing to do with what McKinsey says.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the only difference between Ottawa and McKinsey is that Ottawa goes faster.

McKinsey predicted that the population would reach 40 million in 2026. It did so this past June. According to Statistics Canada, if the trend seen from 2022 to 2023 holds, the population will double in 25 years. It will exceed 80 million people in 2048 regardless of our integration capacity for housing, health care, education, French language training and so forth.

When will this government finally understand that successful immigration is achieved by respecting integration capacity?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that over the past year, Canadians have asked us to do more when it comes to integration capacity.

I am also hearing that we need immigration to grow our businesses. We know that there is still a labour shortage.

We need to take a more surgical approach to our targets. Let us look at what we tabled this week. I think that the Bloc Québécois will be comforted by that, unless it does not like immigration. If it does not, then it should say so loud and clear.

* * *

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister plans to quadruple the carbon tax on heat, gas and groceries. Now he has decided to pause the pain for the 3% of families where his poll numbers were plummeting and his MPs were revolting. The Liberal rural affairs minister said that, if people in the Prairies want a carbon tax break, they should elect Liberals. Well, the people in Sault Ste. Marie did elect a Liberal MP, yet the majority of his constituents are not getting the break.

Will the Prime Minister allow the MP from Sault Ste. Marie to freely vote, take the tax off and keep the heat on for the people of the Soo?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party, as is often the case, is leaving out many important facts. Eight out of 10 Canadian families get more money back in the rebate than they pay for the price on pollution. It is an important part of having a robust plan to address climate change in a thoughtful way. With respect to home heating, it is a particular issue that we can invest in to ensure we are saving money for people, as we move forward, while continuing to address climate change.

The Conservative Party is hiding. It is hiding from science. It is hiding from evidence. It needs to have a plan to fight climate change. Canadians expect more.

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are watching for today's vote on our common-sense Conservative motion to take the tax off all forms of home heating for all Canadians.

The Liberal rural economic development minister said that if people want a pause on the tax, they should have elected more Liberals in the region. Thunder Bay did elect two Liberal MPs, and yet folks there are not getting any pause. Instead, the Prime Minister plans to quadruple the tax on heat, gas and groceries, rather than treating them fairly.

The question is, will the Prime Minister allow these two Liberal MPs from Thunder Bay to vote freely to take the tax off so people can keep the heat on?

• (1445)

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, the Conservatives continue to spread misinformation in this chamber. This pause on the price on pollution on home heating oil applies right across the country, despite what the Conservatives keep saying.

What is particularly concerning, and I think I speak on behalf of every Ontario member of Parliament and many Ontario residents, is every time they say “common sense” it brings up terrible memories of the Mike Harris years, when not only did they slash public services but they slashed them in such incredible ways that it led to things like Walkerton.

Ontarians remember, and they are not going to elect common-sense Conservatives again.

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is just how out of touch and tone-deaf the Liberals are. When asked if she would support giving the same pause on home heating back home, their own minister, right from Thunder Bay—Superior North, said that they do not have the same challenges in northern Ontario that we see in Atlantic Canada.

I visited Thunder Bay last week, and let me say that it gets very cold there, too, just like in Atlantic Canada.

After eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, the cost of living crisis there is so bad that the regional food bank cannot keep up with the surging demand, now at 12,000 people.

Will the Prime Minister let his Thunder Bay MPs vote to give residents fair treatment and take the tax off, so they can keep the heat on?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative provincial finance minister of Ontario knows that pensions matter for the people of Ontario.

That is why he wrote me a letter asking me to convene a meeting of all provincial finance ministers to defend our pensions. Will the Conservative MPs from Ontario be equally courageous and respon-

sible in defending the pensions of the people of Ontario, and support our effort to keep the pensions of all Canadians safe?

The Speaker: I am going to ask all members, especially the member for Battle River—Crowfoot, to please listen to the responses that are to be offered. I would ask all members to listen to that member when that member does take the floor.

The hon. member for London—Fanshawe.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Palestinian Canadians in my riding did everything possible to work with Global Affairs Canada to get their loved ones out of Gaza. They put all of their hopes on Sunday's evacuation, only to hear nothing from Canadian officials.

The bombardments are getting more intense. My constituents, their families, Canadian citizens are trapped. They need the government to stand for human rights and to protect lives. The heads of 18 UN agencies and NGOs and my constituents are calling for a ceasefire. Why not the Prime Minister?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the situation in Gaza is dire. Many Canadians are worried about their loved ones. What is happening on the ground is fluid and unpredictable, and we know there are delays at the Rafah crossing for all countries.

I want to reassure Canadians that we are in regular contact with Egypt and Israel to push for Canadians to leave as soon as possible. We continually try to reach all Canadians, permanent residents and their immediate family members to convey the latest information.

We continue to call for humanitarian pauses, for Canadians to get out, for aid to get in and for all hostages to be released.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 18 United Nations agencies and international NGOs, including Unicef and Save the Children, called for an immediate ceasefire in Israel and Palestine, expressing shock and horror at the mounting death toll from the conflicts, saying that it is a “graveyard for children”.

“It's been 30 days. Enough is enough,” the UN and the NGO heads said in a rare joint statement. “This must stop now.”

When will the Liberal government finally do what most of the world has called for, and that is demand an immediate ceasefire to save the children right now?

Oral Questions

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we unequivocally condemn the Hamas terrorist attack. The price of justice cannot be the continued suffering of all Palestinian civilians. What is unfolding in Gaza is a human tragedy.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs has been to the region twice to oversee our efforts to help Canadians, but also to de-escalate the situation. That is why we continue to call for international humanitarian law to be upheld and for humanitarian pauses, so Canadians can leave, humanitarian aid can get in and all hostages can be released.

Canada is committed to a goal of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

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• (1450)

FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that many Canadian families are struggling to make ends meet. This is particularly the case in Yukon, where more than half of families spend over 30% of their income on housing.

The Minister of National Revenue recently made an important announcement alongside Ms. Tracy-Anne McPhee, the Yukon Minister of Health and Social Services.

Can the Minister of National Revenue inform the House of this announcement and how it will affect our Yukon families?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce that Yukon families can now apply for the Canada child benefit when registering for the birth of their newborn through the automated benefits application service of the Yukon Vital Statistics office. It is the quickest and easiest way to apply for and receive the benefit, which is more than \$5,500 on average per year for Yukon families.

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[Translation]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this Liberal government, this Prime Minister, who is not worth the cost, has found a new partner to help him stay in power for the next two years. Yes, the costly new Bloc-Liberal coalition will soon vote against our common-sense motion to pause Canadians' pain and pause the carbon tax on all forms of home heating. It is costly to vote Bloc. In today's *La Presse*, the Bloc leader confirms that he has no qualms about propping up the Liberal Prime Minister for the next two years.

What concessions has the Prime Minister made to secure the Bloc's unconditional support?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we seem to be in a time machine. The Conservatives want to roll back fundamental rights and women's rights. They want to back down on banning assault weapons. They want to turn back the clock on the fight against climate change. They probably cannot

even spell "climate change". Simply put, they want to take us back to the Stone Age.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are going to get a stone-age government.

We are going to vote on a motion that calls on the government to pause all carbon taxes on home heating for all Canadians. The Bloc Québécois has picked sides: It wants to drastically increase carbon taxes. It is throwing its support behind the Prime Minister, who imposed a second carbon tax that will add 20¢ to the cost of every litre of gas sold in Quebec. Voting for the Bloc is costly.

What did the Prime Minister promise his new partner in this costly Bloc-Liberal coalition, a coalition that is going to radically hike taxes at the expense of all Quebecers?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for once, I agree with my colleague. He just confirmed that we are headed for a stone-age government. Those were his words. We are headed back in time. We are returning to the past. This is a step backwards in terms of fundamental rights, gun control and the fight against climate change. He clearly said that were were heading back to the Stone Age. That is appalling.

We will never go back.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this Liberal government, the Bloc Québécois is lending moral support to the Liberal Party, to this government. Who would have thought? Come to think of it, though, it is true that the two parties do share some commonalities, given that their proposals on global warming have divided Canadians. That is exactly what the Bloc wants to do: sow division and pick fights. The Bloc also wants to radically increase the carbon tax. Is this going to inspire those folks?

My question for the Bloc leader or his Liberal representative is very simple. Will members be allowed to vote for common sense?

• (1455)

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague was the last, and I do mean the very last person, to speak in the National Assembly before the carbon exchange was adopted.

That legislation passed by unanimous consent in Quebec. If my colleague did not like it, why did he not speak up at that time? Why did he save his opposition until today? He did not break unanimity at the time. What has changed for my colleague in recent years?

He too wants to go back to the Stone Age. We will not go there.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is another reason why the Bloc Québécois might be buddying up to the Liberal Party. Have members seen the Parti Québécois's year one budget?

Four pages of that budget talk about how the Liberal government's poor management has become an argument for independence. No, we certainly do not want to go back to the Stone Ages of the Pierre Trudeau era, that is for sure.

Will the Bloc Québécois representative in the Liberal government rise and assure all members of the House that they will be allowed to vote using their common sense?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every time a Conservative member rises in the House, I can sense something fishy going on.

They are incapable of telling the truth. They are incapable of taking responsibility for what they did in the past. That is a shame for my colleagues from Quebec. These people supported the carbon exchange. We should be proud of what has been done in Quebec and proud of wanting to protect the environment across the country.

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SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, more than 221,000 SMEs could go bankrupt if the federal government does not extend the deadlines for them to repay CEBA loans without losing subsidies. We are not talking about billion-dollar multinationals here. These are small businesses that contribute to the vitality of each of our regions.

In my constituency of Rivière-du-Nord, 213 SMEs have alerted the Canadian Federation of Independent Business that they are in danger of going bankrupt.

When will the minister finally offer businesses the extension they are asking for and stop a wave of bankruptcies that she will have on her conscience?

Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Small Business, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have already given small businesses an extra year to qualify for the forgivable portion of the loan.

Since they asked for more help, we are offering them more flexibility on refinancing, more time to access loan forgiveness and a one-year extension on the repayment deadline.

We are always there for our small businesses, unlike the Conservative leader, who wants to take us back to the Stone Age.

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is even worse in Trois-Rivières. There are 288 SMEs there that have said they will go bankrupt if the federal government does not defer payment of the CEBA loans for a year without them losing any subsidies. That would mean 288 bankrupt businesses. Imagine the number of job losses that would represent.

The minister must not allow this to happen through her failure to act. Does she know how many bankruptcies are likely to occur in her region? How can she possibly explain to these business owners that she is going to abandon them instead of offering them the one-year deferral they are asking for?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are proud to have created a

program that has provided \$49 billion in support to our SMEs across the country.

The important thing to note today is that SMEs have until December 31, 2026, to repay the loan in full. That is an important date to keep in mind. We are here for our SMEs in Quebec and across Canada.

* * *

● (1500)

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this Liberal government, food banks can no longer keep up with demand, it is hard to pay mortgages, and groceries are getting more and more expensive. Now, the Bloc Québécois is rescuing the Liberals in order to maintain the carbon tax on the backs of Quebecers and Canadians. Voting for the Bloc is costly.

I am wondering if the Liberals are forming the expensive new Bloc-Liberal coalition to raise taxes on the backs of Quebecers.

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I must explain once again that there is no federal carbon tax in Quebec. Canadians are concerned about the cost of living and climate change. Any serious government must have a plan for both. These Conservatives are not worth the risk. That is why we on this side of the House have created a system.

[English]

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, Alberta got shafted yet again. With Liberal support collapsing in Atlantic Canada, the desperate Prime Minister gave Atlantic Canadians a pause on his punitive carbon tax on home heating while Albertans got nothing.

Today, the Liberal minister from Edmonton Centre has a choice. Will he support our common-sense Conservative motion to axe the tax on home heating or will he once again sell out his constituents to his boss, the Prime Minister?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows well that we have billions of dollars in budget 2023 for carbon capture use and storage. We have green and clean electricity regulations and money that will benefit Alberta.

That member does not want people to know that he is one of the CPC silent 30 who have not come to the aid Albertans. He is not defending the Canada pension plan. He does not care that the Conservative Government of Alberta is scaring pensioners. He is silent. We are going to protect pensions. That is our job, and we are going to do it every day.

Oral Questions

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister plans on quadrupling the tax on gas, groceries and home heating. He gave 3% of Canadians a pause on the carbon tax for home heating where his poll numbers were tanking and his MPs were revolting. The Liberal rural affairs minister said that if people in the Prairies wanted a pause on the tax, they should elect more Liberals. The MP for Calgary Skyview is a Liberal, but his constituents do not get the pause.

Will the Prime Minister let that member mail in a free vote on our common-sense Conservative motion to take the tax off and keep the heat on and shove this carbon tax where the Prime Minister's poll numbers are, in the gutter?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is another silent Conservative on the issue of pensions in Alberta. What a shame to be a Calgary Conservative.

Let us talk about Conservative priorities coming out of Alberta. Instead of building housing, instead of growing our economy, instead of actually doing the work of Albertans, what are the priorities of the UCP AGM? Turning back protections for LGBTQ2 people, taking our province back. They actually voted in favour of conspiracy theories when it comes to voting machines and 15-minute cities. They are out of touch, reckless and not worth the cost.

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• (1505)

[Translation]

CANADIAN HERITAGE

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of our homegrown creators in Quebec and Canada. Last week, Montrealers once again welcomed people from around the world to Cinemania, a festival that has enjoyed nearly three decades of success and that shines a spotlight on some of the amazing francophone voices and creations that Canada has to offer.

Can the minister tell us about the important agreement she signed on Friday?

Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is absolutely right.

Last week, Canada welcomed the President of Switzerland on Canadian soil for the first time ever. My colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, signed a modernized audiovisual co-production treaty with President Berset. The treaty will help increase the number of film, television and video projects produced in collaboration, with much bigger budgets. This is excellent news for our creators in Canada and for the entire audiovisual industry, whose work is world class.

We will continue to support our audiovisual sector because we know how important it is to Canada.

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister plans to quadruple the tax on heat, gas and groceries, but now he has decided to pause the pain for just 3% of families in areas where he is plummeting in the polls.

The Liberal rural affairs minister said that if people in the Prairies wanted a pause on the tax, they should have elected more Liberals. However, the people in Saint Boniface—Saint Vital did elect a Liberal MP, and yet his constituents are not getting the pause.

Therefore, the question is this. Will the Prime Minister allow the MP for Saint Boniface—Saint Vital to freely vote to take the tax off and keep the heat on for his constituents?

Hon. Dan Vandal (Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member is talking about a national program to get rid of polluting, expensive home heating oil and to transition those homes with free heat pumps. This national program is applicable across Canada. It is applicable in Manitoba where there are thousands of people who use home heating oil. It is great for the environment. It is great for affordability. I plan to support this.

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister plans to quadruple the tax on heat, gas and groceries, but then he decided to pause the pain for 3% of families in areas where he was plummeting in the polls and his MPs were revolting. The Liberal rural affairs minister actually said that if people in the Prairies wanted a pause on the tax, they should have elected more Liberals. However, here is the thing. The people in Winnipeg South Centre did elect a Liberal MP, and yet his constituents are not getting the pause.

Will the Prime Minister allow that MP for Winnipeg South Centre a free vote to take the tax off and keep the heat on for people in his community?

The Speaker: I would like to encourage all members to please hold their comments until they have the floor to ask a question or to give an answer. That way we can hear everything that is going on from one end of the House to the other end of the House.

The hon. minister.

*Oral Questions***JUSTICE**

Hon. Dan Vandal (Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is time for that member to stop spreading misinformation. This is a national program that aims to transition from expensive environmentally damaging home heating oil into free heating pumps. This is a national policy that is applicable across Canada. There are thousands of homes in Manitoba that are eligible for the program. This is great for the environment and it is great for affordability.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every day, the member for Winnipeg North gets up in this place and talks and talks and says absolutely nothing.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Once again, before I return to the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, I will ask all colleagues to please when they have the floor, use it, but when they do not have the floor, listen to the person who does.

I would like to give the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman the opportunity to start his question from the top.

● (1510)

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, every day, the member for Winnipeg North gets up and all he does is talk and talk. Only the Liberals like it because he says absolutely nothing.

According to the Liberal rural affairs minister, the member for Winnipeg North failed to stand up and fight for Manitobans. Because of him, Manitobans have been left out in the cold. They cannot afford to heat and eat after eight miserable years of the Prime Minister and his punitive carbon tax.

Manitobans and the useless Liberal MPs are not worth the cost. Will the Prime Minister allow the member for—

The Speaker: I would have liked to have heard the end of the the hon. member's question. Unfortunately, his time had expired, and then some. This is the reason why it is important for both sides of the House to allow a member to ask a question without interrupting, so we can hear the question and the member can profit from the full time to which the member would be entitled.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member wants to hear more from me and I am happy to oblige.

At the end of the day, I want to remind members across the way of something that is an issue with the Conservative Party. I always say those members are like a fish on a dock, flip-flopping all over the place. That applies with respect to the carbon price too.

I will tell members what the leader of the Conservative Party does not tell Canadians. He would take away the rebate. That would take money out of the pockets of 80% of the constituents of Winnipeg North, the people I represent. Shame on the leader of the official opposition for being so reckless and risky.

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I join Canadians from across the country in giving a warm welcome and congratulations to our newest Supreme Court Justice, Mary T. Moreau. Justice Moreau was selected by the independent advisory council, nominated by the Prime Minister, and will be sworn in to her new position today. Justice Moreau is a fellow western Canadian from Alberta, who will serve Canadians well in this important role.

Could the Minister of Justice and Attorney General inform the House as to what makes Justice Moreau the right fit for our Supreme Court, and how will her appointment enhance our country's legal system?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Justice Moreau is a proud Franco-Albertan and previous chief justice of the Court of King's Bench of Alberta. She has a wealth of experience as a trial lawyer as well as nearly 30 years of experience as a judge. She is a talented legal mind, an outstanding jurist and an expert in criminal law. Her appointment is a milestone for our country. With Justice Moreau, the judges on Canada's Supreme Court are now represented by a majority of women for the first time in Canadian history.

* * *

● (1515)

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, women veterans will be attending commemoration services this week. Many of them will be asked if the medals they are wearing belonged to their husband, or their son or their father. Too often, they feel invisible and diminished when they should feel acknowledged and respected for their service. This must change.

Will the minister commit today to ensuring the participation of women veterans in Remembrance Day commemorations this year?

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is our government's commitment, and I can assure the member on behalf of the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, that women will always participate in Remembrance Day ceremonies. Their participation is a must.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are witnessing the glorification of terrorism and incitement of hatred against the Jewish community at pro-Hamas terror rallies across our country.

Business of Supply

At a Queen's Park rally in Toronto, genocidal slogans called for violent acts against innocent civilians. B'nai Brith has reported these rallies that support a listed terrorist organization.

Why has the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada been silent on such grotesque displays of anti-Semitism and incitement? Has he asked his provincial and territorial counterparts to enforce Canada's hate propaganda laws? Canadians believe in the rule of law, not in mob rule.

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are far from being silent. Our government has condemned all incitements to violence, all expressions of hate. I regularly talk to federal law enforcement authorities, such as the RCMP and CSIS, to understand what they are doing with provincial, territorial and municipal partners to keep all communities safe.

Today, I announced enhancements to the security infrastructure program to help all communities, which are understandably concerned for their safety, to better prepare for and discourage any potential acts of violence. We are there to keep all communities safe, and we will continue to do the important work that all Canadians expect of us.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. As you said in your statement a number of weeks ago, a well-placed heckle is certainly within the context of what decorum is in this place. However, what was not said during that time is the inability for members to take photographs.

During a previous state visit, the member for Kingston and the Islands was quite notably recording what was taking place in the House. However, what was found today is that at the time of 2:36:18 p.m., the member for Etobicoke Centre, while on camera, showing up on CPAC and ParlVu for all to see, appeared to be filming the proceedings of this place while the member for Milton was responding to a question.

I would ask that you look at the video and that the member apologize for so wilfully disregarding the order and decorum that we expect of all in this place, to ensure that we can take our debate seriously here.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, on that same point, I just want to confirm that at no time when the mace has been on the table have I ever taken a video in the House. I am fully aware of the rules.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on the same point of order. I just want to point you to a ruling. Forgive me, as I am spontaneously on my feet and do not recall the date, but I recall the member for Carleton doing a very similar thing, taking a recording as he was leaving the House of Commons. Therefore, I would exhort you to look at that incident and the ruling that followed it for guidance in this case.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Mr. Speaker, today is a special day for me because my father was in the gallery for the first time, watching question period. I attempted to take a photo of him. To the extent that I broke the rules, I apologize to all members of the House.

• (1520)

The Speaker: Colleagues, I would like to thank the member for Battle River—Crowfoot and other members who rose on the same issue. I would like to thank the hon. member for Etobicoke Centre for rising to apologize.

This is a good opportunity for me to remind all members that, while the House is in session, we are not to use our devices for phone calls or for recording. These rules are important for all of us, so we can freely exercise our roles as members of Parliament. As we know, we have very clear rules in terms of how the cameras provided by CPAC are used in this place. With the advent of new technologies, we have to be very mindful, so I thank all members for that.

I see the hon. whip for the official opposition rising on the same point of order.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Mr. Speaker, with respect, it is not enough for the member to just apologize. He must delete what he recorded, because it is against the standing rules.

The Speaker: I am certain that all members, who are listening carefully to the Chair, will take it upon themselves to act honourably. I think what the hon. member has raised is an important issue, and I would trust that, when the member presented his apology, he also took corrective action to that effect.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—CARBON TAX PAUSE ON HOME HEATING

The House resumed from November 2 consideration of the motion.

The Speaker: It being 3:22 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the member for Carleton relating to the business of supply.

Call in the members.

• (1535)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 441)

YEAS

Members

Aboultarif
Albas
Angus
Ashton
Barlow
Barron
Bezan
Blaney
Bragdon
Brock
Cannings

Aitchison
Allison
Arnold
Baldinelli
Barrett
Berthold
Blaikie
Block
Brassard
Calkins
Caputo

Business of Supply

Carrie	Chambers	Blois	Boissonnault
Chong	Cooper	Bradford	Brière
Dalton	Dancho	Brunelle-Duceppe	Carr
Davidson	Deltell	Casey	Chabot
d'Entremont	Desjarlais	Chagger	Chahal
Doherty	Dowdall	Champagne	Champoux
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Chatel	Chen
Ellis	Epp	Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)	Cormier	Coteau
Fast	Ferrier	Dabrusin	Damoff
Findlay	Gallant	DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Garrison	Gazan	Desilets	Dhaliwal
Généreux	Genuis	Dhillon	Diab
Gladu	Goodridge	Dong	Dubourg
Gourde	Gray	Duclos	Duguid
Hallan	Hoback	Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
Hughes	Idlout	El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Jeneroux	Johns	Fillmore	Fisher
Julian	Kelly	Fonseca	Fortier
Khanna	Kitchen	Fortin	Fragiskatos
Kmiec	Kram	Fraser	Freeland
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek	Fry	Gaheer
Kusie	Lake	Gainey	Garon
Lantsman	Lawrence	Gaudreau	Gerretsen
Lehoux	Leslie	Gill	Gould
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Guilbeault	Hajdu
Lloyd	Lobb	Hanley	Hardie
MacGregor	Maguire	Hepfner	Holland
Majumdar	Martel	Housefather	Hussen
Masse	Mathysen	Hutchings	Iacono
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)	Jen	Jaczek
McLean	McPherson	Jowhari	Kayabaga
Melillo	Moore	Kelloway	Khalid
Morantz	Morrison	Khera	Koutrakis
Motz	Muys	Kusmierczyk	Lalonde
Nater	Patzer	Lambropoulos	Lametti
Paul-Hus	Perkins	Lamoureux	Lapointe
Poilievre	Rayes	Larouche	Lattanzio
Redekopp	Reid	Lauzon	LeBlanc
Rempel Garner	Richards	Lebouthillier	Lemire
Roberts	Rood	Lightbound	Long
Ruff	Scheer	Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
Schmale	Seeback	MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
Shields	Shiple	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Singh	Small	Martinez Ferrada	May (Cambridge)
Soroka	Steinley	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	McDonald (Avalon)
Stewart	Strahl	McGuinty	McKay
Stubbs	Thomas	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod
Tochor	Tolmie	Mendès	Mendicino
Uppal	Van Popta	Miao	Michaud
Vecchio	Vidal	Miller	Morrice
Vien	Viersen	Morrissey	Murray
Vis	Vuong	Naqvi	Ng
Wagantall	Warkentin	Noormohamed	Normandin
Waugh	Webber	O'Connell	Oliphant
Williams	Williamson	O'Regan	Pauzé
Zarrillo	Zimmer— 136	Perron	Petitpas Taylor
		Plamondon	Powlowski
		Qualtrough	Robillard
		Rodriguez	Rogers
		Romanado	Rota
		Sahota	Sajjan
		Saks	Samson
		Sarai	Scarpaleggia
		Schiefke	Serré
		Sgro	Shanahan
		Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
		Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
		Sinclair-Desgagné	Sorbara
		Sousa	Ste-Marie
		St-Onge	Sudds
		Tassi	Taylor Roy
		Thériault	Therrien

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Atwin
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bergeron
Bérubé	Bibeau
Bittle	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas

Points of Order

Thompson	Trudeau
Trudel	Turnbull
Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vignola	Villemure
Virani	Weiler
Wilkinson	Yip
Zahid	Zuberi — 186

PAIRED

Members

Drouin	Godin
Joly	Liepert — 4

The Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

* * *

[*English*]

POINTS OF ORDER

ALLEGED UNPARLIAMENTARY GESTURE IN THE HOUSE

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we just had a very important vote for Canadians, and the member for Avalon literally gave the finger to Canadians as he stood to vote for our motion to give them a reprieve on home heating costs. He gave the finger to the senior choosing between heating and eating. He gave the finger to all those struggling to make ends meet in an unaffordable Canada. He gave the finger to all Canadians—

The Speaker: We are getting close to debate.

I see the hon. member for Avalon rising in response to the point of order.

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I scratched the side of my head with two fingers. If they think it was one finger, that is up to them. They can take it how they like.

The Speaker: The hon. opposition whip.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Mr. Speaker, I would comment that it is very unusual to scratch the side of one's head with one's middle finger as one is voting, and this is the second time I have had to rise in this place when a member of the government party has used that finger motion—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Colleagues, we had a point of order raising a very serious issue of comportsment, decorum and respect in the House. The member to whom it was directed rose and indicated that this was not done on purpose.

I am placed in a very difficult situation. If hon. colleagues will allow me, I will take a look at this issue, but let me say this. When members are offered an opportunity to explain their actions and they do, usually the matter is closed.

This has raised some disorder in the House. I will take a look at it, and if necessary, I will come back to the House. I hope this will be the end of the points of order on this particular issue.

The hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Speaker, as a point of clarification, as a witness—

The Speaker: I just indicated to all members of the House that I am going to take a look at the video and will come back to members if it is necessary.

The hon. member for Northumberland—Peterborough South is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, the chief whip of our party should be given the appropriate time to give full merit to the situation, as is customary—

The Speaker: I heard the point raised by the hon. member. It is a very serious point. The hon. member it concerned rose to offer an explanation. I am going to review the video on this and come back to the House if necessary.

The hon. member for Gatineau.

● (1540)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a different point of order. I would put to you that during the vote, the catcalls and the very oppressive screaming from the other side are an intimidation and bullying tactic by members of the opposition to all members of this place—

The Speaker: That strikes me as being on the same matter, and I have already explained to this House what I am going to do on it. If there are no related points of order on this, I am going to suggest that we move on to the business of the House.

I recognize the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot and hope he heard my statement.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, I think if you look throughout the Standing Orders, you will see very clearly that when concerns are brought forward in this House, specifically when the chief opposition whip brings forward a concern, it is absolutely essential for and incumbent upon the Chair to ensure that the evidence being presented is heard in its entirety, as that is key to ensuring we can perform our parliamentary duties in this place. Whether the governing party or other parties like it or not, it is incumbent upon the Chair to ensure that the chief opposition whip has a chance to be heard.

The Speaker: Let me assure all members that I understood very clearly the substance of what was raised and the act that was raised. I offered the member who was accused of doing the act an opportunity to explain it to the House and present his apologies. The member gave an explanation.

I am going to take this matter back. There is no more reason for us to dispute this matter, aside from holding up the affairs of this House. Let me reassure all members that I look at all of their interventions very carefully, but at this point, I have not heard a new point of order being raised.

The hon. member for Grande Prairie—Mackenzie.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mr. Speaker, I think it is important for us to consider what has just happened in this House. A member, the chief opposition whip, brought forward very compelling proof, with video evidence—

Points of Order

The Speaker: I am going to ask the hon. member for Grande Prairie—Mackenzie to get right to the point so we can move on with the affairs of the House.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mr. Speaker, the point is this. You have made a great effort in your public comments to state you want to bring decorum to this House, which has been fundamentally undermined by the way in which this whole thing has unravelled. The chief opposition whip was unable to express the evidence being put before you. The member from the Liberal Party stood up and said that he was innocent of using the gesture, and it was only after multiple other interventions that you said you would take it back. I believe that undermines the public statements you have made with regard to bringing decorum to this House.

The Speaker: I regret that the member feels this way. However, as Chair, I feel that I have heard the point raised by the chief whip of the opposition. It was an important point and very well made. I wanted to hear if there were any new points related to it and no new points were raised. I asked the hon. member to rise and he offered his excuse. I indicated to all members, based on what was raised by the hon. whip of the opposition, that I am going to look at this matter and come back to this House if it is necessary to do so.

I hope the member for Miramichi is rising on a new point of order. If it is the same one, I think I have heard enough and we should move on to the next item of the House.

• (1545)

Mr. Jake Stewart: Mr. Speaker, it is a new point of order.

I, many of my colleagues and many of the people at home continue to ask the same question: Why is the volume being turned down so often by the Speaker? Can you explain why that is happening so often?

The Speaker: This was—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: It is because the Chair is standing up. I am going to allow the member to—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am going to ask the hon. member—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: This is the reason why microphones are sometimes turned off: to preserve the honour of the House when there are conversations happening back and forth without people having the floor. No member, I can guarantee, has ever been cut off in terms of making their presentation, posing a question or giving an answer, with the exception of the time when the Speaker is up.

This matter has been brought up with House leaders. I have talked about this issue and it is being addressed.

The hon. member for Miramichi—Grand Lake, on a new matter, I would hope.

Mr. Jake Stewart: Mr. Speaker, this is on a point of clarification on the point of order.

Canadians are feeling like their members of Parliament are being subjected to the microphone's being turned off right at the point when they are making points of order and points of clarification. Making those points is something we are entitled to as members of the House. It is happening on this side more often than not. We do not like to be cut off.

It is debate, that is fine. If the Speaker does not agree that it is a point of order, that is fine. However, we still have the right to be heard, and the microphone needs to be left on when we are speaking.

The Speaker: On the same point of order, the hon. parliamentary secretary. I hope he will come straight to the point.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, like you, I have been very patient, listening to commentaries. You, a while back, very clearly established that you had already received enough information to make some sort of a ruling, pending a review of the situation.

Members continued to stand up, which is a challenge of the ruling you have made as Speaker. I would suggest that people just tone it down and allow the Speaker to do his job.

The Speaker: That is not a point of order. I think we have finished with all the matters which were raised right now. I have promised members that I will come back to them on the original issue that was raised.

[*Translation*]

I wish to inform the House that, because of the deferred recorded division, Government Orders will be extended by 12 minutes.

[*English*]

There are two members who have their hands up. The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I am rising briefly on a point of order, because I believe the point of order made by the hon. member for Gatineau may have been missed in the furor over other issues.

Being a virtual participant, I find it very distressing when, during votes, there is so much heckling. That was the point raised. It had nothing to do with anything visual we observed. However, auditory interruptions in the voting process are against the Standing Orders, and I just wanted to rise briefly to support the hon. member for Gatineau.

Perhaps the Speaker might come back to that question of decorum to remind us of the rules.

Routine Proceedings

● (1550)

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, on a new point of order, there is a member of Parliament who was called out the other day for an absolutely inflammatory tweet. However, it is interesting that, further, the member for Fleetwood—Port Kells not only has a habit of taking pictures of things taking place within this place. In his Twitter feed, he also has what he calls the “Fib-O-Meter”. He is calling members liars and talking about untruths in his Twitter feed. Certainly, when a member is in this place, we expect them to abide by the rules of decorum. The member for Fleetwood—Port Kells has acknowledged that when he puts his elbows up, his guard can come down.

I would ask that you, Mr. Speaker, take a look at the evidence, specifically the member's Twitter feed, on how the member is so flagrantly disregarding the rules of order and decorum in the House and ultimately bringing disorder. In his tweet posted seven minutes ago, he used language that is unparliamentary, and he has been doing so from the floor of this place.

The Speaker: It is an important issue that the member is raising; however, there are limits to what the Speaker can do. There is enough to do in policing what happens in this place and at committee in terms of the exercise of our parliamentary duty, but to be able to monitor all members' social media feeds is difficult to do. I do know that it was raised on one issue, and I invited the hon. member to withdraw his comments. The member was present and did so. I cannot do that right now, but I thank the hon. member for that.

This is a good opportunity once again to encourage all members to rise to the level that is befitting of the chairs and jobs they hold in this place and to conduct themselves accordingly. I think that is an important reminder for all of us so we can conduct ourselves in a way that we would be proud to have done.

[Translation]

It is important for all members to comport themselves with dignity, to live up to the positions we all hold in the House of Commons.

I thank all members for their interventions today.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

* * *

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 13th report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food.

[English]

The report is entitled “Stewards of the Land: Examining Canadian Agriculture's Environmental Contribution”. We maybe could have used a bit more of a simple title, but, of course, we are proud as a committee to talk about Canada's tremendous role in the agriculture sector towards environmental contribution. Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

I thank all those involved in the study. The fact that we presented another unanimous report back to the House shows the good work of the agriculture committee.

* * *

● (1555)

PETITIONS

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to present a petition on behalf of my constituents. I rise for the 23rd time on behalf of the people of Swan River, Manitoba to present a petition about the rising rate of crime.

The NDP-Liberal government is failing to get results for the people of Swan River amidst a crime wave that has swept through this rural town of 4,000 people. Based on a recent report from Manitoba's West district RCMP, I mentioned that, within 18 months, the area saw 1,184 service calls and 703 offences committed by 15 individuals. The report also showed that just 10 individuals categorized as “prolific offenders” were responsible for 133 violent offences. This is why the rural community is calling for action.

The petitioners demand jail, not bail, for violent repeat offenders. The people of Swan River demand that the Liberal government repeal the soft-on-crime policies that directly threaten their livelihoods and their community. I support the good people of Swan River.

EYE CARE

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to finally have the opportunity to present these petitions.

Over eight million people are suffering from eye diseases, and 1.2 million live with vision loss or blindness. Therefore, petitioners call upon the House of Commons to adopt Bill C-284, an act that would establish a national strategy for eye care, as soon as possible.

This was done a few days ago, and I am very pleased that it was done.

FALUN GONG

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in the second petition, petitioners draw attention to the Falun Gong.

They request that the Canadian Parliament and government pass a resolution to establish measures to stop the Chinese Communist Regime's crime of systematically murdering Falun Gong practitioners for their organs, to amend the Canadian legislation to combat forced organ harvesting and to promptly call for an end to the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Madam Speaker, November is Adoption and Permanency Education Month. With that in mind, I am honoured to take this opportunity to present a petition from Canadians who are calling on the Liberal government to provide a royal recommendation for my private member's bill, Bill C-318.

The current EI system discriminates against adoptive and intended parents, so recognizing the importance of time to attach, the petitioners are urging the government to deliver equitable access to all parents for EI leave and to follow through with the Liberals' 2019 and 2021 campaign commitments.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I rise today to present a petition from constituents of Saanich—Gulf Islands concerned about equal rights for women. One would not think we would need a petition in November 2023 to point out that, after all this time, women are not receiving equal pay for work of equal value. Canadian women still receive 21¢ less on the dollar than men for substantially the same kind of work.

Petitioners ask that the House of Commons enact legislation and policies to promote pay equity and pay equality and to do it without delay.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, once again, I have another petition on the same subject. They keep coming into my office. This petition has to do with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Petitioners identify what is well known in terms of the impacts of climate change in Canada, including flooding, wildfires and extreme temperatures. They are quite aware of the Government of Canada's commitment to reducing global warming to 1.5°C. They specifically call on the Government of Canada to move forward immediately with bold emissions caps for the oil and gas sector that are comprehensive in scope and realistic in achieving the necessary targets Canada has set to reduce emissions by 2030.

INTERNATIONALLY TRAINED DENTISTS

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise to present a petition signed by almost 1,000 Canadians, many of whom are members of the Internationally Trained Dentists Association of Canada.

Internationally trained dentists are more than willing to prove their competence through their examinations, but the lengthy delays for exams, the lack of seats, lack of proper communication and transparency and the high costs for exams are leaving them broke and without accreditation.

Routine Proceedings

Petitioners are calling on the government to recognize that the equivalency process conducted by the National Dental Examination Board of Canada needs to have complete procedural and financial transparency, to have better communication with its applicants and to work better with the provinces to review and audit the exam process so internationally trained dentists can quickly complete their examinations and get to work in Canada.

● (1600)

MILITARY CHAPLAINCY

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am here to present a number of petitions today. I am going to start with a petition in light of recent events and of Remembrance Day coming up.

The folks who have signed this petition are calling on the House of Canada to respect the tradition of honouring and affirming the roles of faith in the Canadian Armed Forces. The Canadian Armed Forces chaplaincy program contributes to the health, morale and spiritual well-being of servicemen and women from all faiths and non-faith backgrounds. The Liberal government has attempted to undermine the rights of these servicemen and women by prohibiting chaplains from doing their job.

Petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to reaffirm that the Canadian Armed Forces chaplaincy is free to support servicemen and women through public prayer in keeping with the hard-won and honourable traditions of the Canadian Armed Forces, especially on Remembrance Day.

RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition is from Canadians across the country who note that nearly 300 babies die every day in Canada since the Morgentaler decision. In Canada, the law has no legal protections for the preborn. Only two countries in the world have zero protections for the preborn, being Canada and North Korea; over 98% of these deaths are caused by reasons outside social or personal convenience.

The heartbeat of a child starts at five weeks. The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to recognize the humanity of the preborn starting at five weeks.

FIREARMS

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition I have to present is from Canadians across the country who are concerned about the health and safety of Canadian firearms owners. The petitioners recognize the importance of owning firearms and are concerned about hearing loss caused by the noise levels of firearms, as well as the need for noise reduction.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners acknowledge that sound moderators are the only universally recognized health and safety device that is criminally prohibited here in Canada. Moreover, the majority of G7 countries have recognized the health and safety benefits of sound moderators, allowing them for use in hunting, sport shooting and noise pollution reduction. In many countries, they are mandated.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to allow firearms owners the option to purchase and use sound moderators for all legal hunting and sport shooting activities.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition is from folks across the country who are concerned about the human rights protections of people in Turkey, Pakistan and Bahrain. The petitioners state that Turkish, Pakistani and Bahraini officials have committed gross human rights violations against thousands of Turks, including eight Turkish Canadians. The petitioners say that Turkish officials have killed hundreds, including Gokhan Acikkollu, and that they have wrongfully detained over 300,000 people.

Multiple human rights groups have confirmed these gross violations in Turkey. The petitioners ask the Government of Canada to closely monitor the situation and sanction Turkish officials who have committed these gross violations against eight Canadians and killed Gokhan Acikkollu. They also call on the Turkish, Pakistani and Bahraini governments to end all human rights violations in their respective countries.

FREEDOM OF POLITICAL EXPRESSION

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition is from Canadians across the country who would like the House of Commons to recognize that Canadians have the right to be protected against discrimination. Canadians can and do face political discrimination, but it is a fundamental Canadian right to be politically active and vocal. It is in the best interest of Canadian democracy to protect public debate and the exchange of differing ideas; Bill C-257 seeks to add protection against political discrimination to the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Therefore, the petitioners call on the Government of Canada and the House of Commons to support Bill C-257, which would ban discrimination on the basis of political belief and activity, and to defend the rights of Canadians to peacefully express their political opinions.

• (1605)

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition is from Canadians across the country who are concerned about the Liberals' so-called international assistance policy, which has shown a lack of respect for cultural values and the autonomy of women in the developing world. It does so by supporting organizations that violate local laws at the expense of international development priorities, such as clean water and basic nutrition.

The Liberals' approach to international development has been criticized by the Auditor General for failing to meet measured results. The petitioners note that the Muskoka Initiative involved his-

toric investments in the well-being of women and girls around the world; this initiative emphasized value for money and ensured that investments in the priorities identified by local women were made.

Therefore, the petitioners call on the Government of Canada to align its international development spending with the approach taken by the Muskoka Initiative. It should focus on ensuring that international development dollars meet the basic needs of vulnerable women around the world, rather than pushing an ideological agenda that conflicts with local values in developing countries, and securing measured outcomes.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. When members present multiple petitions, it is great and wonderful, but it is much appreciated if they can keep them as concise as possible. I understand other people want to present petitions.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members that they are to provide a brief statement. I know that the hon. member has tabled many petitions, but they have not been very lengthy. He is doing what he is supposed to be doing, so I will allow him to continue.

The hon. member for Peace River—Westlock.

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, another petition that I have to present today is from Canadians across the country who want to note that it is established that the risk of violence against women increases while they are pregnant. Currently, in Canadian law, the injury or death of preborn children as victims of crime is not considered as an aggravating circumstance for sentencing purposes. Canada has no legal protection for preborn children, including the victims of violent crimes.

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. Therefore, the folks who have signed this petition are calling on the Government of Canada and the House of Commons to legislate the abuse of pregnant women and the infliction of harm on a preborn child as an aggravating circumstance for sentencing purposes in the Criminal Code.

FLOAT HOMES

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this is a petition for the Minister of Transport. Municipalities, property associations and thousands of individuals who are also residents of Ontario are concerned by the damage, including environmental, social, economic and public safety impacts, that unregulated float homes could potentially cause to our waterways in Ontario.

The problem is that there is a lack of consistency between provinces. These structures, in British Columbia, have been classified as float homes and not vessels. Therefore, petitioners are respectfully requesting that the Department of Transport, through the Minister of Transport, classify both existing and new float homes within Ontario as float homes and not vessels in a manner that is consistent with what was determined for the province of British Columbia in 2001. The petitioners look forward to a response from the government.

ANIMAL WELFARE

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I rise with respect to a petition that is asking for the Department of National Defence to stop using pigs for Canadian military trauma training. The petitioners say that the continued use of these piglets is problematic because it does not accurately train soldiers as they need to be trained; human patient simulators, which accurately mimic human anatomy and physiology, are more applicable. The undersigned have asked the Minister of National Defence to bring an end to the use of animals in military trauma training and replace them with more advanced, human-relevant and less-expensive human patient simulators.

* * *

• (1610)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 1710, 1712, 1715 to 1719, 1724, 1725, 1732, 1733, 1735 and 1740.

[Text]

Question No. 1710—**Mr. Dan Mazier:**

With regard to the Centre for Rural Economic Development, since its founding: (a) how much has been paid out in bonuses and performance awards, broken down by year; (b) how many employees received bonuses or performance awards each year; and (c) what are the details of the \$400,000 listed, under the standard object 0306-subscriptions and data, in the government's response to Order Paper Question Q-1449, including, for each contract, the (i) vendor, (ii) date, (iii) amount, (iv) description of the goods or services?

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, between 2019 and late 2021, the centre for rural economic development was housed at Infrastructure Canada, INFC, and thereafter re-established at Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, ISED. As a result, this response reflects the combined records of both departments.

As previously reported in Question No. 1449, financial data for the period requested and the level of detail requested were not captured in INFC's financial system. Therefore, and consistent with its response to Question No. 1449, INFC concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to the question could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading financial information. As such, responses to (a) and (b) reflect the records of ISED.

The centre for rural economic development, since its founding, notes the following. With regard to part (a), in fiscal years 2019-20 and 2020-21, INFC had nil, as per the above justification. In fiscal

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year 2021-22, ISED had zero dollars in bonuses and \$15,455.70 in performance awards. In fiscal year 2022-23, ISED had zero dollars in bonuses and \$16,982.89 in performance awards

With regard to part (b), in fiscal years 2019-20 and 2020-21, INFC had nil, as per the above justification. For fiscal year 2021-22, ISED is withholding information in accordance with subsection 19(1) of the Access to Information Act, as the response contains information that when used alone or with other relevant data could identify individuals. For fiscal year 2022-23, ISED is withholding information in accordance with subsection 19(1) of the Access to Information Act, as the response contains information that when used alone or with other relevant data could identify individuals.

With regard to part (c)(i), in fiscal years 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22, ISED had no vendor. In fiscal year 2022-23, ISED's vendor was Statistics Canada.

With regard to part (c)(ii), in fiscal years 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22, per ISED, there was no date. In fiscal year 2022-23, per ISED, the dates were January 17, 2023; January 17, 2023; and March 14, 2023.

With regard to part (c)(iii), in fiscal years 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22, ISED's amount was nil. In fiscal year 2022-23, ISED's amounts were \$130,000, \$130,000 and \$140,000 respectively to the above dates.

With regard to part (c)(iv), a description of the goods or services, the \$400,000 expenditure was for a project aimed at progressively expanding access to data required to support rural policy formulation and evaluation, rural programs and more broadly the rural data needs of various stakeholders across Canada. The project was led by a team of analysts at the Centre for Special Business Projects, CSBP, of Statistics Canada, in coordination with relevant subject-matter divisions across Statistics Canada.

With regard to the \$400,000, INFC did not code under standard object 03 but rather under standard object 04, consistent with its internal coding practices on memoranda of understanding and other business arrangements. The letter of agreement was transferred to ISED along with the transfer of responsibility of rural economic development. The letter of agreement was in effect at INFC during fiscal year 2021-22 with Statistics Canada. The total amount paid for the contract was \$400,000.

Question No. 1712—**Mr. Warren Steinley:**

With regard to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), since November 4, 2015: what are the details of all studies, completed or ongoing, which were conducted by or on behalf of CMHC, related to taxes on primary residences, including, for each, (i) the amount spent, (ii) who conducted the study, (iii) the start and end dates, (iv) the findings, (v) the website address where details are located, if applicable?

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to completing or having any ongoing studies related to taxes on primary residences, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, CMHC, has nothing to report.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1715—Ms. Heather McPherson:**

With regard to the implementation of Bill C-41, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to other Acts: (a) what is the status of the required guidance for applicants to the authorization regime established by Bill C-41, including (i) which departments and agencies, and specifically which directorates, sectors, and branches, have been involved in drafting guidance for organizations wishing to submit an application, (ii) what privacy concerns have civil society organizations raised with government officials during consultations on guidance documents and what has been the government's response to these concerns, (iii) was the deputy minister responsible for international humanitarian assistance or international development policy included in the consultations, and, if so, in what capacity; (b) what funds have been allocated under the new system, including (i) to which organizations, (ii) for work in which countries; (c) how many authorization applications has the government (i) made for its own activities, (ii) received from outside government, (iii) approved, and for which countries, (iv) sought for its own work in Afghanistan; and (d) what is the current list of countries and sub-regions for which an authorization is deemed necessary and which deputy ministers, including their departments and agencies, are involved in developing this list?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Inter-governmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the government is developing operational guidance required for applicants that have been subject to consultation with both government departments and external stakeholders. This public-facing information will address all aspects of the regime, including in support of the authorization regime.

With regard to part (a)(i), a broad range of government departments and agencies have supported the drafting of this guidance. They include the criminal law policy section, the centre for information and privacy law, and legal services of the Department of Justice; federal policing national security through the Royal Canadian Mounted Police; the financial crimes and security division of the Department of Finance Canada; the charities directorate of the Canada Revenue Agency; the public international law bureau, international crime and terrorism policy division and Afghanistan division of Global Affairs Canada; the Canadian Security Intelligence Service; and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

With regard to part (a)(ii), civil society organizations raised concerns regarding the collection of information as part of the application process required to facilitate the statutory security review requirement. The authorization regime will present a balance between clarifying permissible action and mitigating the risk of terrorist financing. Accordingly, this requires that certain information be collected from the directing officials of applicant organizations to enable the investigative agencies' exercise of due diligence when reviewing applications.

Significant consideration has been given to managing and protecting personal information and limiting access to it for the purposes of the regime. Collection, use and disclosure authorities or limits are embedded throughout the legislative scheme for the regime. For example, the legislation contains safeguards with respect to limiting the use of this information for the administration and enforcement of the authorization regime under section 83 of the Criminal Code. The application will seek to collect sufficient information required to efficiently advise the Minister of Public Safety in their decision to grant an authorization, taking into account the risks and benefits of the activity.

With regard to privacy and transparency, the government is developing a multi-institutional privacy impact assessment, PIA, to

identify privacy risks or gaps, ensure compliance with privacy laws and policies, minimize privacy intrusions and develop a mitigation plan to address identified risks. The PIA will be submitted to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner and a summary of the PIA will be made public.

Organizations also raised concerns about the upcoming requirement to table an annual report to Parliament on the regime. Once the authorization regime is operational, the extent of information that will be available and the level of involvement from stakeholders will be determined.

With regard to part (a)(iii), the deputy minister responsible for international humanitarian assistance or international development policy was not included in the consultations.

With regard to part (b), the authorization regime was designed to enable organizations to conduct needed activities in geographic areas that are controlled by a terrorist group. Organizations may conduct said activities with government funding or private donor funds. Once the regime is operational, the government will track the value of proposed projects and the associated source or sources of funds.

With regard to part (c), the annual report to Parliament on the regime is intended to provide statistics such as how many applications have been received, granted and refused, among other things. It is important to note that Bill C-41 received royal assent on June 20, 2023, and since that date, a humanitarian exception pursuant to subsection 83.03(4) of the Criminal Code has been in effect. This meets the immediate need for humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan and avoids the necessary process that will be associated with the authorization regime.

With regard to part (d), to remove the burden on potential applicant organizations of having to determine themselves which geographic areas are controlled by a terrorist group, the legislation includes a provision that allows an eligible person or organization to seek such information from the Minister of Public Safety. Subsection 83.032(2.1) of the Criminal Code provides, "The Public Safety Minister must, at the request of an eligible person or an organization, provide to that person or organization information in writing about whether an authorization is required to carry out an activity or a class of activities in a given geographic area."

The threat landscape is continuously shifting, and a complicating factor is that territorial control is often disputed and can change frequently between the control of internationally recognized governments, terrorist organizations and/or their auxiliaries. As such, the government will not be maintaining a list of geographic areas that are controlled by a terrorist group, and instead will respond to inquiries on a case-by-case basis.

Question No. 1716—Mr. Rick Perkins:

With regard to the government's funding assistance for the electric battery plant with Volkswagen Canada in St. Thomas, Ontario: what is the contracted construction schedule of the battery plant, including the anticipated day each stage of development will begin, until production commences?

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Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to key milestones, it was announced on March 13, 2023, that Volkswagen and its subsidiary PowerCo will establish an electric vehicle battery manufacturing facility in St. Thomas, Ontario, making it the company's first overseas battery cell plant. This news was shared on the Government of Canada's website, found here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/innovation-science-economic-development/news/2023/03/canada-and-ontario-welcome-historic-investment-from-volkswagen.html>.

On April 21, 2023, the Prime Minister announced that Volkswagen would be investing \$7 billion Canadian toward this project, which is the largest electric vehicle-related investment in Canadian history. Construction of the plant is expected to begin in 2024. Once completed in 2027, the plant will produce batteries for up to one million electric vehicles per year. Additional details on this announcement were shared on the Prime Minister of Canada's website, found here: <https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2023/04/21/volkswagens-new-electric-vehicle-battery-plant-will-create-thousands>.

Question No. 1717—**Mr. Rick Perkins:**

With regard to the April 21, 2023, news release by the Office of the Prime Minister on the Volkswagen battery plant in St. Thomas, Ontario, (a) how was the estimated return on the investment calculated for the announced \$200 billion generated by the battery plant; (b) what is the projected (i) final value on investment, (ii) initial value of investment, (iii) final cost of investment; and (c) how was each figure in (a) and (b) calculated, including the methodology and figures used for each calculation?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), after production ramp-up and assuming full capacity utilization of 90 gigawatt hours, the value of battery production from the PowerCo plant is estimated to reach \$200 billion in less than 15 years, which is well within the average lifespan of a plant in this sector. The calculation is based on the average price of a battery cell in 2022 multiplied by an annual production rate of 90 gigawatt hours.

With regard to part (b), Volkswagen is investing \$7 billion to establish its first overseas electric vehicle battery manufacturing plant in St. Thomas, Ontario.

Canada has committed to providing PowerCo with production support to match the advanced manufacturing production credit in the United States' Inflation Reduction Act, equalling \$35 U.S. per kilowatt hour for battery cells. Canada's support will only be provided for what is produced and sold, and will phase out by 25 percentage points every year beginning in 2030. After 2032, the credit would be eliminated. The agreement also has the flexibility to be adjusted should the U.S.'s advanced manufacturing production credit be changed. For PowerCo, this means support ranging between \$8 billion and \$13.2 billion depending on production levels, two-thirds of which will be provided by Canada and one-third of which will be provided by Ontario.

Canada will also provide funding under the strategic innovation fund, SIF, for capital expenditures of up to \$700 million for PowerCo.

With regard to part (c), the figure in part (a) is estimated based on the average price of a battery cell in 2022 of \$120 U.S. per kilo-

watt hour, per BloombergNEF, converted to Canadian dollars using the average Canada-U.S. exchange rate for 2022, which was one dollar U.S. for \$1.3013 Canadian, multiplied by the production rate of 90 gigawatt hours over a 15-year time period.

The figures in part (b) are the publicly reported value of Volkswagen's investment and the funding committed to by the Government of Canada.

Question No. 1718—**Mr. Ryan Williams:**

With regard to the government's announcement related to the electric battery plant with Stellantis Canada in Windsor, Ontario: what is the contracted construction schedule of the battery plant, including the anticipated day that each stage of development will begin, until battery production commences?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to key milestones, it was announced on March 23, 2022, that LG Energy Solution and Stellantis had created a joint venture with a total investment of more than \$5 billion Canadian, or \$4.1 billion U.S., toward a facility to manufacture batteries for electric vehicles in Canada. As per the announcement, the plant construction activities were scheduled to begin in late 2022, with production operations planned to launch in the first quarter of 2024. The facility will be operational by 2025. This news was shared on the Government of Canada's website, found here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/innovation-science-economic-development/news/2022/03/government-of-canada-welcomes-largest-investment-in-canadas-auto-industry-with-the-first-large-scale-domestic-ev-battery-manufacturing-facility.html>.

Following this announcement, on July 6, 2023, LG Energy Solution, Stellantis, the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario released additional information about the project and the level of support to be provided to secure this investment. Information with respect to the government's obligations under the special contribution agreement was released in a statement from Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. The statement can be found here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/innovation-science-economic-development/news/2023/07/canada-and-ontario-establish-an-auto-pact-to-secure-stellantis-lges-and-volkswagen-deals.html>.

Question No. 1719—**Mr. Ryan Williams:**

With regard to the April 21, 2023, news release by the Office of the Prime Minister on the Volkswagen battery plant in St. Thomas, Ontario: (a) what methodology was used to calculate the announced 3,000 direct jobs generated by the battery plant, including the formula and figures used in the methodology; (b) what is the explanation for how each formula or figure used in (a) was arrived at; (c) what methodology was used to calculate the announced 30,000 indirect jobs generated by the battery plant, including the formula and figures used in the methodology; and (d) what is the explanation for how each formula or figure used in (c) was arrived at?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the number of direct jobs generated by the Volkswagen battery plant in St. Thomas was provided by Volkswagen and is based on the level of employment it has determined it needs to reach the anticipated production capacity of the plant.

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With regard to part (b), as indicated, the number for direct jobs was provided by Volkswagen. Unfortunately, we cannot provide any additional information with respect to how Volkswagen arrived at this figure as it is confidential business information.

With regard to part (c), the economic benefits of battery cell manufacturing are significant for job creation. The number announced for indirect jobs generated by the battery plant is based on a job multiplier of 10, which was derived from an internal study done by the Volkswagen Group regarding its plant in Valencia, Spain.

The Volkswagen study is currently not publicly available. However, it is fully anticipated that a significant portion of the supply chain surrounding the St. Thomas plant will be established within Canada, which will lead to a significant multiplier.

With regard to part (d), Canada's battery manufacturing industry is still in its infancy. The government therefore had to rely on evidence from outside of Canada to determine the potential impact of this plant on job creation throughout the economy. Unfortunately, we cannot provide further details about how Volkswagen arrived at its job multiplier as it is confidential business information.

Question No. 1724—**Mr. Rick Perkins:**

With regard to the Trans Mountain Expansion Project between Strathcona County, Alberta, and Burnaby, British Columbia, since 2019: (a) what are the details of all delays (construction, environmental, cultural, safety) related to the pipeline expansion, including, for each, the (i) reason, (ii) length, (iii) estimated cost as a result of the delay, (iv) date of the event or incident that caused the delay?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the Trans Mountain response to Canada Energy Regulator information request no.1 on August 16, 2023, five key categories of root causes of cost increases were presented. Cost increases can take many forms, but regarding delay costs, specific examples of delays are given below for each root cause.

For evolving and additional compliance requirements, delays were driven by legal and regulatory requirements beyond the execution plan.

For information maturity, delays were driven by changes in the availability and accuracy of information to support expansion project planning.

For indigenous accommodations, delays were driven by changes to support and accommodate the concerns of indigenous communities.

For stakeholder engagement, delays occurred in securing access to the right-of-way and construction workspaces, including the acquisition of land rights.

For exogenous factors, delays were driven by external events and acts of God impacting the execution of the expansion project that were outside of Trans Mountain's control. These include but are not limited to extreme weather events, seasonal and severe wildfire seasons in British Columbia, and productivity losses from COVID-19 related to restrictions, outbreak stand downs and labour shortages.

Please note that in processing parliamentary returns, the Department of Finance applies the Privacy Act and the principles set out

in the Access to Information Act, and certain information has been withheld on the grounds that the information constitutes third party information and commercial information.

In general, schedule delays can be either reoccurring, as they are tied to cyclical parts of construction such as bird nesting delays, archeological delays and permitting delays, or one time events such as weather events. Individual delays themselves may not cause serious cost impacts. However, multiple delays over time accumulate to larger costs. These events can also cause knock-on effects such as missed construction windows or can require construction teams to move to other areas, which results in a significant cost.

As a result of the reoccurring nature of many types of delays, multiple factors simultaneously contributing to delays, knock-on effects to other aspects of construction and construction occurring in parallel on multiple parts of the pipeline, it is difficult to attribute specific dates, costs and project level lengths of delay to the separate categories of delay.

Question No. 1725—**Mr. Mike Morrice:**

With regard to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's (IRCC) oversight of Canadian visa offices located outside of Canada: (a) has IRCC received allegations or reports of corruption or bribery committed by locally-engaged staff toward applicants for Canadian travel documents in the past 10 calendar years; (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, (i) what is the total number of allegations or reports (A) received, (B) investigated, (C) rejected, (D) resolved, broken down by office location, (ii) what actions has IRCC taken, whether solely or in collaboration with its partners, to investigate and address these allegations or reports; (c) does IRCC have internal controls, policies, procedures, or processes to specifically address the risk of corruption and bribery by locally-engaged staff toward applicants for Canadian travel documents; and (d) if the answer to (c) is affirmative, what are the details of such controls, policies, procedures or processes?

Mr. Paul Chiang (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, IRCC, has received allegations or reports of corruption or bribery committed by locally engaged staff toward applicants for Canadian travel documents in the past 10 years; however, IRCC does not have records extending earlier than 2016.

With regard to part (b), IRCC has received 27 reports of corruption or bribery committed by locally engaged staff since 2016. This is the total number of reports. Due to the small number of investigated allegations, data is not further broken down by office due to safety and privacy concerns. Twenty-one did not require an investigation and one is ongoing. Five were investigated, of which two were rejected because they were not founded and three were resolved.

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IRCC, in collaboration with Global Affairs Canada, GAC, as the employer of locally engaged staff, takes allegations of misconduct seriously and follows a protocol to investigate misconduct, using forensic analysis of information systems, including emails, texts and GCMS access; interviews; the review of procedures, etc. Depending on the severity of the infraction, if the allegations are founded, discipline can range from an oral reprimand up to and including termination of employment.

With regard to part (c), IRCC has many levels of controls, policies, procedures and processes specifically to address the risk of corruption or bribery by locally engaged staff, including the following. All IRCC locally engaged staff must have valid reliability status, which is granted by GAC. IRCC travel documents are rigorously and closely managed by Canada-based staff, with frequent reconciliation and quarterly reporting to IRCC headquarters. Any loss or theft of counterfoils, or visas, is reported and investigated. Best practices are implemented and monitored in IRCC's overseas offices to avoid malfeasance, including open-space work environments to allow for supervision, rotation of tasks, random assignment of files, regular quality assurance exercises, secure storage of travel documents and ongoing training. All fees for visa services are paid online directly to IRCC, and IRCC's social media and websites warn clients against making payments to unauthorized representatives.

Question No. 1732—Mr. Frank Caputo:

With regard to the smuggling of contraband in federal penitentiaries: has the government consulted or sought external advice within the past five years, and, if so, what are the details, including the (i) name of the individual or firm, (ii) date, (iii) value of the contract, if applicable, (iv) description of the parameters for the advice or consultation sought, (v) description of the advice or information received?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to better protect the safety and security of our institutions, the Correctional Service of Canada, CSC, continues to explore new, innovative means of preventing and seizing contraband.

The following are instances over the past five years where CSC has sought external advice relating to drone mitigation and signal jamming.

As to signal jamming, on August 3, 2021, CSC met with representatives from Corrective Services New South Wales, CSNSW, to discuss its experiences with the cellphone jamming of contraband cellphones. Following these discussions, CSC began looking into how it may introduce cell jamming technology. CSC has also held consultations with appropriate government departments, including Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Justice Canada.

On February 1, 2023, CSC met with representatives of the Canadian Telecommunications Association, CTA, which represents Canadian telecommunication carriers that provide services and products across the wireless sector. The meeting with the CTA was to discuss mitigation measures involving contraband cellular communication devices.

On June 15, 2023, CSC co-hosted a discussion with the CTA and representatives from all major telecommunications carriers from

across Canada. CSC is engaging with this group as part of its efforts to seek a regulatory exemption to deploy jamming technology.

As to body scanners, in September 2020, under contract, CSC worked with the former manager who oversaw the implementation of body scanners in the Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

From September 2020 through to June 2021, this individual worked closely with CSC staff and provided first-hand knowledge of infrastructure requirements, operating procedures and training considerations. The contract consisted of the development of a statement of technical requirements and statement of work for the procurement of two body scanners for a pilot trial of body scanner technology at two CSC institutions. Following a successful bidding process, the two devices were procured and deployed at the two institutions. CSC is now working to implement body scanners at other sites across the country.

On May 17, 2023, representatives of CSC attended the St. Lawrence Valley Correctional and Treatment Centre, a part of the Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, in Brockville, Ontario, to view a demonstration of its body scanner in operation. This demonstration had been organized by CSC through reaching out to the Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

As to uncrewed aerial systems, or drones, on February 7, 2020, CSC sought the assistance of the vice-president of policy and legal affairs at DJI concerning the addition of geofencing to all facilities under CSC responsibility. This was the result of having procured six DJI AeroScope devices, which are radio frequency detection devices to counter drone incursions into CSC airspace.

On October 7, 2021, CSC held a meeting with representatives of the Swedish Prison and Probation Service, SPPS, to discuss issues related to drone incursions into prison airspace.

On June 6, 2023, a request for information was posted on CanadaBuys for the Correctional Service of Canada to receive industry feedback regarding counter uncrewed aerial system technology. Specifically, feedback was solicited about technological options and capabilities that would enhance CSC's ability to counter the risks posed by drones, as well as contractual terms. CSC is currently in the process of reviewing all feedback received.

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Through its networks and ongoing partnerships with various international and domestic correctional authorities, CSC has had discussions with other jurisdictions on various matters of shared interest, including their experiences with the use of drones to introduce contraband into prisons and penitentiaries. Examples of correctional authorities that CSC has discussed this subject with include provincial public safety partners such as Quebec's Minister of Public Safety, and international correctional authorities such as the Government of Australia and the U.S. Federal Bureau of Prisons.

As to cellular devices detection, in an effort to address operational risks related to the unauthorized introduction and use of cellular devices by inmates in federal custody, and to help disrupt criminal activity targeting federal institutions, CSC initiated discussions with the Connecticut state police in the summer of 2022 to learn more about their deployment of detector dog teams specializing in the detection of electronic storage devices.

CSC sent two experienced dog handlers to participate in the 234th Connecticut state police canine team training cohort, which occurred in the winter of 2023. This international consultation and partnership initiative helped CSC obtain specific information about canine training techniques related to the detection of electronic storage devices. CSC is one of the first organizations in Canada to acquire this canine expertise, and the two new detector dog teams have successfully seized several electronic devices.

As to infrastructure and design, on February 9, 2023, CSC sought to receive information from other correctional jurisdictions within Canada about the strategies they use to mitigate the introduction of contraband via drone. As CSC facilities are larger than those of provincial and territorial counterparts, some of the methods used are not operationally feasible for CSC. However, CSC continues to consult with our partners to determine the best approaches for keeping our institutions safe.

Question No. 1733—**Mr. Frank Caputo:**

With regard to the government's approach to jamming cellular signals in federal penitentiaries: has the government consulted or sought any external advice related to the topic in the past five years, and, if so, what are the details, including the (i) name of the individual or firm, (ii) date, (iii) value of the contract, if applicable, (iv) description of the parameters for the advice or consultation sought, (v) advice or information received?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on August 3, 2021, the Correctional Service of Canada, CSC, met with representatives from Corrective Services New South Wales, CSNSW, to discuss its experiences with the cellphone jamming of contraband cellphones. Following these discussions, CSC began looking into how it may introduce cell jamming technology. CSC has also held consultations with appropriate government departments, including Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Justice Canada.

On February 1, 2023, CSC met with representatives of the Canadian Telecommunications Association, CTA, which represents Canadian telecommunication carriers that provide services and products across the wireless sector. The meeting with the CTA was to discuss mitigation measures involving contraband cellular communication devices.

On June 15, 2023, CSC co-hosted a discussion with the CTA and representatives from all major telecommunications carriers from across Canada. CSC is engaging with this group as part of its efforts to seek a regulatory exemption to deploy jamming technology.

Question No. 1735—**Mr. Richard Bragdon:**

With regard to the new passport design: (a) how much was spent on the graphic design of the new passport; (b) which vendors were contracted or sub-contracted to do the graphic design work; and (c) how much was each vendor in (b) paid for graphic design work associated with the new passport?

Mr. Paul Chiang (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), an expenditure authority in the amount of \$161 million has been provided by the Treasury Board Secretariat to design, develop and deploy Canada's ePassport next generation suite of travel documents and all related printing equipment, software and infrastructure by October 2024. This amount includes costs payable to the Canadian Bank Note Company, CBN, for various project deliverables.

This amount represents the entire project budget, including to develop and deploy new printing equipment, the new passport design and the infrastructure required to produce the new passport, as well as salaries, accommodation refits and IT components. The cost of the redesign was not captured as a separate deliverable but was blended as part of the overall implementation costs payable to the CBN. As such, it is not possible to identify the specific cost of the passport redesign.

As of August 31, 2023, \$81.9 million has been spent on the entire project.

With regard to part (b), as part of the project, Canada launched a competitive procurement process in June 2016, and on May 24, 2019, a contract was awarded to CBN to deliver this solution for the Government of Canada. CBN was responsible, per the contract, for developing the designs for the new passport following the decision on theme by the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, IRCC.

A passport is a secure travel document whose primary purpose is to enable Canadians to travel, preventing counterfeiting to maintain credibility and to ensure it is recognized at global borders. It remains the exclusive property of the Government of Canada despite being issued in the name of the client. Updating passports is a routine process based on industry standard best practices and standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organization.

With regard to part (c), please refer to the response to part (a).

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1740—Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:**

With regard to the National Joint Council's revised Isolated Posts and Government Housing Directive (IPGHD) and the Shelter Cost Differential methodology (SCD) that came into effect on August 1, 2023, broken down by province or territory: (a) what is the total number of employees who (i) experienced decreases in their SCD payments, (ii) were disqualified from SCD payments entirely; (b) how many employees were disqualified from the SCD because they own their home; and (c) does the government expect to see spending reductions as a result of the revised SCD methodology?

Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the isolated posts and government housing directive, IPGHD, is a National Joint Council, NJC, directive that forms part of collective agreements. The revised shelter cost differential, SCD, methodology has been co-developed with bargaining agents. Implementation of the revised methodology will be applied for the annual update of the SCD, which takes place on August 1, 2023.

The purpose of the SCD is to provide an allowance to employees who are at an isolated post where the cost of renting private accommodation or government housing is higher than the national average threshold. This is to help offset the higher shelter costs. The revised methodology, which came into effect on August 1, 2023, replaces a methodology that had not been reviewed since 2012 and had not looked at the cost of shelter in all isolated posts. There are now 20 locations that qualify instead of only five. The same methodology applies for all locations, using census data, to establish which locations qualify and the rate. Once a location qualifies, the rate will be adjusted annually by the provincial or territorial consumer price index, CPI, as applicable, until the next census results are available. Transitional provisions have been agreed to with bargaining agents.

With regard to part (a), the shelter cost differential is provided to employees residing in private accommodation and government housing, housing that is leased or owned by the Government of Canada and rented out to employees. Prior to the August 1, 2023, implementation of the revised shelter cost differential, five locations qualified for private accommodation and three locations qualified for government housing. Furthermore, different rates were provided for each. The revised methodology provides the same rate for both types of accommodation: private and government.

With regard to private accommodation, the SCD was limited to employees residing in private accommodation in five locations. Employees in Inuvik, Yellowknife and Iqaluit residing in government housing received the SCD as well.

With regard to the Northwest Territories, in Inuvik, which has approximately 79 employees, the SCD applied to employees in private accommodation and government housing. In Norman Wells, which has approximately three employees, the SCD only applied to employees in private accommodation. In Yellowknife, which has approximately 830 employees, the SCD applied to employees in private accommodation and government housing. With regard to Nunavut, in Iqaluit, which has approximately 543 employees, the SCD applied to employees in both private accommodation and government housing.

With regard to Yukon, in Whitehorse, which has approximately 687 employees, the SCD applied only to employees in private accommodation.

Due to the transitional measures in place, to date, no employees have experienced a decrease in the SCD. However, as of December 1, 2023, SCD rates for some locations will begin a gradual decrease, which will be completed in September 2024.

With regard to part (b), data on the number of homeowners in isolated posts is not available.

With regard to part (c), any difference in cost to the government has not yet been established.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Furthermore, Madam Speaker, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 1711, 1713, 1714, 1720 to 1723, 1726 to 1731, 1734, 1736 to 1739 and 1741 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately in an electronic format.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1711—Mr. Dan Mazier:

With regard to the statement in the government's response to Order Paper Question Q-1449 on the Centre for Rural Economic Development that "In 2022, the Minister of Rural Economic Development participated in more than 100 stakeholder engagement sessions across Canada": what are the details of each meeting, including, for each, (i) the date, (ii) the location, (iii) the type of meeting (virtual, in person), (iv) the list of attendees, (v) the number of attendees, (vi) the titles of all attendees representing the government at the meeting, including ministers, (vii) the advertised topic, (viii) the list of individuals invited, (ix) the date the invitations were sent out, (x) whether the public was invited, and, if so, how was the public notified?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1713—Mr. Eric Duncan:

With regard to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change's trip to China to attend the annual general meeting of the China Council for International Co-operation on Environment and Development: (a) what was the minister's detailed itinerary on the trip; and (b) what are the details of all meetings attended by the minister, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) time, (iii) location, (iv) list of attendees, including the organization represented by each attendee, (v) agenda items, (vi) topics discussed?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1714—Mr. Eric Melillo:

With regard to government infrastructure funding, since 2016: (a) what was the total amount provided to municipalities each year; (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by individual municipality; and (c) what is the breakdown of (a) and (b) by funding program?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1720—Mr. Jake Stewart:**

With regard to convictions under the Fisheries Act that have resulted in fines since January 1, 2016: what are the details of all fines issued by fishery officers, including the (i) province, (ii) federal riding of the incident, if known, (iii) location, (iv) monetary amount issued, (v) monetary amount paid, (vi) date of the issuance, (vii) date of the payment, (viii) summary of the infraction?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1721—Mr. Warren Steinley:

With regard to the government's Oil to Heat Pump Affordability Program: (a) how many applications for funding have been (i) received, (ii) granted; (b) how many heat pumps have been installed through the program; and (c) what is the breakdown of (a) and (b) by province or territory?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1722—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to the real estate arm of the Canada Lands Company (CLC): (a) how many residential housing units has CLC built since January 1, 2019, broken down by city; and (b) what are the details of the land owned by CLC, broken down by city, including the (i) zoning and number of acres in each zoned category, (ii) number of potential residential lots, (iii) number of acres in areas considered serviced versus unserved?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1723—Mr. Rick Perkins:

With regard to investment tax credits granted under the Scientific Research and Experimental Development Program between 2016 and 2023, in total and broken down by year: (a) how much has been distributed as part of the program; (b) how many applications were (i) received, (ii) granted; and (c) what is the breakdown for how much was distributed by (i) province or territory, (ii) type of research (basic, applied, experimental development, etc.)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1726—Ms. Niki Ashton:

With regard to Indigenous Services Canada's monitoring of access to clean drinking water on reserve: (a) what service standards are established by the department regarding the monitoring and approval of water treatment systems, including (i) visits to communities by department officials, (ii) timelines to approve and re-view systems, (iii) delivery of necessary parts or equipment; and (b) what is the total number of dedicated staff within the department working with communities to assess drinking water conditions?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1727—Ms. Niki Ashton:

With regard to Indigenous Services Canada's (ISC) work to provide clean drinking water on reserve: (a) by what date does ISC expect all existing long-term boil water advisories to end; (b) how many communities are currently under short-term boil water advisories for a period of (i) less than one month, (ii) between one and three months, (iii) between three and six months, (iv) between six and nine months, (v) between nine and 12 months; (c) broken down by province and territory, what is the total number of communities that lack clean drinking water due to the (i) lack of piping from water treatment plants, (ii) contaminated pipe or contaminated water treatment equipment; and (d) broken down by province and territory, what is the total number of communities that deliver clean water to residents through (i) cisterns or wells, (ii) water delivery trucks?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1728—Ms. Niki Ashton:

With regard to emergency evacuations for First Nations communities due to climate-related events, broken down by fiscal year and First Nation since 2015-16: (a) what is the total amount of financial assistance provided to First Nations governments; and (b) what is the total amount provided to the First Nations for natural disaster mitigation and prevention efforts?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1729—Ms. Niki Ashton:

With regard to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and the prolonged visa application wait times for applicants from francophone countries: (a)

what are the mean and median wait times to process a permanent residency application from francophone countries between 2020 and 2023, broken down by country, including, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Algeria, Chad, Djibouti, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius, Niger, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Togo, Haiti, Martinique, and Lebanon; (b) which of these countries have average visa application wait times above the IRCC recommended guidelines; (c) how many applications for permanent residency did the IRCC process from francophone countries between 2020 and 2023, broken down by country, and how many were (i) accepted, (ii) rejected; (d) what are the mean and median processing times for applicants that filed for permanent residency in (i) French, (ii) English; and (e) does the IRCC currently have plans to recommend additional visa application centers in francophone countries, and, if so, which countries?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1730—Mr. Gérard Deltell:

With regard to the emissions resulting from flights on official government trips taken by ministers between June 21, 2023 and September 18, 2023: what are the details of each trip, including, for each, the (i) name and title of the minister, (ii) date, (iii) origin, (iv) destination, (v) purpose of the trip, (vi) distance flown, (vii) estimated emissions resulting from trip?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1731—Mr. Terry Dowdall:

With regard to the Rapid Housing Initiative: how much funding has been provided to date, broken down by municipality?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1734—Mr. Frank Caputo:

With regard to the government's policies related to controlled substances: (a) has there been any direction, with respect to charges of possession of a controlled substance or the refraining of such charges, to any federal prosecutors or agents since November 4, 2015, and, if so, what are the details, including the (i) date, (ii) direction given, (iii) person who gave the direction; and (b) what are the current policies with respect to charging someone for possession of a controlled substance and when to refrain from doing so?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1736—Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:

With regard to usage of the government's Airbus CC-150 Polaris aircraft, since May 1, 2023: what are the details of the legs of each flight, including the (i) date, (ii) point of departure, (iii) destination, (iv) number of passengers, (v) names and titles of the passengers, excluding security or Canadian Armed Forces members, (vi) total catering bill related to the flight, (vii) volume of fuel used, or an estimate, (viii) amount spent on fuel?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1737—Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:

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

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1738—Mr. Terry Dowdall:

With regard to lockstations on the Trent Severn Waterway and the Rideau Canal, broken down by location: (a) what operational metrics are regularly collected and reported to Parks Canada management since May 19, 2023; (b) how many hours was each lockstation inoperative during regular hours of operation; (c) how many full days was each lockstation inoperative; (d) for what reason or reasons was each lockstation inoperative; and (e) for each reason in (d), how many hours or days was each lockstation inoperative as a result?

(Return tabled)

*Government Orders***Question No. 1739—Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:**

With regard to Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) and the Critical Injury Benefit (CIB): (a) how many times and to how many individuals has the CIB been granted; (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by type of injury; (c) how many times has the CIB been granted solely for post-traumatic stress disorder or other mental health conditions; (d) are file numbers attached to each instance where the CIB has been granted for mental health conditions, and, if not, why not; (e) on what date did veterans with mental health conditions become eligible to apply for the CIB; (f) what is the web address for the CIB application that is available for the public to download; (g) where is the CIB application available on the My VAC Account portal for veterans; (h) does VAC plan to update the CIB application form for veterans applying solely for injuries to mental health, and, if so, when will such changes be implemented; and (i) are the Veterans Review and Appeal Board decisions related to the CIB available for the public to review, and, if so, how does the public access them?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1741—Mr. Gord Johns:

With regard to policies, directives, standards and guidelines enforced by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat concerning people management, broken down by department or agency: (a) on what date was the last staffing review completed and presented to the deputy minister and senior managers; (b) what were the conclusions of the last staffing review, including the (i) number of vacancies, (ii) future staffing needs of the department, (iii) ability to fill existing and future job vacancies; (c) did the department hire third-party management firms to provide recommendations on people management; and (d) what are the details of all contracts with management firms in (c), including the (i) name of the company contracted, (ii) value of the contract, (iii) expected deliverables, (iv) titles of the final reports, summaries, or recommendation lists, (v) deadlines?

(Return tabled)

[*English*]

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

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

NATIONAL SECURITY REVIEW OF INVESTMENTS MODERNIZATION ACT

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-34, An Act to amend the Investment Canada Act, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak in support of Bill C-34, An Act to amend the Investment Canada Act.

This bill would improve our ability to respond to changing circumstances that affect Canada's economic well-being and to remain vigilant in upholding our national security. More specifically, I want to focus on how our government's efforts to modernize the Investment Canada Act would help protect the intangible assets of Canadian businesses, which are the cornerstone of economic growth in a 21st-century economy.

As all members are fully aware, intangible assets, such as intellectual property, trade secrets and data, are of immense importance to our economic vitality and prosperity. As such, our country and other open economies are increasingly being targeted by hostile ac-

tors, which pose a threat to our national security, continued economic well-being and prosperity.

Consequently, our government is taking timely action to respond to evolving threats to our economic well-being and national security. Foreign investment certainly fuels innovation and assists businesses to succeed and grow. However, I want to emphasize that we should not compromise when safeguarding Canada's economic interests. As members will note, we should be laser-focused on striking the right balance between attracting foreign investment to help Canadian businesses grow and remaining mindful of the need to protect our intangible assets and intellectual property.

Highly innovative Canadian companies are at the forefront of developing new technologies, such as quantum computing, biotechnology, medical devices and innovative clean energy. Attracting investments to actualize innovation is complex and challenging, yet the safety and protection of Canadians is our government's number one priority. Canada must have a robust and flexible tool kit to protect Canada's interests from national security threats, which come in many forms.

We heard from multiple witnesses on this topic in the context of hearings arranged by the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology. Those witnesses shared their expertise to highlight that hostile state and non-state actors are increasingly pursuing strategies to acquire goods, technologies and intellectual property for uses that are incompatible with our national interest and economic outlook.

We also heard witnesses signal how foreign investment can be a conduit for foreign influence activities that seek to weaken our long-term economic prosperity. Around the world, foreign investment regimes are getting finetuned to better incorporate national security considerations. Our international partners are taking action to respond to shifting technological and geopolitical threats by amending their investment screening regimes.

The U.S. overhauled its foreign direct investment laws in 2018 by adding new types of transactions to government review. For the first time ever, the U.S. also mandated notifications in transactions involving critical technologies. These regulations came into effect in February 2020.

Similarly, Australia updated its regime in January 2021 to grant its government the discretion to require mandatory notification for transactions with a national security dimension. The same can be said for the United Kingdom, which introduced a new stand-alone regime for national security and investments in January 2021.

Government Orders

The U.K. established a mandatory obligation to secure clearance for transactions where control of a business was acquired in 17 sensitive sectors, to be secured before the transaction is completed. The U.K. also introduced legislation that allows the government to impose interim orders while the review is being conducted.

I reference such changes in the U.S., Australia and the U.K. to make a simple point: Canada's national security review authorities under the ICA have been in place since 2009. Quite often, changes introduced by our allies are meant to ensure that they catch up to where we already are. Given our track record, Bill C-34 is the latest in a series of actions our government is taking to make our regime more robust, responsive and flexible.

● (1615)

I would remind members that in March 2021 we updated the national security guidelines to advise that investments involving sensitive personal data, sensitive technologies and critical minerals, as well as investments by state-owned or state-influenced investors, would face enhanced security. The next step came in 2022 when we issued a new policy for review of foreign investments originating from Russia.

In 2022, we also introduced a new voluntary filing mechanism for investors intending to obtain greater regulatory certainty with the same statutory deadlines as a mandatory filing. In addition, we now have five years to review and adopt measures regarding an investment in the absence of a voluntary filing.

As members can see, Bill C-34 is just the latest effort to ensure Canada's foreign investment review regime represents the gold standard. Fundamentally, our government believes that an effective investment review regime must adapt to changing world dynamics and business practices. To respond to the evolving and accelerating threat environment, now is the right time to modernize key aspects of the ICA.

Bill C-34 would better align Canada with our international partners and allies. One of the ways our regime would align more closely with allies includes introducing the new requirement for prior notification of certain investments. This particular amendment would ensure that Canada has greater oversight over investments in certain sensitive sectors, especially when they give investors material access to assets and non-public technical information, such as cutting-edge intellectual property and trade secrets, once the investment is finalized. It would enable the government to prevent potentially irreparable damage. Investors would have to provide notice of the transaction within the timelines specified in the regulations.

A second important change is that it would provide our government the authority to impose interim conditions on an investment during the course of a national security review to prevent potential national security injury taking place during the time the review is being conducted. Another amendment would allow Canada to share case-specific information with international allies to support national security assessments.

Finally, the ICA includes a provision to allow for closed material proceedings. As such, the act would introduce new rules that would allow for more effective judicial review of national review decisions by allowing the use of sensitive information, while also pro-

tecting such commercially sensitive information from disclosure. Ultimately, these significant amendments would ensure that Canada's tool kit evolves and adapts to the changing global threat landscape.

It is for these reasons that I believe the House should support this bill and these new amendments. Where national security is concerned, we should never hesitate to take decisive action.

● (1620)

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member spoke about some of our allies. He spoke about Australia and the U.K. and how they are moving toward our system of examination of these matters on an international basis.

Does he have any information whether those two very important allies actually have a process where one minister determines whether one gets past a security review in those countries? Frankly, that is the worst part of this bill. Can he comment on that, please?

Mr. Ali Ehsassi: Madam Speaker, as the member is fully aware, I did make reference to three countries but the purpose of those references was to say that our regulations are to be fine-tuned every so often. The reason for that, as I tried to emphasize in my comments, is that we face a world that has a changing global threat landscape.

In this particular case there are a few aspects of this bill that would require that we draw on the expertise of not just one minister but several departments. However, that is a good thing because we need to make sure that the regime we currently have in place is robust and flexible and will allow our authorities to thoroughly protect Canadians.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Madam Speaker, foreign investment has generally been based on the size of the transaction and/or the sector in the transaction. It has now come to the point where size or sector does not actually matter, in terms of security review and the sensitivities involved. Small companies can create security difficulties for Canada. Sectors one would never have thought of can create difficulties for Canada, particularly dual-use sectors.

I am interested in the hon. member's comments as to whether this bill addresses this dramatic change in what should be available to or reviewed by the Canadian authorities.

Government Orders

Mr. Ali Ehsassi: Madam Speaker, yes, my hon. colleague has rightly emphasized that our regime, as a general rule, has thresholds in place that allow us to screen investments coming in. In other instances, it is sectoral because there are various sectors of the economy that are vulnerable to falling into the wrong hands, if you will.

These have been ongoing changes. I made reference to changes that we made in 2021 and 2022. This does not mean that if we bring in some of these new provisions, they are necessarily replacing all of the old safeguards that were there previously.

Our intention has always been to have the gold standard when it comes to screening investments coming in. This will ensure that we will continue to lead the way in having a good, robust system in place, which does evolve as security threats around the world evolve.

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a privilege to rise in the House.

Before I really dive into my speech on Bill C-34, I just want to acknowledge Marilyn Bouw, the president of the Springfield Agricultural Society, for hosting my wife and me at their annual banquet. She is a tremendous advocate and supporter of agricultural communities in her riding of Springfield and broader.

I also want to mention Mayor Myron Dyck from Niverville, Manitoba, who also hosted my wife and me this weekend, together with his wife Shari, at the Niverville Heritage Centre annual fundraising banquet. The Niverville Heritage Centre does a tremendous amount of good work in the community, especially supporting our vulnerable seniors.

I thank Niverville Heritage Centre very much.

The interesting thing about what came up this past weekend at both of those events was the issue of the carbon tax. Folks at both venues talked to me about the carbon tax vote that we had here earlier in the House today. They said, “How is it going to go, Mr. Falk? Is this a confidence vote? Will this actually bring us into an election?”

We know that the Liberals want to quadruple the carbon tax and we know that, already, Canadians right across the country are experiencing significant increases to the cost of living and affordability is top of mind for almost all Canadians.

They asked me—

• (1625)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am struggling to find any kind of link between what the member is talking about and the bill that is before the House right now. We have had a number of opportunities to discuss the subject that he is trying to discuss but, right now, we are talking about this bill.

Perhaps you could encourage him to get back to the subject at hand.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is a little flexibility during the speeches, of course. I remind members who are getting up to speak on bills before the House that it needs to be relevant to the bill. They should mention either the bill or what is in the bill.

The hon. member for Provencher.

Mr. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, that is very good advice. I was paving the pathway to this bill on how this carbon tax is negatively impacting investment in Canada.

The Liberals today had an opportunity to reduce the cost of living for Canadians from coast to coast to coast and failed to do that. They were joined by the Bloc. The Bloc members had an opportunity to speak for Quebeckers to make sure their cost of living was also being reduced and they failed to do that.

The members for Winnipeg North, Winnipeg South, Winnipeg South Centre, Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, who are Liberal members, could have reduced the cost of home heating for their constituents, but voted against this motion to expand the carbon tax pause to all Canadians. It is very disappointing that their constituents cannot even count on them to represent them adequately here in the House.

Let me now dive headlong into my speech and carry on with that.

We have seen before where the current government subjects a bill to being discussed, even this critical one here, and this is something we should have seen long ago. It requires legislation of course on the whole issue of Invest in Canada, but this legislation presented by the government lands so far from what is needed, so far from the reality of the problem that it seeks to address, that it is really difficult to see a common-sense solution here. This is the kind of stuff we continually get from the Liberals. We see this on their approach to the environment, immigration, the economy, guns, drugs and the list goes on.

There is a common series of steps the Liberals go through when they encounter these various problems. First, they deny there is a problem. Once that stops working for them, then they start to blame the Conservatives. Then they start blaming Canadians. Finally, when they run out of people to blame, once the PM's wizards and the PMO finally recognize that something needs to be done before even the CBC starts dumping on them, then they put something like this forward. However, it takes all of those things to happen before the Liberal government takes steps to address real issues. When they do finally present something, it is unremarkable, as members will see later in my speech.

For years, the Communist dictatorship of Beijing has been taking advantage of Canadians, of our weak acquisition laws, Canadian industry and our proprietary technology. Why is that? Part of it seems to be the bizarre fascination that the Prime Minister has with China. We all remember his comment about admiring Beijing's basic dictatorship, though at the time few thought he was naive enough to believe that and throw open the doors to Beijing, but it turns out that he actually has that fascination.

Government Orders

When the former environment minister visited China in 2018, she too gushed over China's leadership on climate change and its ability to "scale like no other country". In her address to Boston's Northeastern University this past May, the Deputy Prime Minister "said the fundamental question of our time is: 'Does capitalist democracy still work?'" I think it would be better if the minister were here working for Canadians, but that is what she said.

She stated:

That is the question being posed around kitchen tables, in my country and this one, as parents wonder if our children can count on capitalist democracy's essential promise of a future more prosperous than our present.

These comments, of course, raise the spectre of what she considers a viable alternative. That would be China's basic dictatorship perhaps. To read between the lines, her thought process seems to be that Canada's current economic woes are not the result of her government's incompetent management, but rather the fault of capitalism and democracy.

As one journalist recently noted, if we are talking about what passes for capitalism and democracy in Justin Trudeau's Canada, not unlike those of China, where capitalism has come to be characterized by close—

● (1630)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This is sometimes what happens when members are just reading speeches that are given to them that are written by staffers who perhaps do not know the rules of the House, but the member just said the Prime Minister's name in the context of it being "the [Prime Minister]'s Canada".

Perhaps the member should inform those who are writing his speeches how the rules of the House work so that this does not happen again.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sure the hon. member cannot prove for sure who has written the speech.

The hon. member mentioned the Prime Minister's name. I would ask him to please be careful and ensure that he is not mentioning the name of parliamentarians who sit in the House. I know that does slip from time to time and I think it is done on both sides of the House.

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would ask that you ask the member for Kingston and the Islands to withdraw his comment.

I know it is the practice on one side of the House to just read canned speeches, but I know this member, and I know he wrote that speech. I know he writes all his speeches, just as most of our members do.

I would ask the Speaker to kindly ask him to withdraw that comment, which was meant to put down one of my colleagues on this side of the House.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have indicated that hon. members should be careful with what they put in their speeches, and they should also be careful when saying whether somebody has done something or has not done something.

I am not sure if the hon. deputy government House leader would like to rise to apologize for that. I understand he is not willing to do so.

I would ask all members to please be careful as it causes disorder in the House, which is not the way we want to function here.

The hon. member for Provencher.

Mr. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, to carry on, in a so-called capitalist system where the Prime Minister picks the winners and the losers and stacks the deck to ensure a select few friends get rich while everyone else is pushed to become reliant on government for everything from housing to basic income, the general trend, and I believe the endgame of the government, will inevitably collapse.

Likewise, so would a democracy that has been left unprotected and consistently undermined by the actions of the Prime Minister and his friends in Beijing. Beijing had spies, scientists with ties to China's bioweapons program, in our National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg, which is one of our most secure facilities. Now, they are nowhere to be found.

The Prime Minister took the former Speaker of the House, the person who sat in Madam Speaker's chair, to court and sued that person to prevent the truth about what was happening at the Winnipeg National Microbiology Lab with those Chinese spies from coming out.

There is hacking and espionage against Canadian infrastructure, academia and industry. The list goes on and on. It is always China. What has the government done so far? In eight years, what has the Liberal government done? It has done nothing up until today, unless of course we include cash for access with Chinese billionaires and donations to the Trudeau Foundation.

However, now the Liberals have a plan, which is Bill C-34. What is the solution government members have put forward? Are they proposing to ban Communist Chinese acquisitions of Canadian companies or to take China to the World Trade Organization? Would they expel Beijing-run spies and state police from Canada? No, they would not. Their solution is more government, more bureaucracy and specifically for more power concentrated in the minister. This would not be the Minister of Public Safety or the Minister of National Defence, but with the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry. It is bizarre. One cannot make this stuff up.

In almost case with the government, it is the same minister who created the problem tasked with fixing the problem. In this case, we have the minister of industry, who I actually like. I wish him all the best in his leadership bid. In 2017, before his time, the minister of industry failed to request a full national security review of the acquisition of B.C.-based Norsat International and its subsidiary Sinclair Technologies by Hytera Communications, which is owned by the People's Republic of China.

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Then, in December of 2022, under the former public safety minister, the RCMP awarded a contract to supply sensitive hardware for its communication systems to Sinclair Technologies, which was then owned by a Beijing company and major supporter to China's public security ministry. Then it was revealed, also in December of 2022, that since 2017, the CBSA had also been using communications equipment and technology from Hytera Communications.

Hytera has been charged with 21 counts of espionage in the United States and has been banned by President Biden from doing business in the U.S., but it has not been banned here in Canada, not under the Liberal government. How did the minister respond to these acquisitions? He thought it was cool.

Let us look at another example. In March 2021, the minister updated and enhanced guidelines for national security reviews for transactions involving critical minerals and state-owned enterprises, but in January 2022, he failed to follow his own guidelines when he fast-tracked the takeover of Canadian lithium company Neo Lithium Corp by, once again, Chinese state-owned Zijin Mining Group, without a national security review taking place.

Then, in November of 2022, the minister ordered three Chinese companies to divest their ownership of three critical mineral firms, but guess who he forgot to mention? It was Neo Lithium. The list goes on.

I am not sure what is more astounding: that it is always China with the Liberal government or that the minister can put forward this legislation with a straight face. How can he expect the House or Canadians to trust him to solve this problem when his own lack of oversight has been so instrumental in creating the problem?

• (1635)

As I wrap up, I will say that the member for Kingston and the Islands always asks whether there is nothing positive in the legislation, and if we cannot say one positive thing. Even he needs reassurance that the Liberals are not completely dropping the ball.

Therefore, I am happy to inform him and his—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member's time is up. We will come to questions and comments in a moment, and he will be able to add his additional comments during that time.

[*Translation*]

Order. It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Spadina—Fort York, Public Safety; the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot, Carbon Pricing; the hon. member for Nunavut, Indigenous Affairs.

[*English*]

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, that was interesting to listen to. There was some real revisionist history there. The member opposite referenced political relationships with dictators, and I am going to pick up on that.

It is no secret that the member for Carleton has hitched his political wagon to former president Trump. We know of former president

Trump's relationship with Putin and his affinity for the government in Russia, and we know that the member for Carleton has been eerily silent on his support for Ukraine.

Is that an indication of his lack of support? Can we chalk up the member's silence on his support for Ukraine to his relationship with former president Trump and, by extension, his relationship with Putin? Can the member explain that and connect the dots for us when it comes to relationships with dictators?

• (1640)

Mr. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, the member asked a good question.

I ask why we continue to allow Chinese state-owned companies to invest in Canada when even President Biden, who we often consider as being at the far left or the extreme left, has banned Chinese state-owned companies from operating technology in the United States. The question really is why, here in Canada, are we not seeing the same thing?

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji.* I can see some work has been done on this legislation and that there were amendments made at committee. I see an amendment to clause 7 regarding the review of proposed investments to be made by a foreign entity, and I see that this review would only happen as long as the minister had recommended it to the Governor in Council.

I wonder if the member agrees and if he could share with us whether he thinks this process is sufficient, given the great concerns he shared regarding reviews.

Mr. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's honest, thorough, well-thought-out question.

This is something I raised in my speech, which is whether the responsibility for conducting the necessary reviews regarding protecting the integrity of our country from foreign influence and outside investment that would not promote the safety and security of Canadians should not be held by cabinet or, in other words, Governor in Council. It absolutely should be, but it only would if it were to get referenced there by the minister.

That is why, through this bill, a lot of the power would be shuffled over into the seat of one individual, whoever the minister of industry, science and trade would be. The member appropriately identified an area of concern here, which is that this should be a Governor in Council decision and not just a ministerial decision.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to ask my colleague if he had anything he wanted to finish up with at the end of his speech. I am pretty sure my colleague would agree with me that, regardless of who the U.S. president is, Canada is in a much better trading relationship to have them as any ally with what is happening in China right now.

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Mr. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Brandon—Souris does a tremendous job for his constituents in the western part of the province of Manitoba. They are very well represented. He operates with a lot of integrity and gives a lot of insight into all the issues being considered by the House. I want to commend him for the good work he is doing here.

In so far as answering the question goes, I will talk a little more about the negative impacts the carbon tax has had. It affects investment here in Canada, because it increases the cost of everything. It is not like GST, which is only applied to the end-user once. The carbon tax is applied to the producer, the transporter, the manufacturer, the transporter again, the distributor, the transporter again and finally the retail outlet, which then serves the consumer, Canadian constituents. Those are the people who pay quadruple in carbon taxes, and it is wrong.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise in this place to speak to Bill C-34, which has been before the House for some time. I must state my great regret that time allocation has been applied to it before any member of the Green Party has been allowed to speak to it.

People know that when someone rises on the government's side and says it has had 20 speakers, 20 witnesses and so on, it sounds exhaustive. However, the rules in this place are intended to allow a proper debate of every bill that involves all members with an interest in it. Members will know that I have long decried, as mentioned earlier in this debate, the use of written speeches. This allows more members to speak to a bill who have a strong interest or background in the subject matter.

I think in this case we have the reverse. We have a really important piece of legislation that got all the way through second reading without any speakers from my party, and then it got into committee, where we are not allowed to be members. Then amendments were made, and here we are at report stage already and I have a lot of concerns. Without further pause to reflect on my regret that this is the first time I have been given a speaking opportunity in this place, let me speak to the Investment Canada Act and to the revisions that are made in Bill C-34.

It is very important that we, in 2023, take a new lens and look at what we mean by foreign investments of concern and what that means for national security and national sovereignty. I am concerned that the bill leaves cabinet decision-making more as a discretionary matter and that there will not have to be a cabinet decision unless there is a recommendation from the minister.

Triggering a foreign investment review has never been easy in this country. Let me just reflect for a moment on two specific cases. I think one will be better with the changes made under Bill C-34, but I hate to say that, even at this late hour, I am not certain this bill would improve the situation on a more complicated matter.

Let me speak to the first one. It was a few years ago that a takeover was proposed for one of Canada's largest engineering firms, Aecon. It had gone quite far. It was reported in the business pages that Aecon was to be purchased, after being approved by Aecon shareholders, by a People's Republic of China company, CCCI. It was moving along without concern.

It was in 2018 that I was the first member of Parliament to raise on the floor of the House of Commons a concern: Did we not need a national security review before one of the largest engineering companies in Canada became the property of a company based in the People's Republic of China? It has been a particular concern of mine for some time because, back in the Harper years, a decision was taken by cabinet alone with no vote. I want to repeat that for new members of Parliament, as it will be shocking to them. We never had a vote in the House of Commons on the approval of the foreign investment promotion and protection agreement, otherwise known as a FIPA, between the People's Republic of China and Canada.

It gives corporations and state-owned enterprises from within the People's Republic of China superior rights, if they are a Canadian company, to complain of changes made by regulation, complain of court decisions or complain of any number of matters where a corporation feels that its expectation of profits has been somehow reduced. This originally emerged as an investor-state provision in chapter 11 of NAFTA back in the day when it was NAFTA. Ironically, this investor-state provision has been removed from CUSMA, but it has been transplanted into bilateral trade agreements. However, they are not even trade agreements, as in the case of the FIPA with China. There is no trade deal between the People's Republic of China and Canada. Thanks to former prime minister Stephen Harper, there are investment protections for corporations from the People's Republic of China that Canadian corporations cannot access.

Even worse, the FIPA with China keeps any complaints from the People's Republic of China or its state-owned enterprises completely secret. The complaint process is secret. We would only find out about it if it went to the end, to an arbitration. That would be reported.

• (1645)

I do not have enough time in the time I have to speak to Bill C-34 to fully explain why we must have a very different lens when looking at the takeover of Canadian enterprises by any foreign entity. If that foreign entity has the benefit of an investor protection agreement that gives a corporation superior rights to a domestic Canadian corporation, it is very concerning.

I think I had to raise it two or three times in the House before a few other MPs began to say that they were also concerned about Aecon, and in the end, the minister triggered a foreign national security review. It was turned down. The decision was made by the Government of Canada, I think appropriately, to stop the takeover of Aecon by a corporation in the People's Republic of China.

More complicated and recent is the takeover of virtually all of Canada's pulp and paper production by a corporation owned by one man. It is not a limited corporation. It does not appear on the stock exchanges of any country. The name of this corporation is Paper Excellence. It is owned by one human being, one sole person who is a billionaire from Indonesia.

Some of the media coverage, which thank goodness has been intensive, is quite belated. Basically, Paper Excellence had already bought up Domtar, already bought up Catalyst Paper and already bought up Resolute, and after purchasing Northern Pulp of Pictou, Nova Scotia, suddenly Paper Excellence, which has a registered headquarters in Vancouver but is no more Canadian than the Indonesian billionaire who owns it, has bought up virtually all of the pulp and paper processing across Canada.

This is alarming. Is it a national security threat? The question was never asked. No one really saw it coming. It was only seen through the media investigations subsequent to this Indonesian billionaire-owned enterprise called Paper Excellence becoming the owner of all the pulp and paper mills.

• (1650)

[Translation]

The acquisition of Resolute Forest Products had a major impact in Quebec. Many people, including members of the Bloc Québécois, are very concerned since Resolute is an important player in Quebec's pulp and paper industry.

[English]

It is also very important in British Columbia, where Catalyst Paper is based. The mill in Crofton and the mill in Powell River were purchased initially from Catalyst Paper and suddenly became owned by a very mysterious Indonesian billionaire. Should this have had a review? Media coverage has managed to unearth that the buying spree of Paper Excellence was likely, although we do not know for sure, financed by loans from the state investment bank of the People's Republic of China.

Do Paper Excellence mills have access to the FIPA with China to complain if we make changes in any way, like provincial changes in Quebec or British Columbia, where these mills are based? They would have access to the FIPA if they can make the case that they are operations of the People's Republic of China. We do not know if this investment is from the People's Republic of China.

Even with the changes made in Bill C-34, I am not reassured that we would have caught what was going on with Paper Excellence. Would we have had an opportunity to have a foreign investment review before this single Indonesian billionaire began buying up all our pulp and paper mills? I wish I had had an opportunity at committee. I wish I had had an opportunity to be in debate at second reading. I know the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay raised some of these issues at the time. He is also concerned about Paper Excellence.

With the time remaining, I will say I think it is unfortunate that we have time allocation now and these issues are rushed. It is unfortunate that we will not adequately debate the amendments that have come forward at report stage, such as the ones I have heard

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mentioned by the member for South Shore—St. Margarets. I close here and hope we have not missed too much.

• (1655)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I certainly always enjoy listening to the comments from the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

She must admit, though, that she is aware of the fact that there are a lot of procedural games that go on in the House, which puts the government in a position that, in order to be able to do anything, unfortunately, the reality is that time allocation has to be brought in on certain bills. I think of the Canadian free trade agreement with Ukraine. Every time the bill is scheduled to come up, Conservatives put forward a concurrence motion that is preventing us from being able to let it. If we left it to the Conservatives to always dictate, and I know that Conservatives are heckling me right now and we are not even discussing that bill, we would never even get to the opportunity to pass that very important piece of legislation for Ukraine.

I am wondering whether she could at least acknowledge the fact that she understands the position we are in and that we have to do this from time to time.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, of course, I empathize, but I cannot understand.

I do not like our rules' being abused constantly to bring in forced closure on debate to speed things along. The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands will know that I think the solution lies in applying all of our rules. It is against our rules in this place, as it is against the rules of the Parliament of Westminster in the U.K., to read a written speech. If we did not have written speeches handed out to members, we would have fewer speeches about every bill, because fewer members of Parliament would be prepared to speak from rough notes without somebody else putting the words in their mouth. That would speed things up. I understand and I empathize, but I plead with the government not to keep doing this, because too many members are going to assume that this is the way it is done.

No matter who is sitting in the Prime Minister's chair, we continue to see democracy eroded in Parliament.

Hon. Rob Moore: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Due to multiple technical issues, I was unable to vote in the vote that took place after question period. I would like to seek unanimous consent to have my vote counted as yea.

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

An hon. member: Nay.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Nunavut.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I see that amendments were made to the ICA by the committee. An amendment was made to clause 19, which would expand transparency and disclosure by the minister regarding reviews and orders that are issued. The minister would be required to report on those reviews.

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I wonder whether the member could share her thoughts on whether this is sufficient to make sure that her concerns are being addressed.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I do not think so. The difficulty is that, yes, there would be improved transparency once one has a review, but what would trigger a review in an issue like that of Paper Excellence, which I have referenced? How wide is the net cast, and when could we take concerns forward?

I wish we had more time. I will vote for Bill C-34; let me make that clear. It is an improvement and would modernize the Investment Canada Act. I think I would like to also vote for one of the Conservative amendments, to ensure that cabinet would retain control in the reviews. In any case, I will vote for it, but I am very concerned, because the innovative ways in which Canadian corporations are taken over by foreign interests do not trigger the usual notion of national security but can be very significant for national sovereignty. That is my concern.

• (1700)

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to ask my colleague a question on a point she just made with regard to cabinet's having authority over the movement of this type of development in our trade security systems. Can she elaborate on her thoughts regarding why that is so important?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, it is not to denigrate any individual minister, but the reality is that ministers would have pressures on them that might be regional. They might be specific to the concerns that are shared within the region they represent or the sector that has their ear most frequently. On a matter of turning down the purchase of a Canadian corporation by a foreign interest, it is traditionally a cabinet-level decision, and I think it should remain that way.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I know that from time to time there are technical difficulties when voting, and we seem to have established a practice of allowing members to register their votes. I note that the last request came a significant amount of time after the fact, but I believe if you seek it, you would find unanimous consent to allow the member for Fundy Royal to cast his vote in favour.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry.

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the House, as always, and add my voice to the debate we are having here about Bill C-34. When we say “Bill C-34”, most Canadians who are watching or hearing the debate here would know exactly what that means.

I would remind members that today, we have heard several points of order from members on the Liberal side of the aisle who do not like the topics we are covering regarding this legislation. However, Bill C-34 is an act to amend the Investment Canada Act, modernizing ways in which the federal government could attract

more investment in this country. This line is very important, because it was the Prime Minister who instructed the industry minister to “Contribute to broader efforts to promote economic security and combat foreign interference by reviewing and modernizing the Investment Canada Act”.

I am going to take the time I have on the floor here today, and hopefully not get “point of ordered” too many times from the other side, to say this: Actions speak a lot louder than words. What we have, after eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, is an economic situation in this country that is not very good. After the vote today, for example, a big contributor to the frustration of millions of Canadians is the punitive and damaging carbon tax that the Liberals, the NDP and the Bloc Québécois are imposing on this country. The carbon tax is bad for our economy, for business, for investment and for Canadian households.

In talking about investing in Canada and competition from other countries around the world, the example I am going to cite is one that the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Carleton, has raised from our neck of the woods in eastern Ontario.

We talk about the government's economic record, its actions and not just its words in a mundane piece of legislation. The Liberals are continuing to endorse the carbon tax, and they voted today against taking the carbon tax off all forms of home heating for all Canadians. If that is not out of touch, then the way we have greenhouses taxed, and the lack of competition, or frankly, taxing them out of business in this country in too many cases, is a perfect example of how the Liberals' policies are failing.

I think of SunTech Greenhouses in Manotick, in Carleton County just north of my riding in eastern Ontario. For years, it has been struggling to compete. It is based in Manotick, here in eastern Ontario, and it is struggling to compete on cost with tomatoes that come from as far away as Mexico, or even farther south than that. Why is that? It is because the greenhouse in eastern Ontario is being nailed with the carbon tax. The irony of all that is the fact that the CO₂ it creates does not go into the atmosphere; it goes into the greenhouses and into the plants that are being grown here locally. It is local food, a local economy and local investment, yet it is getting nailed with the carbon tax, which is the height of irony. It is struggling to compete with tomatoes shipped from Mexico, coming up on a ship and then by truck, and those countries are paying no carbon tax whatsoever.

What we are seeing is our potential in agriculture in this country being hurt badly. We are seeing farmers being taxed for growing food, truckers being taxed to ship the food and grocers being taxed to sell the food. It is adding to a competition problem in this country, and it is adding to, not taking away from, the cost of living crisis in every single part of this country.

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I think about two areas I have had the opportunity to visit in recent months. Let's say someone runs a business in northern Ontario and is trying to compete for investment into Canada and actually taking the investments here and maybe exporting around the world. Timmins is hundreds of kilometres away from southern Ontario and the United States, our largest trading partner.

● (1705)

Let us just think about it for a second. There are zero rebates for businesses in Timmins when it comes to these carbon taxes that they are being nailed with. This is only just beginning. They are going to be quadrupling in the coming years. If they are trying to compete with a business in, say, Michigan or even the other way around, if a business in Michigan is competing with somebody at the soup and salad bowl, Simcoe County in Ontario, if a business is trying to take the 600 or 700 kilometres up to Timmins to provide groceries and fresh food, they are being nailed with the carbon tax on the Canadian side.

One of the things I think is really important in this debate is what I will say again: actions speak louder than words. We have a modernization effort here in this bill, long past due. We have tried to add to and strengthen the bill in many ways with no success from the Liberal government.

We talk about priorities and we talk about legislation coming forward. There are so many ways to combat the problems we are facing. Axing the carbon tax is a very high priority for a growing number of Canadians. It is not an environmental plan. It is a tax plan and it is punitive to competition and to investment in Canada, as we can see by recent stagnant numbers, which we are continuing to see in economic indicators on inflation, on housing and on our growth as an economy. We are going in the wrong direction.

The other half I want to highlight is when we talk about efforts to combat foreign interference, we will not look at the words. We will look at the actions of the Liberal government the past couple of years.

We have seen multiple efforts by the Prime Minister and the NDP and Liberals voting together multiple times to ignore, brush aside or try to sweep under the carpet the seriousness and magnitude of foreign interference in our country. In response to the bombshell allegations that were leaked by journalists and courageous whistle-blowers who had to come forward to give the information, we found out that there were numerous members of Parliament who were under surveillance, under threat. It was not until these leaked reports and these whistle-blowers came forward and they were published on the front pages of *The Globe and Mail* and other national publications that the government finally attempted to address the issue.

Look at the Rosenberg report by Morris Rosenberg after the 2021 election. That was an absolute whitewash attempt to cover up the severity and the depths to which the Communist Party in China attempted to interfere in our democratic process. They did not even bother to interview members of the official opposition from the Conservative Party on their experiences and evidence of serious wrongdoing in the 2021 election. They said that report would be good enough and tried to move on.

Second, whenever further allegations came and they were under further pressure, their actions spoke louder than their words. They appointed a special rapporteur. Most people had to google what rapporteur even meant. For months they went on a charade in a process that resulted in the resignation of David Johnston after he lost a lot of credibility—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Eric Duncan: I hear the heckling.

● (1710)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. members are not heckling. I think they are having conversations. I would ask them to have those conversations outside. They have to realize that their voices carry in this House.

The hon. member has one minute to finish up.

Mr. Eric Duncan: Madam Speaker, I would be uncomfortable if I were the Liberals too, called out for their failed record on combatting foreign interference.

We had a resignation from David Johnston. We had 24 hours of filibustering at a committee because Liberals did not want the Prime Minister's chief of staff to testify. Let us not forget the Winnipeg lab documents where the House of Commons ordered the production of those documents, but the Prime Minister and Liberal government took the Speaker of the House of Commons to court in an attempt to cover up information that Canadians deserved to know.

As we talk about issues of combatting foreign interference, if we talk about issues of strengthening investment in Canada, there are many failings after eight years of the Prime Minister and NDP government that leave a lot to be desired. Bill C-34 is just scratching at the surface of what truly needs to be done.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, correct me if I am wrong, but I heard the member say that he was the government that pushed David Johnston into a position of excusing himself from his responsibilities. If I remember correctly, and maybe the member can remind me, did the member and the Conservative Party not continuously call for that resignation? Am I forgetting something?

I am pretty sure the pressure was primarily coming from the Conservative Party of Canada.

Mr. Eric Duncan: Madam Speaker, what I am calling out is the Liberals' continued failed attempts to get to the bottom of foreign interference in this country. They appointed a rapporteur who had many conflicts of interest. They created more questions than answers around the process. They set up a process to try to cover up the truth. They did not want a public inquiry and they did everything they possibly could to avoid it.

The Liberals set up the Rosenberg report, they set up the rapporteur and they avoided, like the plague, a public inquiry. It was only pressure from Conservatives that they finally caved and got a public inquiry going in this country.

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[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will try to ask a question that has to do with the bill before us.

There are two things that must be assessed when it comes to foreign investments. First, we must determine whether there is a net benefit for the Canadian economy. Second, we must take into account any national security considerations, which the member spoke a lot about.

Since this is the digital age, many countries are saying that digital infrastructure should be considered critical infrastructure and that it sometimes needs protecting from potentially hostile foreign investments. Does the member agree with me that the telecommunications sector should be considered critical and strategic infrastructure here in Canada?

[English]

Mr. Eric Duncan: Madam Speaker, I will echo what many of my colleagues on this side have raised. Members who are on the industry committee will know, when this bill was at committee and amendments were being considered, we put forward 14 different amendments to try to add a more rigorous review process of acquisitions and investments from foreign-state enterprises entering Canada. Just to understand how seriously the Liberals take this issue, of the 14 amendments that would strengthen the process even further, only four of them passed.

I would say to the member from the NDP who voted for time allocation and voted for all this to proceed that they are going along with the Liberals and only passing, for example, four of 14 amendments that would further strengthen the bill.

● (1715)

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like my colleague to elaborate a bit more on the topic he was just speaking of.

I would also ask him, because this is on national review, to talk about the kinds of supports needed by our industry in continuing to grow our export volumes in just about all the products we have.

Mr. Eric Duncan: Madam Speaker, a lot of time with legislation, what happens is that the details, what the government is going to be doing through regulation afterward and the process will be very key. I know of many incidents and examples, by colleagues at committee, of trying to understand what protocol, processes and resources would be provided for this year. There needs to be a time frame for review for when a decision will be made, and making it as clear and as quick as possible in order to continue with investments that are worthwhile and are not of a national security concern or threat. We need to address those in an expedited or reasonable time frame.

There were not a lot of assurances from the other side of the number of employees, the number of regulations, the time frame and the processes. Again, we are going to have to wait and see the actions of the government in the coming years. If it is based on other pieces of legislation, we do not need a ton more bureaucracy and cost to the taxpayer.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to take part in the debate on Bill C-34, an act to amend the Investment Canada Act. Bill C-34 attempts to update and strengthen the Investment Canada Act through seven significant amendments. Mainly, these changes to the act aim to protect Canada's national security with stricter regulations and higher penalties. Why does the government feel we need this bill? Here is a little background and some timelines.

In the Prime Minister's December 2021 mandate letter to the industry minister, he asked the minister to:

Contribute to broader efforts to promote economic security and combat foreign interference by reviewing and modernizing the Investment Canada Act to strengthen the national security review process and better identify and mitigate economic security threats from foreign investment.

In essence, this bill would give the industry minister more time and authority to assess foreign transactions that might compromise national security by removing the Governor in Council from the initial process while also making penalties more severe for violating the Investment Canada Act.

Why, again, is this bill needed? Well, in 2017, the minister of industry failed to request a full national security review of the acquisition of B.C.-based telecommunications company Norsat International and its subsidiary Sinclair Technologies by China-based Hytera Communications, which is partially owned by the People's Republic of China. In 2020, the Department of Foreign Affairs awarded a contract to China-based Nuctech, founded by the son of a former Chinese Communist Party secretary general, to supply X-ray equipment to 170 of Canada's embassies and consulates.

In response to some of these failures, in March 2021, the industry minister updated and enhanced guidelines for national security reviews for transactions involving critical minerals and state-owned enterprises. However, in January 2022, the same minister failed to follow his own guidelines when he fast-tracked the takeover of Canadian lithium company Neo Lithium Corp. by Chinese state-owned Zijin Mining without a national security review. In November 2022, the minister then ordered three Chinese companies to divest their ownership of three critical mineral firms, but not included was the previously approved acquisition of Neo Lithium. One cannot make this stuff up.

Government Orders

In December 2022, the RCMP awarded a contract to supply sensitive hardware for its communications system to Sinclair Technologies, formerly a Canadian-owned company, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Norsat International. Norsat, founded and based in Richmond, B.C., itself was acquired by Hytera Communications. Hytera, headquartered in Shenzhen, China, is partially owned by the People's Republic of China and is a major supplier to China's public security ministry. It was also revealed in December 2022 that in 2017 the Canada Border Services Agency had been using communications equipment and technology from Hytera Communications, which worked with Canadian company Canquest Communications to supply the Hytera equipment.

Hytera has been charged with 21 counts of espionage in the U.S. and banned by President Biden from doing business in the U.S. When and if this bill passes, the government would need to come forward with regulations to identify the prescribed business sectors in which enhanced review processes would take place. These sensitive business sectors would be decided upon through regulation. However, it is expected these sectors would feature aerospace, defence, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, energy generation and medical technology.

After eight years of this Liberal Prime Minister, numerous foreign state-owned enterprises have acquired interest and control in many Canadian companies, intellectual property and intangible assets, and the data of our citizens. The government is doing little, too late to protect our national economic and security interests with this bill. Liberals do not take sensitive transactions seriously and have failed to fully review transactions involving Chinese state-owned enterprises, putting the security and material interests of Canadians and the government at risk while Conservatives have continually pressed the government to ensure that appropriate national security reviews are conducted on Chinese state enterprises. While we do agree with the general principle of this bill, we have also flagged issues in which this bill does not go far enough to address the risks faced by Canadians.

● (1720)

That is why at committee, Conservatives found opportunities to strengthen this bill. We actually found 14 opportunities. We put forward 14 amendments aimed at providing a far more rigorous review process of acquisitions and investments involving foreign state-owned enterprises. Unfortunately, the NDP-Liberal government rejected 10 notable Conservative improvements to this legislation, but we still managed to fight hard to get four amendments passed.

The four Conservative amendments that passed accomplished some changes. We reduced the threshold to trigger a national security review for all state-owned enterprises from \$512 million in asset value to zero and, for countries not listed as trade agreement investors, we ensured all investments made by state-owned enterprises would be reviewable. We also implemented a requirement for the minister to review any investments or acquisitions made in Canada that exceed \$1.9 billion in enterprise value instead of being an option.

These changes would be positive for Canadian industry, Canadian workers and our national interest, but Conservatives still see

room for improvement in this bill. We will continue to work to improve Bill C-34 even further by working to delete clause 15, which would remove the mandatory consultations with cabinet in determining whether an investment is a threat to Canada's national security. This change would be problematic, given the number of state-owned enterprises made in Canada over the past eight years that have not undergone a security review as a result of decisions made by past industry ministers.

By removing cabinet from the process, decisions over whether an investment is considered injurious would receive less debate and scrutiny. By removing clause 15 from the bill, the language would revert to the act's current text, thus making all security review decisions reviewable by cabinet and not just by the ministers of industry and public safety.

After eight years of the Liberal government, numerous foreign state-owned enterprises have acquired interest and control in many Canadian companies, intellectual property, intangible assets and the data of our citizens, all under their watch. More needs to be done to protect Canadian interests and Conservatives will continue to work hard to achieve this.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, in a now notorious case, Chinese insurance agent Anbang took over B.C.-based Retirement Concepts, which was a Canadian-owned company that operated senior living facilities. At that time, Anbang was a privately owned corporation. This takeover was approved under the current rules, and almost immediately, we saw problems in seniors homes in British Columbia, including declining quality standards, seniors' needs not being taken care of and a general decline in the care of our seniors.

It seems the current laws did not work in that case, and I am wondering if my hon. colleague has any suggestions on how we could strengthen Canadian laws to make sure that this kind of situation does not happen again, particularly when it has such devastating impacts on people as vulnerable as Canada's seniors.

● (1725)

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Madam Speaker, during the whole committee process of reviewing the bill, and this is why we are debating it at report stage, my Conservative colleagues on the committee proposed 14 amendments to improve this legislation, to improve the security and scrutiny that takes place with foreign-controlled enterprises that are looking to take over Canadian companies and the impact it has on workers in this country. Unfortunately, only four of those amendments passed.

Government Orders

Conservatives are looking to create situations where we can improve this legislation. We are hopeful that we can get additional changes made, including the removal of clause 15 to ensure mandatory consultations with cabinet in determining whether an investment is a threat to Canada's national security.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, at the committee stage of this bill, the Conservatives introduced an amendment that would have required any major investment from a state-owned enterprise outside the Five Eyes to be considered a national security risk. My riding and a few other Quebec ridings are home to the aerospace industry. An investment from Airbus, a French-German state-owned enterprise, would have been automatically considered a threat to national security. That amendment could have posed a serious threat to major investments in Quebec, major investments in the aerospace industry and major investments in my riding.

I would like to know whether my colleague still agrees that such investments, in my riding and in our aerospace sector, should be automatically considered a threat to national security.

[English]

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Madam Speaker, my understanding is that the amendment we proposed at committee would have allowed for a takeover by any foreign hostile country to be reviewed immediately. That would have been looked at.

It is again the whole notion of removing the mandatory cabinet review on national security issues. Does the member not feel that those members from the Quebec caucus who are members of cabinet should not have the right to review such sensitive information and sensitive matters when those decisions are being made in Canada?

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

Before I get into my question, I would like to recognize the life of Eugene Dery, who passed away, leaving behind his wife, Kim Galloway and their son, Dax.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague about time allocation being moved despite us having a lot of unresolved issues with this bill. Does the member care to comment on the minister saying that we are all *ad idem*, when clearly, we are not?

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Madam Speaker, I agree with the member's comments. On this side of the House, we are disappointed in the government for bringing forward time allocation.

There are chances to improve this legislation. We put 14 amendments forward, and only four were accepted. We still have concerns that we would like addressed to ensure that this bill is better, better for all Canadians. That should be the priority of everyone in the House.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to address the House today on Bill C-34, an act to amend the Investment Canada Act.

There are some positive advancements in this bill. Notably, there is the move to give the minister more time and authority to assess foreign transactions that might compromise national security. These are important considerations in an increasingly less secure world where foreign actors are using several means, through asset acquisition, technology transfers and theft, to advance their economic interests, often to the detriment of others, including trade partners and allies. It is important that Canada represents itself well in this regard, and does not always arrive as the only boy scout at the negotiating table.

I will keep the rest of my comments today to the parts of this bill which, at this stage, seem to overlook key principles on which we, the people of Canada, govern ourselves, and to how some of the proposed amendments would affect business in the manner it transpires in an interconnected world, which is becoming more and more scarce of resources.

In March 2021, the current Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, and let us say the industry minister going forward, updated and enhanced guidelines for national security reviews for transactions involving critical minerals and state-owned enterprises. They were just words on paper it seems because in January 2022, the same minister failed to follow these guidelines when he fast-tracked the takeover of Neo Lithium mining by Chinese state-owned Zijin Mining without a national security review.

It is an important illustrative case. Neo Lithium was a Canadian-listed company with assets in Argentina. None of the assets were in Canada, but in a country whose critical mineral assets were far from any supply chain that might emerge in Canada. Why was Neo Lithium a Canadian company? It is because it is registered in Canada and is listed for trading on the Toronto Stock Exchange, notably, the world's foremost exchange for listing mining properties in every jurisdiction.

About 43% of the world's publicly listed mining companies are hosted on Canadian exchanges, with an estimated market capitalization of over \$560 billion. An understanding of this strength is critical to grasp what Canada and Canadians bring to the world wide mining landscape.

National instrument 43-101 is a Canadian regulatory reporting instrument that provides clarity on a company's resource plays and is world-renowned. This instrument is one of the ways in which our resource industry and our financial markets have become internationally renowned as being best in class. Investors around the world count on our standards to understand the prospects of mineralization in resource opportunities. This is an international advantage that we would let go of at our peril. Negligence of this understanding is not an excuse for decades of hard-won international repute.

Government Orders

Co-existent with this regulatory standard is pricing. No international miner is going to list their prospect in a jurisdiction where they cannot raise funds to advance their project. Gaining so-called liquidity on these markets means that there is an active and broad array of buyers and sellers following the industry.

Funds are raised for mineral developments of all types, including critical minerals, at what is called a “multiple”. For simplicity, let us use the price-to-earnings multiple in Canada, which is currently around 13.8 times. Concurrently, broad market multiples in the U.S. are 22 times. Comparing apples to apples, the market in the U.S. values their companies at a rate about 60% higher than in Canada.

There is more to consider in that analysis, as that is frankly too simplistic, and the resource industry has more sway in the Canadian market, so its discount is more like 15% to its U.S. counterparts, but we have more small and micro exploration companies. Any entrance of political interference in this very transparent process will move investment funds, prospects, jobs and money from Canadian oversight to foreign oversight. The loss to our economy and our reputation will be significant. Let us ensure we have these considerations in mind as we develop policies that are meant to restrict foreign investment in Canadian-listed companies with foreign assets.

As an example, Australia is Canada's main competition for listing mining properties. Its disclosure regime is not considered as robust as Canada's, so we win on the basis of reputation.

• (1730)

Fifty per cent of the world's lithium supply currently comes from mines in Australia. Ninety per cent of the lithium extracted in Australia ends up in China. That is what is meant by a “critical mineral supply chain”, at which China has performed so adeptly. In order to develop Canadian mines for the world's growing critical mineral needs, we will need the invested funds from around the world for development and financing at a multiple where it makes sense here as much as it does elsewhere, particularly in regimes with much lower regulatory oversight.

In the case of Neo Lithium, the industry minister approved the takeover, ignoring his own guidelines. Because no one could find the rationale, transparently, the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology undertook a study specifically on the acquisition. The committee received significant input and made three recommendations, the most important of which is “That the government create a formalized and transparent process” for these reviews. Members will note from my previous analysis that I do not disagree with the outcome at which the minister arrived. However, I am dismayed that it arose in direct contravention to his previously stated guidelines.

Canadian companies working in exploration and development opportunities globally need to continue to lead their peers in developing the minerals the world needs more of going forward. I agree with the committee that there should be a transparent process, and it seems that the minister and his department are only learning the inputs to these decisions on the fly. If they need help, there is an excess of industry expertise in Canada that can advise outside the halls of the industry department, and the minister should not be averse to seeking this input.

Now, I contrast the minister's decision on Neo Lithium with his decision this past November, where he ordered the divestment of Chinese state-controlled shareholdings in three Canadian-listed mining companies: Ultra Lithium, which has five mineral prospects, two of which are in Canada, two in Argentina and one in Nevada; Lithium Chile, which has three mineral prospects in Chile; and Power Metals Corp, which has three Canadian exploration properties. I cannot find the consistencies. Arguably, Lithium Chile should be treated in the same manner as the minister treated Neo Lithium. However, something changed, or something is not transparent, as the committee recommended it should be.

There are dozens of Canadian-listed mining companies with foreign investors, including in critical minerals, that were not addressed by the minister. At the same time, here in Canada, our only producing lithium mine is the Tanco mine in Manitoba. Tanco was taken over by Sinomine Resource Group, a Chinese state-controlled company, in June 2019. Notably, all the minerals it extracts are exported directly to China, which is a unique approach to our strategic supply chain in critical minerals. To add confusion to the mix, Sinomine was also the shareholder of Power Metals, which the minister ordered to divest its shares in the previous example I gave. It is a twisted plot with no apparent consistency.

This brings me to a significant concern with the proposed amendments to the Investment Canada Act in the bill. The legislation proposes to remove Governor in Council oversight from the process of assessing foreign transactions for national security consideration. This would effectively dilute the government's role and place it directly in the hands of one minister. Let me remind members that this very minister has already acted with absolute inconsistency on this file, in direct contravention of his own guidelines. Now this amendment seeks to move this decision further from the transparent process that the industry committee recommended; he has stated that he agrees with the recommendation, yet he is not acting that way.

I say that words and actions need to align. Unfortunately, with the bill before us, as with so many of the government's initiatives, they do not.

Government Orders

• (1735)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am tempted to remind my friend of the incredibly dismal record of the Harper regime. Over nine years, we repeatedly saw the sellout of important companies: Nexen to CNOOC and Progress to Petronas. We also had the disastrous signing of the Canada-China FIPA, which is one of the reasons why Bill C-34 is so important. This was over a 30-year period, so the Harper government did not sell out Canada just for the period when it was in office, but also for more than three decades.

Diane Francis with the Financial Post, who is certainly not a left-winger, said that the Conservatives:

have demonstrated the worst negotiating skills since Neville Chamberlain....

The terms agreed to by Ottawa [and the Harper government] are unprecedented and would be laughed out of Britain, Brussels, Canberra or Washington. Beijing has negotiated a heads-I-win-tails-Canada-loses deal.

This is the kind of situation that has to be addressed by Bill C-34. We know that the Conservatives have been blocking the passage of the bill, even though they say they support it. Is it not important that we fix the mistakes of the Harper regime, and can the member apologize on behalf of Conservatives for their sellout of Canada?

• (1740)

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I am a little confused. My colleague spoke about many issues.

There are some excellent foreign investors that came into Canada in the previous regime, but that is over eight years ago now. We are looking at a lot here. My colleague advanced 14 amendments, some of which were supported by the member's party at committee and some of which were not, in order to strengthen the bill. The bill needs to be strengthened to make sure we do not have a puppet democracy, where one person would decide what goes forward. I do not know why my colleague is so averse to making a bill stronger in relation to how it would be perceived and practised in every other democratic country in the world.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, I know my colleague from Calgary Centre has done a lot of good work in the area of mergers and acquisitions throughout his career. I would like him to comment on what we are actually debating today that some members in the NDP-Liberal coalition do not seem to want to talk about, which is the removal, in the bill, of cabinet from the decision-making process.

Given that my colleague has sat at C-suite tables and board tables, and I know he understands how cabinet works, does he not think decision-making processes in the area of foreign takeovers would be much enhanced by the collective decision-making of a management team, a board or a cabinet as opposed to letting one lone minister make the decisions?

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, that is the crux of what Conservatives see as being wrong with the bill. It has been led by our industry critic, who just spoke. That is what we need to change more than anything else in the bill: to make sure collective decision-making is happening at the cabinet table. We cannot have one person from one region of Canada deciding what happens to a company that might exist in another province of Canada, without input from people at the cabinet table who might have differing perspec-

tives on it as far as how it affects the country, whether in finance, transport or defence. All of these things have to be taken together in collective decision-making.

That is what we have in Canada right now, and that is what the bill is trying to usurp. This has to change. Conservatives are trying to get that out of the bill, and I thank my colleague for bringing that forward in a very strong amendment. I hope the House considers that amendment very strongly and we can get back to the way democracies function in this regard.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, one of the amendments in committee that was defeated by the Liberals said that any takeover in Canada by a corporation whose headquarters are resident in Beijing would be automatically reviewed. The Liberals voted against that for some reason, perhaps because Beijing's government is most admired by the Prime Minister.

I am wondering whether the member could comment about what would possess Liberals to oppose an amendment that would force an automatic review.

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I do not know where the government is going on this. It is obvious that for years, we were looking at transparent decisions made with the market. Unfortunately, a lot of acquisitions happen in the market around the world by foreign actors that are state-owned enterprises. Those require oversight because, frankly, state-owned actors have a different way of doing business than businesses—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to resume debate.

The hon. member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley.

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise today to speak on Bill C-34.

Before I do, I would be remiss if I did not talk about the calamitous vote the Liberal members of this House took earlier today by excluding all Canadians from being treated fairly by pausing the carbon tax for Canadians all over the country. I come from Winnipeg, one of the coldest cities on the planet. Today, Liberal members from Winnipeg said no to Winnipeggers, while their Atlantic Canadian counterparts seem to be more effective than they are. They have the ear of the Prime Minister who I suppose was trying to save himself from his terrible polling results with this desperate measure by the government. However, at the end of the day the Liberals chose not to pause the carbon tax pain, which is really unfortunate for all Canadians.

Government Orders

As far as Bill C-34 is concerned, I want to say this. After eight years of the Prime Minister, numerous foreign state-owned enterprises have acquired interests and control in many Canadian companies, intellectual property, intangible assets and the data of our citizens. The government is doing too little, too late to protect our national economic and security interests with this bill.

Since the Liberals came to power, business investment per employee in Canada has dropped 20%. At the same time, business investment per employee in the United States has increased 14%. Per capita growth is at the lowest level since the Great Depression some 90 years ago and Canada has the most at-risk mortgage default portfolio in the G7. According to the National Bank of Canada, for the first time ever, business investment is now lower in this country than housing investment. When we think about all the manufacturing, oil production and everything else, investment in those things is lower than it is in housing.

The goal of the Investment Canada Act is to deal with foreign investors controlling Canadian industry, trade and commerce. Foreign direct investment creates opportunities, stimulates economic development and introduces new ideas and innovation to Canada. For Canadians, this means more high-quality jobs and a stronger, more sustainable economy.

Billions of dollars of Canadian natural resources, ideas, IP and land are being controlled by foreign entities. Huawei, a state-owned enterprise that feeds intelligence directly to China, was still working with many Canadian universities as of this past summer.

Another example would be taxpayer-funded dollars at Dalhousie University that are funding Tesla intellectual property and research and that IP is all going back to California.

In 2017, the Liberal government allowed a telecom company from British Columbia called Norsat to be acquired by a company called Hytera, which is a Chinese-based state-owned company. Conservatives demanded at that time a full national security review. The Liberal minister of the day refused to do one and approved the acquisition.

This sort of lax attitude toward issues of national security is clearly a problem. After eight years of the Prime Minister, numerous foreign state-owned enterprises have acquired interests and control in many Canadian companies, intellectual property, intangible assets and the data of our citizens.

The future of Canada needs to be protected in the airwaves, AI and quantum computing. It needs to be protected in our farms, food-processing plants, oceans and fisheries, as well as in developing Canadian LNG, which the world so desperately wants. The government is doing too little to protect our national economic and security interests with this bill. Canadians know the Liberals do not take sensitive transactions seriously and have failed to fully review transactions involving Chinese state-owned enterprises, putting the security of Canadians and the government at risk.

The minister is the minister of broken bills, which is why Conservatives are having to make more amendments to this piece of legislation. On his other bill, Bill C-27, the digital charter implementation act, after a year and a half he was forced to make amendments.

The Liberals missed the chance to think big and understand what is going on in the Canadian economy. This bill does not go far enough to address the risks faced by Canadians. That is why Conservatives worked to pass four significant amendments to ensure a rigorous review process—

• (1745)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Conservatives go to great lengths to remind us of the ruling that was made by the Chair recently on what is expected with respect to decorum. In particular, one of the things the Speaker identified in that process was using fake names for people in this House. Therefore, when the member makes comments like the “minister of broken promises”, or whatever he just said, he is clearly violating the rules that you have put in place and I would ask you to ask him—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We do not want to repeat what is incorrect.

The hon. member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley.

Mr. Marty Morantz: Madam Speaker, in the House, I think the Speaker was asked a very similar question and said he has relented on that position.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Let us try to be respectful and judicious in our comments.

The hon. member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley.

• (1750)

Mr. Marty Morantz: Madam Speaker, the Liberals missed a chance to think big and understand what is going on in the Canadian economy. This bill does not go far enough to address the risks faced by Canadians.

That is why Conservatives worked to pass four significant amendments. For instance, Conservatives ensured that the threshold to trigger a national security review was reduced so that Canadian resources, including intellectual property, are safer.

Government Orders

Among the changes proposed by the government in the bill is the removal of mandatory consultations with cabinet in determining whether an investment is a threat to Canada's national security. This change is problematic given the number of state-owned investments made in Canada over the past eight years that have not undergone a security review because of decisions made by past industry ministers. By removing cabinet from the process, decisions over whether an investment is considered injurious will receive less debate and scrutiny.

These are decisions that should have a national perspective that only cabinet could provide. Foreign investments often have national impacts on our economy and on multiple regions. To leave the discretion in the hands of one minister from one part of the country will negate a broad national perspective. It is a problem that this bill is only as strong as the minister's scrutiny, whoever the minister may be in the future. Conservatives believe matters of such importance should be scrutinized by all of cabinet to make sure nothing slips through the cracks.

As I mentioned, one Conservative amendment that was approved at committee was about reducing the threshold to trigger a national security review from \$512 million to zero dollars for all state-owned enterprise investments made in Canada. Lowering that threshold was critical so that at least it would trigger and initiate a security review.

Another Conservative amendment that was passed would ensure that items reviewable under the national security review process include acquisitions of any assets by a state-owned enterprise. Until now, the review only applied to acquisitions of the controlling shares of an industry. That was a huge loophole, as it opened the door to circumvent a review where a deal was structured as an asset purchase. For example, buying the shares of a mining company could be reviewed but buying the mines themselves could not. This is a welcome change.

Another amendment would ensure that an automatic national security review is conducted whenever a company has previously been convicted of corruption charges. Another change would require the minister to review any investments or acquisitions made in Canada that exceed \$1.9 billion in enterprise value instead of it being an option.

Conservatives could have improved this legislation further had the NDP-Liberal government not rejected many notable Conservative improvements to this legislation. Among the common-sense Conservative amendments that failed to pass committee was one that would have modified the definition of "state-owned enterprise" to include any company or entity headquartered in an authoritarian state such as China.

Another amendment that was defeated would have exempted non-Canadian Five Eyes intelligence state-owned enterprises from the national security review process to prevent any overly broad review processes. Another amendment would have ensured that an automatic national security review is conducted whenever a company has previously been convicted of corruption charges. One other amendment would have implemented a requirement for the minister to trigger a national security review automatically whenever the investment review threshold was triggered. The last would have re-

quired the minister to conduct a national security review by changing the word "may" to "shall" to ensure a review would be triggered whenever it is in the new threshold.

It is important that we get this right. Recently at the ethics committee, there was a study on foreign interference and the role that nations, particularly China and Russia, are playing as state-owned actors in making investments in our economy for the purpose of control, including controlling Canadian businesses, Canadian minerals, Canadian resources and, in many cases, some of our northern and offshore areas.

Therefore, it becomes critically important for the government to keep a keen eye, and multiple eyes in fact, on what is happening with foreign investment and approvals. We believe that Conservatives have improved the bill dramatically. We are trying to improve it again in the spirit of good public policy for Canada and protecting our economy against hostile interests, which the Liberals seem not to be that interested in.

I urge the House, including all members of the Bloc Québécois, the NDP and the government, to recognize that cabinet's decision-making process is essential to understanding the national impacts of foreign investment. I urge members to vote for our amendment. By removing clause 15 from the bill, all security review decisions would remain reviewable by cabinet and not just by the ministers of industry and public safety. This is all about protecting Canadians and protecting our valuable assets, our businesses, our national security and certainly our interests.

● (1755)

We must take sensitive transactions seriously, and we have failed to fully review some transactions, particularly as they relate to Chinese state-owned enterprises of the past. A Conservative government would not only protect Canadian investment but build Canadian companies and attract investments to grow them.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, we know that Parliament significantly reformed the ICA in 2009. That was of course done under a majority Conservative government led by Prime Minister Harper. At that time, a very ill-advised step was taken. The Conservative government raised the thresholds that would trigger a net benefit review of an investment under the act and eliminated most sector-specific requirements, with the notable exception of cultural businesses. At the same time, Parliament enacted provisions that granted the federal government more extensive powers to screen and potentially block any foreign investment that could threaten national security.

Does my hon. colleague know how many investments have been blocked since 2009 under the foreign investment national security criterion?

Government Orders

Mr. Marty Morantz: Madam Speaker, I always find it interesting that the NDP is stuck in the past. Its members want to keep talking about the last Conservative government or Mr. Harper. My recommendation is that the member and his party start thinking about their future, because it is dismal to tie their wagon to this calamitous Liberal government.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to give the hon. member an opportunity to comment on the issue we are debating, which he did extensively. A lot of the questions from the government and the NDP are not about what we are debating today, which is whether cabinet should be included in the decision-making process.

I would like the member to comment in particular about the members from the Bloc, who seem to think it is okay for cabinet to be eliminated and therefore have no Quebec input on acquisitions made of Quebec companies. Does he think it is hypocritical of the Bloc to not express itself on whether it thinks cabinet decision-making should be there in any foreign takeover of a Quebec company?

Mr. Marty Morantz: Madam Speaker, it is a very large concern. One person should not have that much power in a democratic government, period. For example, let us say that the minister of the day is from Ontario and a foreign investor wants to come along from an authoritarian state and spend \$30 billion buying a Volkswagen electric battery plant. The minister from Ontario would be under a lot of pressure to allow that type of investment to proceed, but it might not be in the national interest. That is why it is important to have multiple perspectives at the table when decisions are being made about investments that are national in scope and could have major effects on our GDP, our economy and our national security.

I agree that the Bloc is being hypocritical on this. It should support our amendment.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, is the member saying that because a minister might be from one province, they would not have the capacity to represent the entire country and the interests of the entire country? Are we led to believe it is impossible for somebody who represents one particular region to represent the entire country? Is that not how we have been operating since Confederation?

Mr. Marty Morantz: Madam Speaker, I question the capacity of every minister in the government.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise to speak to this bill for the second time. Last February, I gave a speech on Bill C-34, an act to amend the Investment Canada Act. At the time, I talked about the many problems with this legislation and our intention to improve it in committee. I will come back later to the amendments we proposed. Some of them were adopted, while others were, unfortunately, rejected. I will start by talking about the genesis of this bill.

In the December 2021 mandate letter given to him by the Prime Minister, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry was asked to do the following, and I quote:

Contribute to broader efforts to promote economic security and combat foreign interference by reviewing and modernizing the *Investment Canada Act* to strengthen the national security review process and better identify and mitigate economic security threats from foreign investment.

I have to say that that was a legitimate request. Recently, there have been far too many cases where Canada's national security was potentially compromised because of the acquisition of Canadian businesses by foreign interests that are a bit too close to the central power. An update was more than welcome.

I sit on the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology. I would like to commend my Conservative Party colleagues, who are doing admirable work on the committee. I see it every week. Over the past two years, we have looked into several of this government's missteps regarding transactions and contracts that could compromise our national security.

One of the most recent examples is from 2017, when the Minister of Industry failed to request a full national security review of the acquisition of telecommunications company Norsat International and its subsidiary Sinclair Technologies by the Chinese company Hytera Communications, which is partly owned by the People's Republic of China. This is just one of many examples.

After eight years of this government, too many foreign state-owned enterprises have acquired Canadian companies, intellectual property, intangible assets and citizens' data. Rather than taking the situation seriously, the minister is giving himself more powers with this bill and not making up for the negligence that allowed the contracting incidents involving Zijin Mining, Hytera and the RCMP to happen.

A few weeks ago, during study of the bill in committee, security experts were invited to highlight the acquisitions that were not subject to a national security or net benefit review, even though the threshold under the Canada Investment Act had been met. Other witnesses pointed out the evolution of the dynamic of the Chinese private sector economy and the fact that many Chinese businesses operating on an international level are now beholden to the demands made by the Chinese Communist Party, even though they are not directly controlled by the state.

Charles Burton argued in favour of a stricter review framework for state-owned enterprises entering into Canada, including those belonging to the private sector who have their head offices in authoritarian countries like China. We proposed an amendment to that effect. We asked that the definition of state-owned enterprise be reviewed to include private enterprises that have their offices or their head offices in an authoritarian country. Unfortunately, that amendment was rejected. The definition of state-owned enterprise therefore remains too vague in our opinion.

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Another point raised by witnesses was the need for greater clarity on which sectors should be considered strategic in order to ensure a more consistent review process. Professor Patrick Leblond argued that establishing a list of specific sectors necessary to ensure national security would prevent the review system from becoming entirely politicized. Knowing what we do about this government, more safeguards are needed.

To sum up what we studied in committee and what the witnesses told us, it is safe to say that this is too little, too late. There are too many flaws in this bill. It appears that this government is not taking sensitive transactions seriously and is not doing the necessary due diligence, putting the security of our government and our citizens at risk.

● (1800)

The most significant change this bill makes is the power that the minister is giving himself. I think this is unacceptable, which is why we introduced the amendment we are discussing today. Under the current act, the minister must submit to cabinet his intention to conduct a security review when a foreign interest acquires a Canadian company. Cabinet must give its approval.

In the bill before us, the minister gives himself the power to decide whether to conduct a security review with the consent of the Minister of Public Safety, but without cabinet approval. Only two ministers would be responsible for decisions with potentially very serious repercussions. Imagine two Ontario ministers deciding the future of a Quebec company without any other Quebec cabinet minister having a say in the matter. I hope that my Bloc Québécois colleagues are listening to me carefully and that they will vote in favour of our amendment. We know that this Liberal cabinet has made some very bad decisions, but this is a safeguard that needs to stay in place.

Here are a few more examples of the changes we were able to make to this bill, which was overly flawed. We secured a reduced threshold to trigger a national security review for all state-owned enterprises. It went from \$512 million to zero dollars in asset value for companies not listed as trade agreement investors. This ensures that all investments made by state-owned enterprises will be reviewable. We also implemented a requirement that an automatic national security review be conducted whenever a company has previously been convicted of corruption charges.

We managed to add another factor to ensure that the elements reviewed as part of the national security review process include asset acquisitions by state-owned enterprises, not only new business locations, share purchases and acquisitions.

Finally, we implemented a requirement for the minister to conduct a national security review each time the investment review threshold is reached. Simply put, this amendment requires that the minister review any investments or acquisitions made in Canada that exceed \$1.9 billion in enterprise value instead of it being an option.

The amendments that we proposed sought to create a more robust review process. We could have made even more improvements to this bill, but unfortunately at least seven of our amendments were rejected.

We are talking about national security here. This government did not take some of our issues and concerns seriously, and that is extremely important. For example, we sought to authorize the government to go back and redo a security review for Canadian businesses acquired by state-owned companies to allow for a more flexible process. The Liberals rejected our proposals.

As I said earlier, this government's desire to address the matter of national security is too little too late. The dynamic between nations is changing, and the future is uncertain. The Government of Canada must be more vigilant than ever. On this side of the House, we have always taken the matter of national security seriously, and Canadians can count on us to ensure that it will be a top priority in the future.

I want to once again add that I sincerely thank my colleagues on the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology, because they have a very good reputation and do outstanding work to ensure our country's national security.

● (1805)

[*English*]

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, I enjoy serving on the committee with that hon. member, who does amazing work and has worked very hard on this bill.

I know one puzzling thing is that, as we are here in report stage actually debating a further amendment to the bill that we proposed, somehow, we have not heard from the Bloc Québécois on whether they believe that the minister, on his or her own, should be able to make the decisions on a foreign acquisition of a Quebec company, without any input from cabinet colleagues in Quebec. That is the change the government is trying to make to the bill, removing cabinet from the process, which could potentially remove Quebec from any input in the decision-making on a foreign takeover.

Could the member comment on why we have had such silence from the Bloc on this issue?

● (1810)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague. It is quite incredible to see the Bloc Québécois aligning itself with the government again today to vote against an opposition motion to remove the carbon tax on all types of home heating.

The Bloc Québécois is in an odd position here, because we are proposing an amendment that would keep us—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I apologize to the hon. member, but I must interrupt.

Government Orders

I would ask members to lower their voices and not make a ruckus while the hon. member is answering a question.

The hon. member for Montmagny-L'Islet-Kamouraska-Rivière-du-Loup.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, what I was saying is that I hope the Bloc will vote with us on this amendment.

The possibility of having two ministers from Ontario or British Columbia who would be responsible for public safety, innovation and industry would mean that no one in cabinet would have any power or say over a decision concerning a company that could be sold in Quebec and acquired by other companies around the world. We therefore fail to understand the Bloc's position on this matter.

[*English*]

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, I wonder whether my hon. colleague could comment on the importance of putting the safety and security of Canadian citizens, those who call this nation home, as the primary objective of government. We all know government has competing affections and responsibilities, but of utmost importance is the security and safety of Canadians. If that is not looked after, Canadians are actually not able to prosper in the way they deserve to. It is incumbent, then, upon the government of the day to ensure that decisions are taken with utmost sobriety and with the greatest judgment possible, and that a great deal of attention is given to research. In this case, of course, that has to do with foreign investments, in order to make sure that Canadians are kept safe and secure and that our prosperity is able to be furthered.

I wonder whether my colleague could comment on that and perhaps on where my Liberal government colleagues across the aisle maybe got that right and where they maybe got it wrong in the bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, that is an important question since, indeed, when we talk about national security and the security of companies that might be acquired or that have a national security interest, it is vital that we ensure that the process is done properly.

Unfortunately, several of the amendments we proposed were rejected. They would have enhanced the quality of the work that the government in place should have done to ensure that we do not get taken for a ride, which is what happened in several cases where the minister approved acquisitions in Canada that never should have happened.

[*English*]

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, an amendment was promised at committee that all companies headquartered in China would be subject to an automatic review. The Liberals defeated that amendment. Could the member explain why?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, we know that the current Prime Minister has the utmost admiration for the President of China. Again, when it comes to totalitarian countries like China that want to acquire Canadian technologies, it is vital that we find a way to act. I think that our amendments were designed to help—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I must interrupt the member. We have to resume debate.

The hon. member for Lethbridge.

[*English*]

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise in the House today to discuss Bill C-34, an act to amend the Investment Canada Act.

Ultimately, at the very heart of this debate is the prosperity of Canadians and their well-being. For Canadians to prosper, the government of the day needs to do three things. It needs to grant freedom to the people: freedom to dream, freedom to take risks and freedom to earn a living. The government of the day needs to facilitate an environment of economic prosperity where folks can dream, take a risk and invest, where red tape is cut and where taxes are decreased so that people can flourish. The government of the day also needs to prioritize the safety and security of Canadians. Without our borders being secure and without the safety of Canadians being front of mind by the government, it is rather difficult to pursue these other things.

That said, we also know that the government needs to get out of the way as much as possible. When looking at this legislation and the amendments made to the Investment Canada Act, one must ask this question: Where does the balance lie between government engagement or involvement and none?

Here in Canada we have incredibly industrious and talented people. We have people who combine their talents with the bounty of the land to prosper, and they make amazing things possible. I think of the farmer who works his land and brings it to harvest. I think of the fisherman who works on dangerous high seas. I think of the miner who works miles underground. I think of the business owner who brings her passion to life through innovation and hard work to create jobs for others and, of course, to earn a living herself.

Because of the greatness of the people who call Canada home, I believe we can participate in a broader global economy as well. That is where the bill comes in. This broader global economy presents amazing opportunities for Canadian businesses and allows us to spur innovation. Our quality of life grows when the Canadian economy can offer so much to the world and to each Canadian. The world in turn, of course, invests in Canada. Our economy then grows even more and Canadians are empowered to live fulfilling lives to an even greater extent.

While the global economy generates many opportunities, it also invites threats, which is again where Bill C-34 comes into play. It is why it is so very important that we as Canadians are vigilant in making sure that the investments we are attracting into our country are ones that we indeed want to attract, ones that are good for Canada. It means that a robust review process is absolutely necessary to ensure this is the case. A thorough and robust review process, I would argue, is an absolute must.

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The globe is not made up entirely of governments that desire peace and goodwill for all people. We know that, perhaps more now than many years ago. We know that some states pose a threat to the very way of life we enjoy here in Canada. They do not desire the prosperity of Canada, nor do they approach our market in good faith. In fact, they have other objectives in mind. These countries are not our friends. That is why it so very important that we get legislation like this right.

It is the duty of the government to ensure that Canadians are kept safe and secure, that good decisions are made and that the right investments are drawn into the borders of our land. Certain countries operate with covert agendas and work to undermine the security of our nation and the prosperity of its people. This often happens through the vectors of our international trade and the acquisition of Canadian assets. This is why, again, it is so important for security reviews to be done in a thorough and timely manner. I will use some examples to highlight what I mean.

In 2017, the Minister of Industry failed to request a full national security review of the acquisition of the B.C.-based telecommunications company Norsat International and its subsidiary Sinclair Technologies. The Chinese company Hytera Communications wanted to acquire them. We know that Hytera Communications is partially owned by the People's Republic of China. A careful review should have been done but was not.

● (1815)

Fast-forward then to December 2022, and the RCMP actually awarded a contract for sensitive communications system equipment to this technologies firm. Again, I will remind the House that it is partially owned by Beijing.

This company then, in January, only a month after the contract was awarded to them, was charged with 21 counts of espionage in the United States, and then banned from doing business in the U.S. by President Biden.

This company is one that was given access to all RCMP communications services. Of course, we could imagine what that does to our overall safety and security as a nation and to the confidence that Canadians can place in the RCMP.

Here is another example. In 2020, even more insultingly, the Department of Foreign Affairs actually awarded a contract to a Chinese-based company called Nuctech, founded by the son of a former general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party. They were contracted to supply X-ray equipment to 170 Canadian embassies and consulates. One can quickly imagine what the impact of such a decision would be, in terms of the types of intelligence that could be gathered through doing X-rays, especially in a place like an embassy or a consulate.

It would seem that in some ways it is almost on brand for the Liberal government to turn a blind eye to these important decision-making processes and just allow things to flow the way that they will, which is actually putting Canadians in jeopardy then. This is where responsibility needs to be exercised, and I would even dare say just some basic common sense. We have to take precautions in order to safeguard the people of this country and our economic prosperity as a nation.

Speaking of economic prosperity, what could be more prosperous than people earning a living for themselves and being able to take that money and invest it where it needs to go. What could be more important than government getting out of the way and allowing those Canadians to spend their money as they need to, in order to make ends meet.

In fact, right now, Canadians are actually finding it more difficult than ever before to do that. In large part, that is because of a carbon tax that is applied to everything from home heating to food to the fuel that we put in our vehicles. The Liberal government coming under immense pressure from the Canadian public, knowing that they were having a difficult time being able to afford life, made the decision that it would take the carbon tax off a small portion of people in Canada for a short time. It would hit the pause button and scrap the carbon tax for three years for those who live in Atlantic Canada and use oil heating. However, those who are in my province of Alberta who use natural gas are out of luck. They still have to pay the carbon tax.

We thought we would give the hon. members across from us the opportunity to make this fair for all Canadians, because, of course, choosing a favourite 3% is not fair and it is no way to govern a nation properly. The Conservative Party put forward a motion, and that motion was voted on today. It was a motion that invited all members in this place to vote to scrap the carbon tax for all Canadians, to make it fair from coast to coast to coast, which is what any government should want to do. It should be concerned about the unity of this great country and the economic prosperity of its people.

This place was given an opportunity to vote in favour, with the Conservatives, and to bring that motion into play, which would have saved Canadians thousands of dollars. Instead, the members across the way decided to vote that motion down. They voted to make life more expensive and less affordable for Canadians. They decided that they wanted the carbon tax to be applied to 97% of Canadians, but taken away from 3%. The government across the way determined that its polls were down in Atlantic Canada, and so it needed to show favour to that 3% but the rest could be punished. It is sad.

Parliament, this place, those who sit here were given an opportunity to be on the side of the everyday Canadian person. Instead, Liberals chose to play politics.

The bill that is before us today is yet another opportunity to be on the side of the Canadian people and to make sure that their safety, security and well-being is put first and foremost, which means that more than 10 amendments that were brought forward by Conservative members at committee should have been accepted in order to strengthen this legislation and make it better for all.

Unfortunately, again, the government of the day actually shot those amendments down. While the bill that we debate today makes some minor improvements, and I cannot fault the government for that, I do fault the government for not going all the way and making this bill even stronger. That is very sad. There could have been bipartisan co-operation to strengthen this bill. Again, the government of the day—

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• (1820)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets.

• (1825)

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to the member for Lethbridge's speech, and I am particularly interested in the example she gave about Hytera. For those who are watching and do not understand, the Chinese-based state-owned company that bought it does not make money; it actually loses money every year. These state-owned enterprises are not only acquiring Canadian companies but also winning contracts by being the lowest bidder for Canadian companies not making money.

Could the member please inform the House what she thinks the motivation might be of a state-owned enterprise if it is not making money in acquiring these businesses?

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Madam Speaker, the existing committee and the committee of industry before it actually took opportunity to study this issue extensively. In addition to that, there have been other investigations done. What has been found is that at times, there will be state actors that will make an investment in Canada or purchase a business that exists within Canada and do so for the sake of the state actor. It is in their interest, not in the interest of the Canadian people. It is not in the interest in the furtherance of our nation. It is not in the economic interest of Canada. Rather, in this case in particular, it is the Communist Party of China that ultimately will benefit from such a decision. Again, this is where proper review and consultation are so important when we look to allow these foreign investments in Canada.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, understanding that in deciding to invest in Canada, there has to be a balance between what will generate prosperity in Canada and protecting national security, I wonder whether the member can comment on whether she thinks this bill would balance more toward the prosperity of Canada or more toward national security.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Madam Speaker, if I may, with the deepest respect, I think it is a dichotomy that maybe is not necessary. It is possible to do both. It is possible to look after the safety and security of Canadians, to make sure our nation is put first and foremost, and also to want to cultivate prosperity for the Canadian people. Both can be done, but it comes down to the review process.

For example, in the bill before us, one of the things is that a minister would be able to make a decision on their own, without having to bring it to cabinet. By doing that, the minister would actually be acting unilaterally, and I would say rejecting the collective wisdom cabinet would have to offer in many of these cases. Cabinet is an assortment of individuals from many different ways of life, many different backgrounds and different regions, so its ministers have access to information that could help a robust discussion to take place and an educated decision be made. When cabinet is kept out of that process and the minister makes the decision all by himself or herself, Canadian people are put at a disadvantage.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I would like a quorum call.

And the count having been taken:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): There are 20 members, including me, without the ones who are coming in.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, in studying the bill before us, the Liberals had an opportunity to reflect what actually is going on in the world rather than just putting in a fairly basic bill that just focused on time rather than on national security. I am wondering whether the member could comment on the lost opportunities the government had in introducing the bill without any substance.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Madam Speaker, there was an opportunity to look at the recommendations that came from a subsequent committee and really take them to heart. A tremendous amount of study, time and energy went into those recommendations.

Further to that, my hon. colleagues at the committee brought forward numerous amendments. I know for certain that 10 of them were excellent, but they were rejected. They could have strengthened the bill. All those amendments were based on substantiated evidence that was brought forward by experts. Why would the government reject them? Why would it not want to make the bill the best it can be?

• (1830)

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, this is a great opportunity to talk about foreign direct investment in Canada, why it is important and why this legislation is before us.

Our viewers might ask why foreign investment is so important to Canada. There are many reasons that we should be looking to attract foreign investment into our country. Foreign investment provides Canada with the capital it needs to develop its full potential and, yes, that includes our abundant natural resources, such as oil and gas. Foreign investment in Canada is also a source of innovation, allowing Canada to benefit from evolving technologies. As one of the most educated countries in the world, we also use that foreign investment in innovation to build our own technological capacity.

Intellectual property will drive our future prosperity. We had better ensure that this advantage is not squandered by failing to properly review foreign investments.

It goes without saying that foreign investment creates many jobs across our country. Invariably, when a foreign investor makes its investment in Canada, this creates new job opportunities for Canadians. Related to that is the fact that jobs created by foreign investment generate higher wages. At a time when the worst affordability crisis of a generation is raging, when many families are struggling to make ends meet and pay for groceries, schooling, gas and rent, it is important that the jobs that Canadians have available to them also have decent paycheques attached. Foreign direct investment also drives increased productivity, leading to greater prosperity for our country. When foreign investors commit to building our economy, they also increase our tax base, which of course allows governments at all levels to deliver the services that Canadians expect.

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Unfortunately, for quite a number of years now, especially since the current Liberal government came to power, Canada's foreign direct investment performance has lagged far behind that of many of its OECD competitors. What I mean by this is that there is more investment flowing out of Canada and being invested in foreign jurisdictions than there is foreign investment flowing into Canada. We actually have a very significant deficit. Why has this happened?

There are many reasons. I will not go into them all, but I will begin with this: Canada is suffering from regulatory gridlock. In other words, regulatory and approval processes at all levels of government are so complex and reflect such an overreach that nobody wants to invest in Canada anymore. We have labour force challenges, heightened uncertainty, deteriorating public finances and increasingly unmanageable debt loads.

By the way, our system is not tax competitive. For years, we have been talking about tax reform, yet over the last eight years, no reform has materialized under the current Liberal government. As a result, it has become too expensive to do business in Canada.

Most recently, the Liberal government decided that not only would it maintain a punishing carbon tax on everything, but it would also quadruple the carbon tax on the necessities of life, the things that Canadians need to survive, such as home heating, natural gas and groceries. Prices have skyrocketed as the Prime Minister ratchets up his carbon tax. Putting gas in the car is becoming prohibitively expensive for many families. He plans to quadruple the carbon tax on fuel for our cars as well.

To make matters worse, while the Prime Minister recently announced that he would temporarily suspend the carbon tax on home heating oil for 3% of Canadians, the remaining 97% of Canadians will receive absolutely no break from the carbon tax on their own home heating costs. I thought he once said, "A Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian". It is another vacuous promise from a failed Prime Minister who seeks to divide Canadians and pit them against one another.

● (1835)

The bottom line is this: The world no longer sees Canada as a great place to invest. It is the government's policies, grounded in an ideology that disregards the importance of making Canada a welcome place for foreigners to invest, that is the basis of these problems. We have to get foreign direct investment into Canada right, because it can raise our standard of living and give Canadians, especially young Canadians, the hope that they can live out the Canadian dream.

However, not all investments are necessarily in Canada's best interests. There are benevolent investments that benefit Canada's economy, and then there are investments that are being made by malevolent actors around the world who simply want to take advantage of Canada. As we consider which investments fall into each of these two categories, it is absolutely critical that we make the determination that we are going to focus on Canada's net benefit, on defending our sovereignty and protecting our national security. That is why we are discussing this legislation today.

Bill C-34 simply attempts to update the Investment Canada Act, an act that is quite a number of years old now, but it has not kept up

with the changing conditions on the ground, in a rapidly evolving global environment. I would mention that, after eight years, the government has been unable to put in place the kinds of policies and regulations that would actually protect Canadians against their key industries and companies being bought out.

I will give an example. Hytera and its associated company Sinclair Technologies have been charged with 21 counts of espionage in the United States. In fact, President Biden has banned the company from doing business in the U.S. However, in 2017, the Liberal industry minister, Navdeep Bains, refused to conduct a full national security review on the sale of a B.C.-based telecoms company, Norsat International to China-based Hytera, which is banned from doing business in the United States. It was here in Canada buying up one of our companies.

The RCMP awarded a contract to Hytera to supply sensitive hardware for its communications systems. The Canada Border Services Agency has also been using communications technology from Hytera. Members may recall that a few years ago, the industry minister set up some rules about making sure that key Canadian companies, especially within the critical minerals space, would not be bought up by foreign hostile actors, yet that is exactly what happened.

In 2022, the Liberal government fast-tracked the takeover of Canadian lithium mining company Neo Lithium by Chinese state-owned Zijin Mining without a national security review. Every single citizen in China, every single company, whether a state-owned enterprise or otherwise, has a responsibility to report to the government any information it asks for with respect to the business that they carry on.

We want to make sure that this bill does what it is supposed to do. Briefly, this bill would streamline the minister's ability to investigate national security reviews of these foreign investments. It would strengthen penalties for failure to comply with the Investment Canada Act's review provisions. It would create a new power to generate a list of sensitive industries. It would improve coordination with our international partners. It would also vest power to the minister, rather than allowing cabinet to make these kinds of decisions in the first instance.

Would it not be better, instead of having two eyes on this kind of transaction, to have all the eyes of cabinet focusing on whether an investment is in Canada's net benefit or whether it represents a risk to our national security? The bottom line is we tried to get some amendments. To their credit, some members of the committee agreed with us and we actually got four critical amendments passed. However, there were seven other amendments we tried to make, some of which were contained in a unanimous report from the industry committee, and guess what? The Liberals on the committee voted them down.

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• (1840)

We can do better, but this is a start.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I heard the member reference that some countries are taking advantage of Canada. When he said that, I could not help but reflect on when I heard the member for Cumberland—Colchester suggest that Canada was taking advantage of Ukraine. Does the member believe that Canada is taking advantage of Ukraine?

Hon. Ed Fast: Madam Speaker, we are talking about the Investment Canada Act. We are not talking about the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement.

I will say this, to complete my thoughts. The Investment Canada Act is there to protect Canadians against investments that are not in Canada's national interests. This act would be a small step forward—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We are going to other questions and comments.

The hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will do something unusual and ask a question about the bill, unlike the Liberal members, who seem to want to talk about everything but the bill.

The bill is about returning cabinet decision-making to the Investment Canada Act process. I know the hon. member is a former international trade minister and knows more than probably anyone on the government side in the House about cabinet decision-making and the role and importance of it. Without it, we have had poor decisions by the now VP for Rogers, former member Navdeep Bains of the government, who basically said that anything China wanted to buy China could have without a national security review.

I wonder if the member would enlighten the House as to the proper way a cabinet decision-making process should be when a hostile state like China is trying to acquire the assets of our country.

Hon. Ed Fast: Madam Speaker, that kind of decision takes a lot of thought. It takes a lot of due diligence. It is much better to have cabinet review, through a cabinet process, a national security-related matter or an investment when we are trying to determine what the net benefit to Canada is.

In cabinet, there may be 15, 20 or 25 people around the table. Everyone is asked to review all of the relevant documentation, and at the end of the day, they are able to discern whether something is in Canada's national interests. If we leave that decision with one minister, there is a huge risk that the minister will be co-opted by special interests within our country or outside of our country and a decision will be made that is contrary to our national interests.

Mr. Heath MacDonald (Malpeque, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to go back a little to when the hon. member was a minister. The deal signed at that time was the Nexen deal. It was signed by selling off Nexen to a Chinese national offshore company for over \$15 billion. The deal was signed in Russia in secret by former prime minister Stephen Harper. Does the member have any comments on that?

Hon. Ed Fast: Madam Speaker, at least this question relates, although obliquely, to the Investment Canada Act.

With respect to the Nexen transaction, prior to that point in time, Canada had absolutely no rules about how state-owned enterprises could invest in Canada or if they even should be investing in Canada. When that transaction came forward and cabinet had to review it, we said to hold it because with this transaction, there were no rules for us to be guided by. Therefore, Stephen Harper at that time articulated a clear set of rules for when countries like China or state-owned enterprises from countries like China, Russia and Iran, which are hostile actors, want to invest in Canada. We established the first set of rules for that, and of course, that—

• (1845)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Madam Speaker, Bill C-34 will increase oversight and improve our international reputation. I wonder how much that might help us with our main financial partner, the United States, if we pass Bill C-34 in its current form.

What does my colleague think of that?

[*English*]

Hon. Ed Fast: Madam Speaker, as we know, this bill would not measurably impact investments coming from the United States, because we have special carve-outs for our free trade partners.

Having said that, it is important that we do have an act like that and that, from time to time, we review it—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise and close off debate today on Bill C-34, the amendments to the Investment Canada Act.

I just want to say that, earlier today, I was very disappointed that, when we had our vote on the carbon tax, on taking it off constituents in my riding who have to pay the carbon tax on home heating, as we were asking for the same type of consideration for Manitoba as was given by the Liberal government to those in Atlantic Canada, the government would not extend those considerations to people across the Prairies.

After eight long years of this government, Canadians from coast to coast to coast have had enough of this Prime Minister and his punitive carbon tax that continues to penalize Canadians, especially those low-income Canadians who are seeing everything up go in value. The cost of inflation is eating away at their paycheques. Their buying power in the grocery store, as well as in the housing market, continues to erode.

I do have some concerns with Bill C-34, which I had hoped would have been addressed through amendments that were brought forward by the Conservatives.

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I just have to thank my colleague, the shadow minister of investment and industry, for the work that he has done on Bill C-34 in trying to strengthen it and make it better. It has been 14 long years since this bill was updated, eight of them under this Liberal government.

I think all of us have concerns that the government has not taken issues around foreign investment and how it impacts things like national security very seriously. We know that it has not protected our critical infrastructure, which is at risk here if it falls under the control of foreign entities, especially those that are owned and controlled by their states.

What we witnessed, right across this country, is that critical minerals continue to get bought by foreign entities and that those state-controlled operations, first and foremost, are beholden to the despots and dictators who control their countries, rather than produce those critical minerals for our supply chains here.

Speaking of supply chains, this foreign investment act fails to address our economic sovereignty and how that relates to our overall national defence.

If one looks at making sure that supply chains are protected, although Canada is a smaller economy compared to our allies, we still need to make sure that we are getting critical supplies to build everything within our—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I apologize but the hon. member's phone is either vibrating or making some sort of sound.

The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman.

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, it was foreign interference. We are talking about national security and, of course, we know that we have had foreign interference in our democratic institutions right here. It all ties in together very well.

I will continue with how critical supply chains are. Although we may not be able to produce all things right here in Canada, we should be producing them at least within our Five Eyes, where we know there are the same security controls and concerns that we have here in Canada. Thus, we can ensure that we have control of things that are important for building defence infrastructure and national security infrastructure, as well as providing security and public safety for Canadians at large. Again, we fail to see that recognized to any great degree.

All we have to do is look at the recent record of the Liberal government when it comes to foreign companies owning businesses here that have engaged in espionage and continue to raise major security issues. We can also look at what is happening in our universities and what happened at the Winnipeg labs, where the government allowed and gave work visas to people who were doing research on behalf of the People's Liberation Army. That is the Communist Party of China's military organization. Scientists from the PLA were put into our universities and the Winnipeg labs; they got information on all sorts of intel and then were able to take that back to mainland China.

We have already talked about Sinclair Technologies, which provides a lot of the security screening equipment that we see at our

embassies and that is used by the RCMP, the Canada Border Services Agency and our airports. That company was bought up by Hytera, but the government continued to award contracts to Sinclair Technologies, which was now under the control of Beijing.

No one can forget about Huawei and the way the Liberals dithered, delayed and dragged their feet, kicking and screaming, until they finally banned Huawei from our 5G network here in Canada. This was after the United States raised red flags and banned it from its 5G network, as well as after Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom did so. Our Five Eyes partners stepped up and said, "We are banning Huawei, why aren't you?" However, there was no good answer coming from the government. It took another 24 months before finally making the decision to ban Huawei, which had incredible switches and back doors linking intel right into the PRC at its headquarters in Beijing.

We could also talk about TikTok. It is an app that many of our young Canadians are familiar with, and it is used around the world. We banned it from all our devices here in Parliament and in the Government of Canada. However, I know that there is great concern being raised in the United States about this technology, which is still being used by our millennials and by generation X. We know that the PRC's socialist ideology has been instilled in and permeated through TikTok, and it has been promoted and used more and more. We have to take these things seriously, because these state-controlled enterprises are not so much worried about the consumer. They are definitely not worried about our democracy right here in Canada or our allies; they are doing everything they can to undermine it.

I now want to talk about something that is very important to us, which is our critical minerals. We have large deposits of lithium across this country. We have already talked about Neo Lithium, which is now owned by Zijin Mining out of Beijing, and it is hoping to develop those mineral resources here and take them back to China rather than developing them in Canada.

We have Sinomine here, which got access to three large lithium deposits in northwestern Ontario. I will give credit, because the government actually made it divest those resources and sell them back into Canadian control. However, the government still lets Sinomine operate in Canada. If the government is so concerned about Sinomine controlling those lithium deposits in Ontario, why was it not concerned about Sinomine, just in 2019, buying Tanco mines in Manitoba? It also has a mine just outside my riding, headquartered in my riding in Lac du Bonnet, that has lithium and 65% of the world's cesium. It also produces tantalum, which is used in electronics and warheads on nuclear missiles.

• (1850)

All of the ore that they are producing right now in Manitoba is not refined in Manitoba. They ship it out raw, back to mainland China, and none of it ever comes back to Canada. This is something very concerning. The government turned a blind eye in 2019. Rather than looking at lithium and the Tanco mine, which, at that point in time, was U.S.-owned, and saying it wanted to make sure those critical minerals stay within Canadian or at least North American ownership, it allowed a Chinese company to come in here, buy it up and take all those resources straight back to China.

That undermines our overall goal. The Government of Canada has a goal to produce more electric vehicle batteries, and the lithium being produced right now in Canada is actually all going to China, undermining our ability to sustain the critical supply line to the EV battery plants that are being built in Ontario.

I just want to say that we do have a lack of coordination with the government, between its foreign investment plan and its Special Economic Measures Act, SEMA, which sanctions those who are responsible for gross human rights violations and for destabilizing peace and security in the world. We have things that have happened here in Canada. I will use Roman Abramovich as an example. He owned Evraz, the steel mills in western Canada. Again, we have not seen those holdings liquidated and provided to support Ukraine's war effort against the Russian invaders. We know there are Russian hawks out there who own things like Buhler Industries, which also sells out of Russia. Konstantin Babkin, one of the top people there, has been out there supporting Russia and denouncing Ukraine, yet they are still allowed to benefit from Canada's economy and our strong manufacturing industry.

• (1855)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It being 6:57 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the report stage of the bill now before the House.

[Translation]

The question is on Motion No. 1. A vote on this motion also applies to Motion No. 2.

[English]

Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of motion to House]

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): 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.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I would ask for a recorded vote.

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[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The recorded division on Motion No. 1 stands deferred.

[English]

The recorded division will also apply to Motion No. 2.

The question is on Motion No. 3.

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

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, we request a recorded division.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The recorded division on Motion No. 3 stands deferred.

The House would normally proceed with the deferred recorded division on the report stage of the bill. However, pursuant to Standing Order 45, the recorded divisions stand deferred until Tuesday, November 7, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I believe that, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to see the clock at 7:12 p.m., so we could start Adjournment Proceedings.

• (1900)

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Madam Speaker, on October 26, I asked the government to address the alarming incidents of anti-Semitism, intolerance and intimidation being displayed by pro-Hamas supporters.

We are seeing on streets across Canada pro-Hamas rallies calling for the boycott or swarming of Toronto businesses just because they are owned by Jews. That is repulsive.

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Last week, we saw the offices of MPs and MPPs defaced. A Jewish woman was physically assaulted after leaving a peaceful rally at Queen's Park. Only two days ago, for a second time in as many weeks, another Jewish-owned business in my riding was targeted, with an escalation from the first incident of simple harassment of staff and their customers to now vandalism. Next, will they break the windows?

Tragically, we are about to mark the 85th anniversary of Kristallnacht on November 9, the Night of Broken Glass, when Nazis unleashed a wave of violence, vandalism and arson on Jewish-owned businesses, homes and synagogues. They even desecrated Jewish cemeteries.

What is the point of Canada's hate propaganda laws if they are not enforced? With every incident left unanswered, there is more violence, more intimidating actions and more slogans propagating hate.

It is sadly ironic that November is Holocaust Education Month, a month that provides an opportunity for Canadians to learn about what occurred to the Jewish people under the Nazis. It is to provide an opportunity to learn about anti-Semitism.

Since the October 7 Hamas terrorist attack against Israel, which killed more than 1,400 people and left thousands injured, Canadians have seen a number of pro-Hamas terror rallies on our soil. These rallies have glorified Hamas, a listed terror organization in Canada.

As I noted earlier in question period, we hear genocidal chants at these pro-Hamas rallies, chants such as "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free." That slogan is commonly understood as a call for the ethnic cleansing of Jews and the dismantling of the Jewish state. Furthermore, the chant's origins are linked to Hamas and is regularly used by Hamas terrorists.

On Oct. 9, at a rally at Nathan Phillips Square, right in front of Toronto City Hall, we heard calls for the Al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, to carry out more attacks in Israel, just two days after its members had massacred over 1,400. In another chant, there was a call for the brigades to blow up Ben Gurion airport. These chants are clear examples of hate speech. They are in clear violation of Canada's hate propaganda laws.

As noted in a B'nai Brith release on October 10, "According to sources at the rallies, those in the crowd in Toronto embraced and lauded the individual who carried the flag of Hamas and others who displayed placards containing genocidal slogans."

Enough is enough. I asked the government today during question period why the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada has been silent on such grotesque displays of anti-Semitism and incitement. Even though he was literally up one minute before my question to answer a friendly Liberal question, he was either unable or unwilling to answer mine.

Therefore, I will ask the parliamentary secretary my question. Has the minister discussed with his provincial and territorial counterparts the need to enforce Canada's hate propaganda laws, yes or no?

Mr. James Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me just start from the beginning. The minister has spoken loudly and clearly, denouncing all forms of hate. If he does not believe me, he should follow him on Twitter and he will see what I am talking about. Everyone in this country has the right to live their life free from fear of attack or abuse because of who they are as an individual.

I want to begin by condemning what we saw here on Parliament Hill this past weekend. The display of a swastika by an individual on Parliament Hill is unacceptable. We must always call out hateful imagery and this was appalling. Anti-Semitism is completely and utterly unacceptable.

Hatred that targets people based on race, faith, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability or any personal characteristic is counter to Canadian values. Everyone in Canada deserves a safe space to be themselves and to thrive. Unfortunately, hate, intolerance and racism, particularly anti-Semitism, exist in many ugly and dangerous forms throughout Canadian society and the world. Some are in plain sight, some are hidden.

I have no doubt that for many in the Jewish community this has undermined their faith in what Canada stands for as a country. Our government is working to ensure that this hate does not gain momentum in this country. We are working with groups like CIJA to address the challenges we face. I can assure the member that the minister and I, and the entire government, take this issue seriously and have plans to address anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and all forms of hate in this country.

• (1905)

Mr. Kevin Vuong: Madam Speaker, my question is why the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada is not acting, taking action to ensure that our hate laws are being upheld. These hate propaganda laws already exist. They can be found in sections 318 and 319 of the Criminal Code of Canada. If the government feels existing laws are insufficient, then let us get to work. Let us create a new criminal offence that specifically targets the glorification of terrorism. Such a call has already been made by B'nai Brith Canada. This will send a strong and very clear message that such behaviour, whether targeted against Jews or any other community, will not be tolerated in our country.

Canadians support the rule of law, not mob rule. Will the Liberal government stand up to escalating violence and anti-Semitism or does someone really have to get hurt before it finally acts?

Mr. James Maloney: Madam Speaker, to suggest that any member from any side of this House, or a minister and a member of this government does not stand for the things that he is talking about, is outrageous. He should acknowledge the fact that this government, this minister, has stood firmly and proudly against all forms of hate and our government has taken significant steps in moving forward.

I would ask this member to look hard at what we have done and what we are doing. He too will recognize that we are on the right path and taking all the steps necessary to fight the measures that he is talking about.

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, as always, it is an honour to stand and represent the people of Battle River—Crowfoot, especially on such an important issue like what I asked last week in question period about the common-sense Conservative plan to axe the carbon tax on all home heating.

Let me take things back to what happened here a number of weeks ago. The Prime Minister, instead of providing leadership and acknowledging that his carbon tax has failed to meet any of its objectives, decided to carve out a small portion of those who are disproportionately affected, there is no question, but exempt a few and leave 97% of Canadians to suffer his carbon tax pain.

Home-heating oil and the dynamics associated with it is not a new conversation. Conservatives have consistently brought up the realities for so many Canadians, whether it has to do with home-heating oil, that small 3% of Canadians benefiting from the carbon tax exemption, propane, natural gas and other carbon-based fuels that heat so many homes across Canada during our cold winters.

However, what we have seen over the last number of weeks is carbon tax chaos. The Liberals admitted that their plan is failing, that it drives costs up and that it has become unaffordable for Canadians, yet instead of taking the opportunity to vote in favour of the motion Conservatives brought forward last week, they continue to divide Canadians for their personal political gain. It is driving Canadians into energy poverty. In a country that is so richly blessed with natural resources, no Canadian should have to worry about turning the heat down so they can afford food at the grocery store, but that is the reality that the Prime Minister, the members of the government and the Liberal-NDP coalition have brought our country to.

Last week, I asked a simple question of the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages. I asked why he would suggest that he had not heard about whether or not the carbon tax was impacting Canadians' ability to pay their bills. I have learned since that question that people have reached out, including from the minister's own constituency, saying they have shared their concerns and pain with him, yet he refuses to respond or acknowledge it, as is the case with so many Liberals and their coalition partners in the NDP.

The Liberal minister from Edmonton had his “let them eat cake” moment, saying it does not concern him. We cannot make this stuff up. The Liberal minister from Edmonton said that he is not concerned at all, I believe is the exact quote, about the costs that the crippling carbon tax is placing upon his constituents and Albertans. The Liberal member from Calgary has consistently run offence for the Prime Minister's failed policies in Calgary, as well as a host of other rural Liberal members of Parliament.

What is interesting is that some areas of the country have traditionally had safe Liberal seats that are now in open revolt against their own Liberal members of Parliament because they are not able

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to afford the necessities due to the carbon tax pain that is being inflicted upon them by the Prime Minister and his Liberal leftist ideology and coalition partners in the NDP. They are in the constituencies of Sault Ste. Marie, Nickel Belt, Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Thunder Bay—Superior North, Sudbury and Saint Boniface—Saint Vital. Time and time again, we see Liberals who refuse to acknowledge the reality—

● (1910)

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

Mr. James Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if the member for Battle River—Crowfoot thinks that defending the country from the perils of climate change is left-leaning ideology, then he sees the world through a different lens than I do.

Our government understands how important this issue is. Our government understands the impact that climate change is having in our country. We cannot turn on the news without watching the devastating impact it has had on every city, every rural community and every province in this country. Until everybody in the House acknowledges this and endorses that something has to be done about it, we are going to be having conversations that go around and around.

We are standing here on this side of the House defending Canadians. The measures that were taken last week are another example of that. Home heating oil is the most expensive source of heat in this country. As the member wants to talk about the cost of carbon pricing, I note that over 80% of the people in my province of Ontario benefit financially from the carbon pricing mechanism. If this new program were adopted by all the provinces, including his and my own, that number would go from 80% to a higher number. That is what we are striving to do.

I am asking my own premier in Ontario to get on board with the heat pump incentive program. It would help people in rural parts of Ontario and in some of the ridings the member just mentioned. Thunder Bay, where I was born, Sudbury and Timmins are the areas where making this transition can benefit Canadians so that the number goes from 80% to 90% to 100%.

If the Conservatives do not want to take this seriously, I do not know what else we can do. We have taken it seriously and we are going to continue to do that on this side of the House. We are going to keep pushing forward measures because we are standing for all Canadians on this issue, not just those in certain parts of the country as perhaps some other members are doing.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, certainly one minute is not enough time to respond to what was quite a bit of rhetoric from the member. Let me start by laying a foundation.

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The member suggested that Conservatives do not understand the realities that our country is facing. I am the fifth generation on a family farm, so if the member wants to talk about the realities of climate, he can come and visit. I can tell him that for five generations we have figured out how to make it work in the special areas in Alberta.

The Liberals are lecturing oil patch workers, lecturing energy workers and lecturing those on the precipice of ensuring that we have a secure, reliable energy system. While the Liberals try to put my constituents out of work, it is my constituents who have the solutions to ensure that we have a green and reliable energy future, which includes both traditional oil and gas and new clean tech.

Let me finish by saying this. It is time for common sense to come back to the conversation, because the Liberals have lost it. Canadians are paying the price, and they cannot afford to pay their—

• (1915)

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

Mr. James Maloney: One minute is definitely not enough time to respond to that rhetoric, Madam Speaker. My mother used to say that common sense is not that common. I give members exhibit A.

This government is doing everything it can to fight climate change. We are standing up for people in my community and we are standing up for people in the member's community. The five generations of farmers he is talking about are exactly the ones we are trying to protect. The sooner the Conservatives realize that, the better off we are all going to be.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, in Grassy Narrows, the effects of mercury poisoning can be traced to 1970, more than 50 years ago. The Liberal government committed in 2017 to build and operate a mercury care home. Six years later, the ground has yet to be broken for this facility.

I asked the Prime Minister in June when the suffering from the effects of mercury poisoning would end. He said that the situation “has gone on for far too long” and that he was “working...with local leadership and moving forward” on a solution.

This potential project is another in a long line of broken Liberal promises to indigenous peoples. Chief Turtle wrote to the Minister of Indigenous Services on October 13 saying that he continues to wait for Canada to provide the full funds to build the mercury repair home. For six years, Grassy Narrows has worked to get the project started. For six years, it has experienced barriers from the Liberal government.

While elected officials say that the government is committed to this project, approvals are delayed. The first nation has done what it can do to get the project started. Grassy Narrows has done everything asked of it. It has submitted the applications, done its due diligence and followed all the government's bureaucracies.

There can be no more justification. It is the federal government's responsibility to provide Grassy Narrows with the care it needs, not to prevent that care from starting. The delays are not justifiable. Meanwhile, this community continues to suffer.

Research published in July found that the youth suicide rate is three times higher than other first nations. Consumption of fish from mercury-contaminated waters has led to nervous disorders and psychological stress over generations. Mothers indicate that over 40% of girls have attempted suicide. Before the mercury was dumped in 1970, the community did not report a single suicide. The connection could be said to be clear.

The Prime Minister once said that Canada's most important relationship is with indigenous peoples. So far, Canada's relationship with Grassy Narrows has been marked by barriers and neglect. What is Canada's delay in honouring the minister's promise?

Mr. James Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Nunavut for raising the important issue of the Grassy Narrows situation.

I can tell her that I have been to Grassy Narrows. She may have heard me mention earlier this evening that I was born in Thunder Bay, and I am familiar with Grassy Narrows. I am aware of what has been happening there, which is why I went. That is why I went many years ago. It is because I wanted to see first hand what it looked like and what conditions the people were living in.

The member is correct. The Prime Minister has said on record many times, as have all members of our government, that there is no relationship more important.

With respect to the specific project at hand, I can assure the member that we will do everything within our power to work with the community because that is critical in making sure these projects are not only completed, but also completed properly in conjunction with the community and in a manner the community endorses and respects.

I will say again that I want to thank the member for raising this issue with respect to Grassy Narrows. I understand why it is so important and would be happy to speak with her further at the first available opportunity.

• (1920)

Ms. Lori Idlout: *Uqaqtittiji*, when Grassy Narrows submitted more changes to the funding request, as required by the department, it waited eight months for an answer. The Minister of Indigenous Services met with Chief Turtle in May and approved the project. She said that everything was ready to go, but the government needed to get the funds from Treasury Board. She said that Grassy Narrows would see the funds by September at the very latest.

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It is now November and there are still no funds from Treasury Board. There should be no further justification for this delay. When will this funding finally be sent to Grassy Narrows so it can start building the mercury repair home it so desperately needs?

Mr. James Maloney: Madam Speaker, the funding has been approved, as the member quite rightly pointed out. The request has been made to the Treasury Board. I am prepared to undertake to explore this issue further and get back to her if she wishes.

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

(The House adjourned at 7:22 p.m.)

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