



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

House of Commons Debates

Official Report
(Hansard)

Volume 151 No. 270
Monday, January 29, 2024

Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, January 29, 2024

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

• (1105)
[*English*]

VACANCY

TORONTO—ST. PAUL'S

The Speaker: It is my duty to inform the House that a vacancy has occurred in the representation, namely Ms. Bennett, member of the electoral district of Toronto—St. Paul's, by resignation effective Tuesday, January 16.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to paragraph 25(1)(b) of the Parliament of Canada Act, I have addressed a warrant to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of a writ for the election of a member to fill this vacancy.

It being 11:03 a.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

GREENHOUSE GAS POLLUTION PRICING ACT

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC) moved:

That a message be sent to the Senate to acquaint Their Honours that this House disagrees with the amendments made by the Senate to Bill C-234, An Act to amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise again and talk to Bill C-234.

Groundhog Day is just a few days away and it feels like Groundhog Day again on this bill, Bill C-234.

It was basically two years ago, almost to the day, that I presented this important bill to the agricultural community and the backstop provinces to help provide some relief in the form of carbon tax exemption for on-farm use when farmers were heating their livestock barns and drying their crops. It has really added up in the last two years, and it will continue to cost them.

Before I get into it, I want to highlight a couple of facts about the state of the country and where we are today. There are four key pri-

orities on which this party, our leader and members of Parliament will focus, which is axing the tax for our agricultural community as well as for all Canadians. They are really suffering under high inflation, high bills and high costs, whether they are seniors at home, or families or whether people are on their own. Inflation is out of control. By axing the tax, it will give Canadians a chance.

The other thing is that we have a massive housing deficit. We need to build more homes. We need to encourage cities and municipalities to get out of the way and allow this to take place.

We also have to get control of our federal budget and federal finances. The debt and deficit are way out of control. The debt has doubled in eight years under the reckless spending of the Liberal government. We need to get this under control, not just for the sake of the overall finances and the well-being of our country, but for the trickle-down effects it has on Canadians in every corner of the country. High spending by government leads to inflation.

The last thing is that our city and country roads and streets need to be safe. I cannot believe how much has changed in eight years in regard to crime and the safety of our streets. We have to act now. Canadians are counting on us. It does not matter if people live in the downtown of a city, in a suburb of a city or down a country road where I live, everywhere is being impacted. It is the catch and release, catch and release and a person is out the door.

On Bill C-234, I would like to highlight one thing, maybe a bit of a brag. I was at a Grain Farmers of Ontario meeting for the Huron county chapter during the recess of Parliament. I have some nice numbers to report.

The average corn yield for corn in Huron county, and let us call it Huron—Bruce, is 200 bushels to an acre. Soybeans are over 55 bushels to the acre. These are all above the provincial averages. Soft red winter wheat is 101, soft white winter wheat is 99 and hard red winter wheat is 97. Those are great yields for Huron—Bruce. We are very proud of that. It is a testament to the dedication of farmers up and down every country road.

Private Members' Business

I attended a co-op annual general meeting, of which I am a member. What really struck me during his comments, and he does not owe me anything, as I am just there as a member and not as an elected member of Parliament, was that he was talking about the best way we could help farmers. He is looking at it himself.

He said that the best way we could help farmers was to actually cut that carbon tax. He said that farmers saw it every month on their bills and that it was incredible how much that was adding up. He said that the best way to provide them with relief was to cut it 10¢ a litre.

On another side note, they also sell fuel. They sell gasoline and diesel as well. As a side note, 17¢ a litre, on average, is the carbon tax on gasoline for people who drive to work and back, or to take their kids to hockey or baseball or to take their parents to doctors' appointments, maybe in the city.

Bill C-234 is for farmers. At the end of the day, if it accomplishes one thing, it is to cut the carbon tax on farming. It is an inflationary tax, it is relentless, it is indexed and it will continue to rise. At the end of the day, if the members of Parliament in the House could cut this tax, it would provide relief to farmers. At the very end of the economic chain, it would provide relief to Canadians, who go to the grocery store every week to provide for themselves. That is a fact. If we can do one thing in the House to start off the session, it would be to do that.

Farmers work hard. They use technology. I heard something from a couple of Liberal-appointed senators and it was disappointing to hear what they had to say. I am not putting words in their mouths. We can go back and look at the comments they made in committee. We can go back and look at the comments they made in their speeches. They said that farmers were laggards when it came to technology. That is the furthest thing from the truth.

Farmers across the country are some of the most progressive business people we will find. Whether in their barns, their greenhouses, their tractors or even their financial accounting software, they are very progressive. They take on technology whenever they can and they make it more efficient, so they have more crops to feed more people and to feed the world, which is really what they are doing.

I would like to set the record straight there. Farmers are very advanced in their implementation of technology. If we look at the last 10 or 15 years, even 20 years, it is night and day. Wherever there is an opportunity, farmers are doing it. They are doing it for yield and they are also doing it for the betterment of their land.

If we look at agriculture in the last number of years, we can see the inflation with which farmers are dealing, such as increased costs in machinery. Increased costs in all inputs. Fertilizer, pesticide sprays and seed inputs are all increasing. Rent, land, and the cost of building sheds and grain storage units have all gone up.

Agriculture is not a high-margin business. We have talked about this before in the House of Commons. Farmers are price-takers; they are not price-makers. They take what they can get on the open market and what the basis is in Chicago. That is the reality of agriculture.

Any time the government can help them, for example, by cutting the carbon tax, it is a huge relief. As I have mentioned in the House many times, one example is a hog farmer down the road from where I grew up. A year ago, his bill just for the natural gas he used on his farm was \$4,300. The carbon tax on that bill was \$3,300. If we think about that, how does that make sense? How does it make sense for farmers, who have invested hundreds of thousands, maybe millions, of dollars on their farm to make the highest-quality food and have the highest-quality crops out there, to get bills like that? It is not feasible.

As I have said, it will continue to increase every year until 2030-31, and it will put a lot of farmers out of business. At that point in time, we will have to be concerned about food sovereignty not only in our country, but we will also have to be concerned about the amount of food we export around the world to feed other nations. It really is a precarious time.

Let us think about it. Many people have said it in the House, as has the leader of our party, that it is cheaper to put a load of food or produce on a transport truck in Mexico and ship it through many states to bring it to Canada. It is cheaper to truck food from Mexico than it is to grow it on a farm here and sell it at a farmer's market or into the open market.

● (1110)

How does that make sense for Canadians? How does that make sense for Canadian farmers? How does that make sense for the environment? It just does not make sense at all.

Speaking of the environment, the Liberal government has asked farmers to pay a steep price with this carbon tax it has hammered them with, but when has it ever recognized the environmental good they do? There is a rebate, \$1.70-something per \$1,000 of allowable expenses, so if a farmer has \$1 million of allowable expenses on their farm, they will get \$1,700 back in rebates. That is a slap in the face.

Farmers who have woodlots on the farms they have maintained in Ontario, where the emerald ash borer is, have harvested the trees and made use of them, but they have lost that. They have ethical woodlot practices.

In the fall, a lot of farmers nowadays are planting fall cover crops. They do that on their own, because it is good for the soil and for their land, and it increases the humus matter in the soil. That is a fact.

With respect to crop rotation, I will speak specifically about the province of Ontario. The crops I mentioned in the beginning are used for crop rotation. It is good for the soil. It helps minimize the pests in the environment that impact the crops, which is good. Environmental farm plans and nutrient-management plans are all things that farmers do to be good neighbours and good stewards of the land.

Private Members' Business

Of course, with technology, no-till drilling goes back a long way. Quite a few years ago now, in the eighties, I can remember as a kid going out to Don Lobb's farm, and the University of Guelph at Ridgeway was out there doing plot experiments to perfect that. There were a number of farmers in Huron County and other counties that started this in the region. It has grown and is continuing to grow. Now we see how they even rip small sections of land where the seeds are going in to preserve the soil and the humus and not disturb it, because they know the value of that.

• (1115)

I will go on to one more highlight. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has done at least two studies on this bill, Bill C-234. According to his last report, by 2030-31, the Liberal government will have taken nearly \$1 billion out of farmers' pockets because of the carbon tax. Think about that. Farming is a high-capital, low-margin business that provides food for Canadians to eat. It has very low margins, and the Liberal government is taking \$1 billion out of the back pockets of farmers. That is really unconscionable to me.

The last thing I will highlight is the piece of the bill that has been sent back from the Senate. I understand the independence of the Senate. The bill is now back in the hands of the House of Commons, where members of Parliament are going to decide how it is going to go. What I would ask of members of Parliament in the other political parties is this. Let us not drag it out. Let us not delay the bill longer than it has already been delayed. It is already two years old. We can have some debate. We can hear what the other parties are thinking: if they have changed their minds, if they like it better, and so on. Over the last two years a lot has changed in the economy, such as interest rates and inflation, and these are things that are impacting farmers everywhere they go.

Therefore, I would ask the Liberal Party specifically to allow some of its members to have a say, but to be reasonable. Let us not kick this too far down the road. Let us have good discussions, a good debate and exchange of information, and a timely vote on this to send it back to the Senate and let the senators deal with it again. I think that is the reasonable and logical way to do it because, at the end of the day, members are not helping me, but helping the farmers at home. When we can directly help farmers and indirectly help consumers, that is great.

Thank you for the time, Mr. Speaker, and I will take some questions.

• (1120)

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, happy new year to you and all my colleagues.

I would like to thank the hon. member for Huron—Bruce for his remarks today. I will start by saying that he will have my support for the motion to keep the bill as is. That is a commitment that I have made very clearly in the House, including to my agricultural community in Kings—Hants. I want to make a comment and then ask a question.

The comment is around the idea that Liberal senators somehow blocked this. I would reference the Hon. Colin Deacon. He was appointed under the Prime Minister. He supported the bill. I would point to the Hon. P. J. Prosper, appointed under the Liberal govern-

ment. He supported this bill. I would also point to the Hon. Rob Black, a really strong agriculture champion, appointed under the Liberal government, who supported this bill.

My point is that I think the Conservatives were left wanting in terms of their advancement of this bill in the Senate, including that upwards of five of 15 Senate colleagues did not vote on the crucial vote that actually sent it back here. I want that to be on the record.

My question for the hon. member is, if he is unsuccessful with his motion to keep the bill as is, does he intend to bring a subsequent motion, in particular around the three years? The barn heating and cooling is an important element. Maybe we could find some type of agreement in the House for just three years, so that we could encompass, largely, what the bill intended. Does the member intend to do that, if his motion cannot win a majority in the House?

Mr. Ben Lobb: Mr. Speaker, I already presented the motion a couple of weeks ago. It takes out all the amendments that came from the Senate and puts it back in its original form.

I appreciate the member for Kings—Hants. We have a good working relationship. However, I would also point out that the Liberals appointed six other senators, just in the last couple of months, to get this bill passed. He knows one senator who was appointed really well. It is Rodger Cuzner, who spent 20 years as a Liberal member of Parliament in the House of Commons. I understand the member's points, but the Liberals also appointed quite a few Liberals to the Senate.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am in favour of keeping the bill in the same form that passed the House at third reading.

I have been on the agriculture committee for a long time, and I hear the Conservatives talk a lot about the carbon tax. However, I would like to hear from my hon. colleague about the other costs. I do not think that is talked about as much in this place.

How does the Conservative caucus propose to deal with the immense costs that are being foisted on farmers from the effects of climate change? We know the summer coming up is going to be particularly bad for farmers in Alberta. What about the high input costs? What is the policy in dealing with those? Also, when are the Conservatives going to speak up to address the outrageous profits in oil and gas? Those, by themselves, completely obliterate any effect the carbon tax would have. Oil and gas profits have increased by over 1,000% since 2019. When are the Conservatives going to address that incredible cost on the backs of farmers and Canadians from coast to coast to coast?

Mr. Ben Lobb: Mr. Speaker, a colleague of ours submitted an Order Paper question on the cost to administer the carbon tax, which I believe is \$82 million a year. That is outrageous in and of itself.

Private Members' Business

In regard to the environment, what I would say to my hon. colleague is this. Farmers are not the problem. I know he was not saying that farmers were the problem; I realize that. Farmers are doing their part. In life, we have to be able to do what we can and what is feasible. Farmers get up every day and do what they can to provide for their family; to pay their bills to the banks, co-ops and everything else; and to be good to the environment. That is the reality of being a farmer.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague's speech was excellent and really honoured the work that our farmers do to feed us.

In my riding, over Christmastime, I met with a local woman who had to shut down her business because of the cost of butter. Eight years ago, when she started, it was \$2.49 a pound. It is now upwards of \$7.49 a pound. That is a 300% increase.

How would this bill help with that butter effect that we have seen with inflation and help the cost of a household item like butter come back down?

• (1125)

Mr. Ben Lobb: Mr. Speaker, just simply, at the end of the day and at the bottom line, if this bill could do one thing, it would be to axe the tax for farmers so that there are lower prices at the grocery store. That is what at the end of the day we have to do. If all the elected members of Parliament want to help people in their ridings, I am telling them that this is one way they can get it done.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened very closely to what the member said, and I would like to provide some comments in regard to some very specific things that he put on the record this morning.

First and foremost, let me emphasize one of the biggest misrepresentations of reality that the member tried to portray. That is to give the impression in any fashion whatsoever that the government does not recognize the true value of our farmers and what they do, not only in local communities but for the broader world. That does a disservice to the farmers. We, at least on the government benches, recognize that the farmer is the one who experiences climate change at the ground level in a very real and tangible way. If only there were Conservative members of Parliament who recognized that climate change is a reality, because farmers know and appreciate and understand that climate change is in fact a reality.

We have a substantial agreement. We are talking about hundreds of millions of dollars, leading to approximately \$3.5 billion. We have heard of the sustainable Canadian agricultural partnership, which is there to support farmers in the community in dealing with issues like climate change. They are tangible dollars to support farmers in the advances that they have taken and to encourage continued advances in regard to recognizing and fighting climate change reality.

The member stood in this place and mentioned, right at the very beginning, the Conservative Party agenda. I suspect we might be hearing more about the Conservative agenda. He said the Conservative Party has four priorities, and priority number one is axing the tax.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, members are saying, "Hear, hear!" They like that priority. How far the Conservative Party has come from the last general election, when that member and every other member who was elected in that election, or all candidates who ran in that election, campaigned on an election platform that said they supported a price on pollution. Now they are saying that they just want, at all costs, to axe the tax, which kind of feeds into the idea that they have no concept of the reality of climate change and the responsibility of good government to bring in policies to deal with climate change.

Whether it is the Ukrainian government, the Canadian government or many states in the United States, they recognize that the price on pollution is a positive policy.

Priority number two for the Conservative Party, as the member across the way said, was dealing with housing. No government in the history of Canada, with a possible exception on a per capita basis in the 1940s, has invested more in housing than this government has in the last eight years. When the leader of the Conservative Party was the person responsible for housing, he was an absolute and total disaster on the issue of housing.

Let us contrast that to this government, which has a number of housing programs to deal with what the member across the way said was the Conservative Party's priority. There is a myriad of programs to support Canadians. Never before have we seen a national government take such a proactive approach to dealing with the issue of housing.

Priority number three that the member referenced in his opening remarks is that the Conservatives would get federal spending under control. Canadians need to be aware of what that hidden Conservative right, MAGA agenda is all about. The Conservatives' agenda is to look at ways in which they can cut back on valuable programs that Canadians are very much dependent on and want to see. Whether it is programs like child care, dental care or whatever it might be, the Conservatives' priority number three is to cut government expenditures. The member just said that.

• (1130)

Whether it is programs like child care, dental care or whatever it might be, the Conservatives' priority number three is to cut government expenditures. The member just said that.

As the Conservatives said, there are the top four items. The fourth item is the issue of crime. There is a difference in approach between the Liberals and the Conservatives on the issue of crime. Whether it is urban or rural, we believe we need to take action that puts a stronger emphasis on repeat offenders, as we saw with the bail reform bill, which took a huge effort not only from this government but also from provincial jurisdictions and many other stakeholders, including the courts, to bring forward legislation. However, the Conservative Party wanted to filibuster and prevent its quick passage, even though everyone else in the country recognized the importance of that bail reform legislation.

Private Members' Business

On those four priority issues the Conservative Party talks about, I would suggest they will be found wanting. I look forward to the ongoing debates on those issues and others.

When we talk about our farming community, the member made reference to the hog industry in his comments. He said that the hog industry was in trouble, and he talked about a hog farmer in his riding or close to his area. He tried to give the impression to those listening that hog farmers are experiencing a difficult time.

This is not to take away from addressing those important issues, whether one is a hog farmer, a cattle farmer, a wheat farmer or whatever they might be. As a government, we are very sympathetic and are working with our farming community in order to ensure that we have good, sound policy. However, the Minister of International Trade was in Winnipeg just the other day, and we met with Manitoba Pork and with the hog industry at the research centre with the University of Manitoba. Manitoba's hog industry is doing better than it ever has, period, and I believe somewhere around eight million piglets are born in Manitoba every year now. That industry is creating not only thousands of direct jobs but also thousands of indirect jobs as well.

As a government, we recognize that the farming community, whether it is dealing with animal waste or making sure of the quality and the health of the earth, continues to be sustainable well into the future. We will find that government policy and how it works with the different stakeholders supports just that. We invest literally hundreds of millions of dollars every year to ensure we are there to support farmers in a very real, tangible way, and we will continue to work with the industry.

We disagree wholeheartedly with the Conservatives' number one priority of getting rid of or axing the carbon tax. It is highly irresponsible. I look forward to one day being able to knock on a door and to reinforce to my constituents that the Conservative Party does not have any idea or concept. The MAGA Conservative Party of today does a great disservice to the constituents I represent. At the end of the day, climate change is real, and the Conservative Party needs to start being more honest and transparent with Canadians about the environment issue.

• (1135)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, although it is already January 29, I do not think it is too late to extend my best wishes to everyone. I hope we can engage in constructive politics. That is exactly what we are going to try to do this morning.

Listening to the speeches, I feel as though this is being treated like an either-or issue. One side is saying “axe the tax” while the other side is saying that we need to send some sort of message and that they will be there to help. The Bloc Québécois falls somewhere in between. We are reasonable people. We believe in sending a message and offering incentives for the climate transition, but we also believe in a climate transition that is fair and equitable for everyone. That is what I am going to talk about this morning: the agricultural exemption.

The agricultural exemption is an expression I am using more and more often in an attempt to get it to stick in people's minds, so that everyone understands that farmers—the people who feed us, who work extremely hard and whom we thank—deserve respect and support. There are different ways of offering support. Bill C-234 granted an exemption to a specific sector, and that is why we were in favour of it. There needs to be more support for sectors where there are fewer or no exemptions.

I paid close attention when the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government was speaking. He said his government is there for farmers and is supporting them, but that is not what I am seeing on a daily basis. If the Senate amendments are adopted, I want the government to make a formal commitment to supporting the climate transition in meaningful ways, especially in sectors where there is no alternative, such as grain drying. Farmers are being asked to use less pesticide and herbicide, to protect shorelines and wetlands, to maintain grasslands, to recultivate marginal land. We have to support them as they do that and give them the help they need. We have to be smart about this. That is the point of my speech this morning. If there is no exemption, there has to be compensation. There has to be support, intensive research and development and investment programs to help these sectors. That is key.

We have been talking about Bill C-234, known in the previous Parliament as Bill C-206, for the past four years. In the beginning, the bill was about grain drying. As the study progressed, the heating and cooling of certain buildings was added. Then an election was called. After that, Bill C-234 was introduced, and it specifically addressed grain drying and the heating and cooling of certain buildings. We studied the bill. Now the Senate has sent it back to us with an amendment that cuts out buildings and shortens the bill's lifespan. It is certainly not the same bill that we passed. Obviously, we have some reservations. However, it is back in alignment with the original bill and puts the focus where it is needed the most.

I have to say that I am concerned about the Conservatives' tactics this morning. I am not entirely comfortable with all the parliamentary procedures, but when I see the opposition responding to the Senate before the government does, I have to wonder whether the procedures were followed. Could this not have been discussed earlier?

I thought the Conservatives' goal was to set targets and come up with slogans. When I talk about the Conservatives' goal, I do not include my colleague from Huron—Bruce in that. I know he cares about farmers and is doing this for the right reasons. I am talking about the strategy in general. Do the Conservatives want to turn this fight into a slogan, so they can go back to the kind of aggressive partisan politics we saw when this bill was being studied in the Senate? I would remind my colleagues that when we were debating a motion here dealing with this, bullying was a very serious problem.

That is why I said at the beginning of my speech that I wanted us to engage in constructive politics. I invite everyone to proceed in an intelligent way, to present intelligent arguments and content, and to engage with people from other political parties to reach a consensus in order to move things forward. We should not just be trying to score political points ahead of the next election.

Private Members' Business

What we should be doing right now is having a look at the work done by the Senate. We should be analyzing and improving it. How can we improve it? We have two options. We could reject the amendments and refer the bill back to the Senate. That would probably lead to a ping-pong match, forcing us to redo the work and set new deadlines. Bill C-234 stayed in the Senate for a long time. Will it come back to the House? How long will it take? We have no control over the date of the election.

• (1140)

We have no control over whether the bill will be sent back. When will it come back? Is the second option not better? It is worth taking time to consider this bill. We could make tangible progress now and establish the principle of the agricultural exemption. The purpose of Bill C-234, beyond the grain drying exemption, is to establish the agricultural exemption, the fact that there are some sensitive sectors that need to be supported or exempted. If the bill is adopted as amended, that is the message it will send. That will be a win for grain farmers with respect to grain drying. This was very well explained by my colleague from Huron—Bruce just now.

They have no alternatives, nor do they control sales prices. When costs go up, their profit margins go down. That is just not right. We cannot do that to the people who feed us.

At the same time, with the amendments that the Senate is proposing, we would continue sending a message about the environment. We cannot forget that side of things either. We need to continue doing that. Pollution must have a price, but sectors like agriculture must not be the ones who have to pay that price. They need to be supported in all of this. When it comes to buildings, perhaps the alternatives are not so far out of reach. Of course, for many farmers, many of those solutions have not actually been implemented, but they are more within reach than in the case of drying.

I would like to ask the government the following question: Is it committed to quickly implementing a bold and substantial program? I am talking to the parliamentary secretary, but this question is also for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. We need to give farmers access to the technology that we are asking them to have but that they are unable to get. That is the key.

We must not forget that the carbon tax is a federal tax. It was created for the provinces that were doing nothing for the environment. We need to think about that too. If we were to do away with the carbon tax, as the Conservatives are proposing, what message would that send to the other governments? Would we be sending them the message that they too can do away with the carbon tax?

For the benefit of my Conservative friends, I would point out once again that the carbon tax does not apply in Quebec. The fact that the Bloc Québécois has supported Bill C-234 from the beginning is a major gesture of goodwill toward the farming community, because the measure puts Quebec farmers, who are not currently entitled to the exemption, at a disadvantage. It sends a message to all governments that an agricultural exemption is inescapable. That is why we supported the bill. That is why Quebec farmers encouraged us to do so, to show their solidarity with westerners. That is why we did it, at their urging.

At the same time, we are putting our people at a disadvantage by voting for Bill C-234. I would like to drive that point home for everyone. We are putting our people at a disadvantage. The proposal we are debating this morning may strike the right balance. Could the Senate's amendment be the ideal way to achieve the mission we were given, the mission to establish an agricultural exemption? Would it not create an exemption without placing Quebec producers at an undue disadvantage? I am asking the question.

We are well aware that some farmers will be disappointed if the Senate's amendments are adopted. However, there are other ways to get things done. We can take the grain drying exemption now and prevent the bill from getting bogged down again thanks to the kind of intimidation, threats and other things that have absolutely no place in a democracy. We can put the matter to rest, move on and keep working on the buildings issue in a different way. I will not turn my back on farmers. We will not turn our backs on them. We need proper dialogue, research and development.

Bill C-234 must succeed. It would never have seen the light of day without the initial and ongoing support of the Bloc Québécois, which also agreed to officially recognize the agricultural exemption principle. I thank my colleagues for that. My question is this: Do we want to send the bill to the Senate and keep bickering over it, with media clips and slogans, or are we willing to grasp the tangible gains within our reach? The answer should be obvious.

We always try to do politics with the future in mind, not the next election. We intend to stick with this approach.

• (1145)

[English]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, here we go again with Bill C-234. It does not seem to want to go to the Governor General just yet.

As previous colleagues have said, this is a bill I am intimately familiar with. We did see a previous version of the bill in the 43rd Parliament, and of course, now that we are here at the beginning of 2024, the bill has had an approximately two-year journey to go through both houses of this Parliament, only to end up back in the House because the Senate has decided to amend it.

I want to remind hon. colleagues and all Canadians who are watching this debate of something, because I know a lot of the agricultural sector is probably tuning in right now, and members of the Agriculture Carbon Alliance have a very real interest in this bill and want to see us pass it in the same form it was passed by the House at third reading. What I want to remind everyone of is that the third reading vote is quite remarkable. The bill passed by a vote of 176 to 146. Just so everyone realizes this, that Conservative bill would not have made it to the Senate if it had not been for the support of the New Democratic caucus, the Bloc Québécois caucus, two Green Party members and a handful of Liberals.

Private Members' Business

We tend to try to bring a narrative in the House that it is just one party doing all of the work. The beauty of a minority Parliament is that sometimes the opposition can come together on an idea that has its merits and can use its combined majority vote to pass legislation the government may not agree with. It is a far better experience for members of the opposition than I ever had during my first four years in this place, when I was facing a majority government. It is a lot more worthwhile to members on this side of the House because we are able to work in a collaborative environment and to actually get things done when they may be in opposition to official government policy.

It was a notable vote, and that vote was the result of a lot of deliberation not only in the House of Commons but also at the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, of which I have been a proud member since 2018. We have heard quite definitively from many witnesses with intimate knowledge of the agricultural sector that these exemptions are necessary.

I was here in 2018 when the original Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act was brought in. I believe, if memory serves me well, it was part of a budget implementation act at the time. If we look at the original legislation, the existing statute of the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act, we can see that when the Liberal government at the time drafted the legislation, it included significant exemptions for farming activities. There is a list of eligible farming activities, fuels and equipment, because the government realized that agriculture is in a unique position and that sometimes farmers do not actually have an option to switch to a different kind of fuel source. Many sectors in agriculture are still reliant on fossil fuels to conduct their operations, and that is going to be a fact for the foreseeable future, hence the exemptions that were put in the original act.

When I look at Bill C-234, I think the language in the bill that was passed by the House at third reading is in line with the spirit and intent of the original statute, which is why I gave it my support. It is why I will continue to give my support for the version of the bill that was passed by the House at third reading.

The basic premise behind carbon pricing is to incentivize a change of behaviour to a less polluting fuel source. However, we heard very clearly from many people who are involved in the agriculture sector that there are not commercially viable alternatives for the farming activities referenced in this bill. If we cannot use this tool to incentivize a change of behaviour, it is not going to be very worthwhile. This is why, when we look at the text of the bill and how the agriculture committee amended the bill, we recognized some technologies may be coming online and showing signs of early promise but are not in any shape or form ready for commercial viability.

● (1150)

We also wanted to signal to the sector that we are putting a short time frame on this. That is why we see referenced in the language of the bill the fact that there is an eight-year sunset clause, so the provisions that originally existed in the statute will come back into force after eight years, giving the industry a break for a short amount of time and giving it the signal that we expect change in the coming decade.

With respect to the carbon tax debate in this place, I am filled with a lot of remorse at the state of debate. I do not think it actually does great service to the complexities and dangers that climate change is presenting to Canada and many countries around the world. I regret very much that the state of debate around the carbon tax is that it has been reduced to a rhyme on a bumper sticker. That is a great disservice to the very clear and present danger that climate change presents to our agricultural sector.

If we want to look at one of the key reasons food price inflation is so high, we need only look to the state of California, which has been going through unprecedented drought-like conditions because of a changing climate. Since California acts as a breadbasket for much of Canada, when farmers are unable to produce as much as they did in years previous, that, of course, means there is going to be a supply shortage and increased prices.

I am very worried about what the upcoming summer is going to be like. Look at the summer we went through in 2023, with fires burning out of control in so many different provinces, levelling a clear and present danger to many agricultural operations. We can see the snowpacks that are in such a reduced state in the Rocky Mountains right now. They feed all of the major river systems in the Prairies. What are we going to do when farmers start running out of water in our prairie provinces? That is going to be a monumental crisis, and I do not think the debate around the carbon tax gives enough attention to the significance of that.

I also do not think we give enough conversation to the fact that farmers are dealing with massive input costs. There are gross farm revenues, but the farmer gets only a small portion of that at the end of the day because of the input costs: fuel, fertilizer, transport and so on. Farmers have enormously high input costs, and one of the best ways we can serve our farmers is to put in effective policy dealing with those input costs, helping them change the way they farm and putting in strategies to help them reduce fertilizer use, because it is possible to do that and also maintain the same kinds of yields.

As well, we need to talk a lot more about the power imbalance that exists with the corporate-controlled grocery sector. That is why farmers have been on the front lines of asking parliamentarians to put in a grocery code of conduct.

Private Members' Business

Last but not least, if we are not going to talk about the ridiculous oil and gas profits, we are doing an extreme disservice to everyone who is listening to this debate. We can go on and on about the carbon tax and its costs for Canadians, but if we are not going to talk about the fact that since 2019, the oil and gas sector has seen over a 1,000% increase in net profits, that is a disservice to the debate. I keep asking my Conservative colleagues to confront the elephant in the room, which is that the real reason people are paying through the nose for so many goods and services is that oil and gas companies are milking Canadian families for all they are worth. High profits mean someone is paying. It is Canadian families from coast to coast to coast that are lining the bank accounts of a very profitable oil and gas sector.

I will conclude by saying that with respect to Bill C-234, New Democrats are going to honour the third reading vote that we presented to the House last year, part of the 176 votes to 146 votes. Therefore, we support a message to the Senate rejecting their amendments and honouring the bill in its form at third reading in the House.

• (1155)

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate we have to rise to speak to Bill C-234 once again.

Before I get into the meat of the speech that I want to bring up today, I do want to give some thanks. I want to thank the member for Huron—Bruce for bringing this private member's bill forward, as well as the member for Northumberland—Peterborough South, who brought this bill forward in the previous Parliament, which shows how much work we have put into this legislation.

I would also like to thank those senators in the red chamber who made the right decision, one based on facts, not fiction. I know there was a lot of intimidation and bullying going on in the Senate as the Prime Minister and the environment minister were personally phoning senators to support the amendments to this very important bill. However, about 40 senators stayed strong; they represented their regions and represented the facts of the discussion and debate. I think that what this all comes down to today is to try to get the amendments removed and get the bill back into its original form and back to the Senate. This is a discussion about fact and fiction.

My comments today are going to be for my colleagues in the Bloc, the NDP and the Green Party who have strongly and staunchly supported this legislation all the way through. They have done so because they understand the importance of agriculture. They understand the importance of the economic viability of Canadian farm families and the critical role they play in feeding not only the world but also Canadians, ensuring that we have affordable, nutritious food grown right here in Canada to support Canadian families and Canadian consumers.

Unfortunately, the Liberal government is making decisions based on ideology and fiction. The environment minister was very clear that if there were another carve-out of the carbon tax, he would resign as environment minister. Therefore, we now know that the whole fallacy of the carbon tax being an untouchable part of the Liberal climate change policy is not true. The Liberals have already done a carbon tax carve-out for home heating oil that was focused basically on Atlantic Canada, but when it comes to a piece of legis-

lation that is supported by every opposition party in the House, and even by a handful of Liberals, they are not willing to listen. It is about picking and choosing winners and losers when it comes to who gets a break from the carbon tax and who has to pay it.

Here is a fact: Passing Bill C-234 and offering an exemption to the carbon tax for propane and natural gas would save farmers close to a billion dollars by 2030. That is a billion dollars that farmers now have to pay the Liberal government, when they are already paying record-breaking input costs on feed, fuel, fertilizer and many other inputs. We found out early last week not only that the billion dollars is being taken out of the pockets of farmers by the Liberal government but also that the GST is being charged on top of the carbon tax.

We have all known that, so we have been putting private members' bills forward. My Conservative colleague has put forward a private member's bill to remove the GST from the carbon tax. However, we now know the numbers, and they are staggering. The GST on the carbon tax alone cost Canadians almost \$500 million last year. By 2030, it will be a billion dollars. Cumulatively, over the past several years and by 2030, Canadians will have paid \$6 billion for GST just on the carbon tax, not on every other good and service they use. It is no wonder that Canadians cannot afford to put food on the table, put fuel in their car and pay their mortgage. Certainly, it is no wonder that farmers are struggling every single day. They are looking to these types of pieces of legislation that would offer them some financial relief.

The next fiction of the Liberals is that there are commercially available alternatives to propane and natural gas on farms, especially when it comes to heating and cooling barns. We know that is not true. Electric heat pumps are not going to heat a 100,000-square-foot chicken barn that is built with state-of-the-art technology. The Liberals should be applauding Canadian farmers for what they are already doing.

• (1200)

Here is another fact: The average global emissions that come from agriculture are about 26%. In Canada, the emissions that come from agriculture are 8%. This is a stat that we should be applauding every single day. It shows what our farmers are doing to ensure that they are the strongest environmental stewards of their land, soil and water. However, instead of being a champion for Canadian agriculture and applauding what farmers are doing, the Liberals are punishing them with the carbon tax and defending it every step of the way.

There are no other commercially viable options. There is no way to change behaviour for farmers who need natural gas and propane to heat their barns and to grow their food in greenhouses.

During the recess, we had three or four days in southern Alberta when it was -37°C . I guarantee everyone that a heat pump was not operating and not sufficient to ensure the health and safety of cattle, pork and poultry in those operations. However, at -37°C , those farm families are still out there making sure that we have quality, affordable food to eat every single day.

Here is another fact: The amendments we are discussing today, which were passed by the Senate, were already proposed by the Liberals in the House of Commons at the agriculture committee. Those amendments were voted down by the elected members of that committee. We have gone through this discussion but, again, fiction.

This is not about viable options for the Liberals. This is about trying to kill a bill that would provide a carbon tax carve-out for farmers.

Another fact is that, in his food report study, Professor Sylvain Charlebois at Dalhousie University reported that policies such as the carbon tax on farmers are going to increase the wholesale cost of food by 34%. Again, these are costs that are being put onto the backs of farmers, but, down the road, they will impact Canadian consumers who are struggling to put food on the table every single day.

We have two million Canadians accessing the food bank in a single month. It is unbelievable that this is happening in a country like Canada.

This is a discussion about fact and fiction, and I want to thank the members of the opposition parties who have stood by facts. They have stood by Canadian agriculture and the importance of growing affordable, nutritious food here in Canada. I hope they will continue to stand with us on Bill C-234 while the Liberals focus on fiction.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

FALL ECONOMIC STATEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023

The House resumed from December 12, 2023, consideration of the motion that Bill C-59, An Act to implement certain provisions of the fall economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 21, 2023 and certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Happy new year, Mr. Speaker.

This is my first time rising in the House in 2024, and I want to wish everyone a happy new year.

It is 2024, and the Prime Minister is not worth the cost. That is the reality. That was the reality in 2023 and 2022, but the cost keeps going up every year.

That is why the Conservative Party has a very focused common-sense plan. We have four priorities that we want to work on in Par-

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liament, and they are to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop crime.

After eight years in office, this Prime Minister has managed to drive up the cost of living at the fastest pace in 40 years by doubling the national debt and printing \$600 billion. He has increased inflation and interest rates at the expense of the working class and our seniors, and he did so with the support of the Bloc Québécois. The Bloc Québécois completely agrees with the exorbitant spending increases and the cost of government, which are creating a burden for Quebeckers. The Bloc Québécois voted in favour of all of this government spending in the fall of 2023. It supported the tax increases on gas, which punish Quebec farmers and workers.

The common-sense Conservative Party is the only one offering an alternative to this destructive and costly policy implemented on the backs of Quebeckers.

First, we will eliminate the second carbon tax, which does indeed apply to Quebec.

Second, we will control spending by eliminating waste. We are going to get rid of the \$35-billion infrastructure bank, which has not delivered a single project for Canadians. We will get rid of the ArriveCAN app and the so-called green fund which, according to the officials involved, is now a scandal on par with the sponsorship scandal. We will cut spending on consultants, who now cost every Canadian family \$1,400. In eight years, this Prime Minister has doubled the amount spent on outside consultants. These are extraordinary costs that do not produce results for Canadians. It is work that could have been done by the government, by public servants, whose numbers have ballooned by 50%.

We are going to introduce a common-sense law, a dollar-for-dollar law. Every time ministers in my government increase spending by one dollar, they are going to have to find one dollar in savings to offset that spending. Instead of increasing the national debt, inflation and taxes, we are going to cap spending. Once the government is forced to reduce the cost that falls on the backs of our people, it will enable workers, businesses and our economy to grow.

Let us talk about our workers. There is a war on work right now. Workers are being punished with sky-high tax rates that claw back more and more of every dollar they earn. A common-sense Conservative government will lower taxes and reward work here in Canada, for our workers, small businesses and all Canadians, so that we can be a country that rewards work.

We will protect the paycheques of ordinary Canadians and ensure that they can earn bigger paycheques by doing away with unconstitutional laws that prevent natural resource projects from going ahead. We will allow Quebeckers to build dams and develop mines and other projects that generate wealth for our country, instead of sending money to China or other countries that are dictatorships. We will keep that money for ourselves, so that Canadians can have bigger paycheques. We are also going to build houses.

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• (1205)

After eight years under this Prime Minister, the cost of housing has doubled, rent has doubled, the money needed for a mortgage on an average house has doubled, and the down payment needed to buy that same house has also doubled. In Montreal, it has tripled.

After eight years under this Prime Minister, the cost of a two-bedroom apartment in Montreal has increased from \$760, when I was the housing minister eight years ago, to \$2,200 now. Red tape has blocked the construction of 25,000 housing units over the past six years. Thousands of construction projects across the country are in limbo because of red tape. In Vancouver, whose former NDP mayor is incredibly incompetent, it is even worse. He added additional costs of \$1.3 million to each housing development built. These increases are tied directly to the red tape and taxes charged by the governments.

In Quebec City, I had the opportunity to meet Mr. Trudel with my Quebec lieutenant. He told me that \$500 of the monthly rent for these apartments goes toward taxes and red tape, the costs charged by the government. For apartments that rent for \$1,000, half of that amount covers only the taxes and the bureaucracy. That cost is too high. That is why a common-sense Conservative government will encourage municipalities to speed up construction instead of obstructing it.

The federal government pays out \$5 billion to municipalities through the sales tax program. Quebec receives about \$1 billion. There are already a lot of conditions attached to that money, a lot of federal conditions. However, those conditions do not include accelerating construction. That is why we are going to work with the Quebec government on a new infrastructure agreement that incentivizes construction. We will tie the amount of money that each municipality receives to the number of houses and apartments completed in the previous year. That would mean that municipalities like Victoriaville, Saguenay and Trois-Rivières would receive substantial bonuses, because there has been a huge boom in construction there. Last year, for example, construction increased by 30% in those municipalities. That should be rewarded. Real estate companies are paid according to the number of homes they sell. Construction companies are paid according to the number of houses they build. We should pay local bureaucracies on the basis of the number of homes they allow to be built. This would encourage the acceleration of construction.

We should also insist that every transit station be located near apartment buildings. Transit stations should be surrounded by large apartment towers. Across Canada, in Vancouver, Montreal and elsewhere, we see beautiful transit stations, yet there is almost no housing around them. It is ridiculous.

The federal government provides funding, but often a third or a half of the amount needed. We should insist that this money not be invested if there are no apartment buildings where our seniors and young people can live next to a public transit station. That is how we are going to speed up home construction. We are going to insist that CMHC provide funding for apartment buildings within two months, not two years. Executives should be fired unless they meet that deadline. Finally, these homes should be located in safe communities.

After eight years under the leadership of this Prime Minister, crime has increased by nearly 40%. He has increased crime by allowing the same small groups of repeat offenders to keep committing the same crimes over and over, and by letting them out on bail the very same day they are arrested.

• (1210)

A Conservative government will replace bail with jail. We will target real criminals who use guns and seal our borders instead of targeting hunters and sport shooters. We will treat and rehabilitate people with drug addictions instead of decriminalizing crack, cocaine and other drugs, as the Prime Minister has already done in partnership with the NDP in British Columbia.

What I have been describing here is common sense. This is the kind of common sense used by ordinary Canadians. For decades, there was a common-sense Liberal-Conservative consensus that led to our extraordinary success. A Conservative government will rebuild that consensus to give Canadians back the country they love and deserve. That is our goal. We are going to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and, finally, stop the crime. It is common sense, and that is what we are going to do.

• (1215)

[*English*]

Madam Speaker, I wish you a happy new year. It is 2024 and the Prime Minister is still not worth the cost. He is not worth the crime. He is not worth giving up the country that we know and love. After eight years, everything costs more, crime is running rampant, housing costs have doubled, the country is more divided than ever before, and the Prime Minister seeks to distract and attack anyone who disagrees with him in order to make people forget how miserable he has made life in this country after nearly a decade in power.

Our common-sense counterpoint is very focused. In this session of Parliament, we will fight to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. That is how we are going to turn around the mess the Prime Minister has created in eight years.

Let us quickly touch upon that mess. After eight years of the Prime Minister, housing costs have doubled. This is after he promised that those housing costs would go down. In fact, they rose 40% faster than incomes, the worst gap in the G7 by far and the second worst among all 40 OECD nations. It is twice as bad as the OECD average, with roughly a quarter of OECD countries actually seeing housing affordability improve over the last eight years. Here in Canada, under the Prime Minister, we have seen it worsen at the fastest rate in the entire G7.

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The Prime Minister has created a situation where only 26% of Canadians are able to afford a single-family home. It now takes 25 years to save up for a down payment on the average home for the average Toronto family, when 25 years used to be the time it took to pay off a mortgage. After eight years of the Prime Minister, it is now more affordable to buy a 20-bedroom castle in Scotland than a two-bedroom condo in Kitchener.

After eight years of the Prime Minister, a criminal defence lawyer reported on Twitter that numerous clients have asked if she can help extend their prison sentences so they do not have to live in this housing market and find a place to rent. In other words, the Prime Minister's housing market is worse than prison by the judgment of several people who actually live in prison.

After eight years of the Prime Minister, we have 16 seniors crammed into a four-bedroom home in Oshawa according to its food bank, which told me it had to house middle-class seniors together. They are all losing their homes because of the incredible rent increase the Prime Minister's policies have caused.

We have homelessness skyrocketing across the country. Every town and centre now has homeless encampments. Halifax has 30 homeless encampments for one medium-sized city. After eight years of the Prime Minister, who would have imagined that we would have 30 homeless encampments in one city, but that is the misery that he has created through his policies that are not worth the cost of housing.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister makes the problem worse. He gives tax dollars to incompetent mayors and bureaucracies to block homebuilding. The worst incompetence, of course, has been by the former mayor and the present mayor of Toronto, and the former mayor of Vancouver blocking construction in those cities and making it uninhabitable for many of the people who should be able to afford a home. We now have the second-slowest building permits of any country in the OECD. That is why we have the fewest homes in the G7, even with the most land by far to build on.

We were told that the media darling Minister of Housing, who was brought in in the fall, was going to fix all of this. He was going to hold photo ops right across the country, and all of a sudden there would be more building. What happened was that housing construction actually went down. There was a 7% reduction in housing last year under the leadership of the current housing minister.

Is it any surprise, when the guy who destroyed our immigration system was put in charge of housing, that we got a destructive result? It is not me accusing him of ruining the immigration system. It is his own Liberal successor. The current Liberal Minister of Immigration says that the system is out of control. In his own words, he claims that his predecessor was giving study visas for students to come and study at what he calls "puppy mills". Those are his terms. I would never have used that term. It is insulting. They are actually human beings, not dogs. That is the language we get from the current immigration minister to describe the chaos that his own predecessor caused in the international student program and the temporary foreign worker program, not to mention countless other programs that have now been overwhelmed by fraudsters, shady consultants and bureaucratic incompetence. Now they take the guy

who ruined all of that and say that this is the guy they are bringing in to resolve the housing crisis.

It is no wonder it gets worse and worse by the day. The Liberals' only defence is that they are spending lots of money. Failing is bad and failing expensively is even worse. That is what the Prime Minister has done after eight years. It is not only in housing. It is in generalized inflation. After eight years, inflation hit 40-year highs. After eight years, the Prime Minister has increased the cost of food so quickly that there are now two million Canadians, a record-smashing number, who are required to go to food banks in a single month. We have students forced to live in homeless shelters in order to afford food. We have seniors who say they have to live in tents in order to be able to shop and feed themselves, because food prices have risen so high.

In Toronto, one in 10 Torontonians are now going to a food bank, enough to fill the Rogers Centre seven times. If the monthly users of the food bank in Toronto alone were to go to the Rogers Centre, the place would have to be filled seven separate times, just to accommodate them all. Who would have thought we would have this many hungry people in Canada's biggest city, a city that has elected no one but Liberals since 2015? This is the result from that.

In that same city, crime and chaos rage out of control. In the adjoining suburbs, we now have stories of extortion, where small businesses receive letters saying that if they do not fork over big dollars to international crime syndicates, they will be shot at, their houses will be burned, their families will be targeted, and the government does nothing to protect them. Who would have thought that Canada would be so vulnerable to this kind of criminality and chaos that these foreign criminal syndicates would think Canada so weak and so easy to target that they could go after innocent small business leaders and their families in order to shake them down for money? Yet that is what has happened.

These same business owners go to bed at night with one eye open, because they know their car could be stolen as they sleep. I told some stories yesterday to the caucus, incredible stories of people in Brampton whose cars just vanished in the middle of the night. The cars go over to Montreal where they are put on a ship and sent off to the Middle East, Africa or Europe where they are resold at a profit. They are not even inspected as they go onto the ships in these containers.

• (1220)

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister spends billions of dollars trying to buy back the legitimate property of licensed law-abiding firearms owners. He believes that the problem is the hunter from Nunavut or the professional sport shooter from Nanaimo, when in fact the real problem is the criminals.

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Common-sense Conservatives are going to put an end to this madness. We are going to bring home the country we know and love. Let us go through the common-sense plan.

We are going to bring home lower prices by axing the carbon tax. It starts with passing Bill C-234 to axe the tax on farmers and food so farmers can make the food and Canadians can afford to eat it. Let us pass the bill unamended today and let Canadians eat affordable food. It is very easy. The House of Commons passed it once before. The Senate, under duress and pressure from the current Prime Minister, then sent it back with unnecessary amendments. Now the other opposition parties are flip-flopping and wavering. They agree in principle with the Liberal plan to quadruple the carbon tax, but say they might consider giving farmers a break on it. Now they are not so sure. They are siding with the costly Prime Minister again on keeping the tax on our farmers. Every time our people go to the grocery store and see those rising prices they will know that the NDP has betrayed working-class people in favour of greedy government with higher taxes on farmers and the single moms who are struggling to feed their families.

We are going to axe the tax on home heat not just for some or for a short time, but for everybody, everywhere, always. Common-sense Conservatives call on the Prime Minister to be consistent and not just temporarily pause the tax in regions where his polls are plummeting and his caucus is revolting, but rather let us axe the tax for every Canadian household to heat their homes in this devastatingly cold winter. It is incredible how cold it was in Edmonton, -50°C, and the Liberal member for Edmonton Centre voted to tax the heat of Edmontonians. Not only that, the Liberal member for Edmonton Centre wants to quadruple the carbon tax on the home heat of Edmontonians, so over the next several years, as the winter cold comes in and people crank up their heat, their bills will rise increasingly faster. In some places now the carbon tax is more expensive than the actual gas that people are buying. We are going to be sharing the bills that some of my caucus members have so that everybody knows how badly the Prime Minister and his NDP coalition are ripping off Canadians for the crime of heating themselves in -50°C weather. We are the only party that will axe the tax for them and for everyone, everywhere, always.

Our common-sense plan to bring home lower prices includes capping the spending that has driven inflation, the \$600-billion increase in spending and debt, which means printing money. Printing money bids up the goods we buy and the interest we pay. In fact, government spending is up 75% since the Prime Minister took office. He has nearly doubled the cost of the government at a time when the economy has barely grown at all. In fact, it is shrinking while the government is expanding, which means it is gobbling up an increasing share of a shrinking pie and there is less left for everyone else. Right now the government is rich and the people are poor, because the Prime Minister cannot stop spending, and his greedy NDP coalition counterparts push him to spend even more of other people's money. Our common-sense plan would cap spending and cut waste. We would get rid of the \$35-billion Infrastructure Bank, the \$54-million ArriveCAN app and the billion-dollar so-called green fund, which is really a slush fund.

• (1225)

We would cut back on the money wasted on consultant insiders, who now consume 21 billion tax dollars a year, an amount that is equal to \$1,400 for every family in Canada. We would cut back on this waste to balance the budget, and bring down inflation and interest rates, so that Canadians can eat, heat and house themselves.

We are going to unleash the growth of our economy. Instead of creating more cash, we would create more of what cash buys. We have the most powerful resources, perhaps the greatest supply of natural resources per capita of any country on earth, and we are very good at harvesting those resources to the benefit of our people and our environment at the same time.

The Prime Minister, with the help of the NDP, has been driving the production to other countries, where they pollute more, burn more coal and add more greenhouse gases to the atmosphere. The Prime Minister would drive the production away from Canadians, who use among the cleanest electricity grids on Planet Earth, instead of bringing it home to this country. Our common-sense plan would repeal Bill C-69 and replace it with a new law that would not only protect the environment and consult first nations but also get projects built so that we can bring home paycheques for our people and take the money away from the dirty dictators of the world.

I was able to recently announce our new candidate in the Skeena—Bulkley Valley riding, the great Ellis Ross, former chief of the Haisla Nation. He is responsible for bringing Canada the biggest-ever investment in its history, which is the LNG Canada project. It is a project that was approved by the former Harper government, and the only reason it was able to go ahead under this government is that it gave the project an exemption from the carbon tax. Had the tax applied, the project never would have occurred. Had Bill C-69, the anti-resource law, been in place, the project never would have happened.

By the government's own admission, this project will reduce greenhouse gas emissions around the world by millions of tonnes because it will displace dirty, coal-fired electricity in Asia by sending clean, green Canadian natural gas, liquefied using hydroelectricity and our natural cold weather, and sent abroad on our shortest shipping distance, which means burning less fossil fuels to get it to market. This will displace more emission-intensive forms of energy in countries where they need to cut back. That is a solution to fight climate change and protect our environment, and thank God we had the visionary leadership of the great Ellis Ross to make that project happen, along with that of Stephen Harper.

Unfortunately, the Prime Minister has blocked every other LNG project from coming to fruition. There were 18 of these projects on the table when he took office, not one of them is completed. Only the aforementioned—

An hon. member: Hear, hear!

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, we got a cheer over there. It was the Marxist member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie. He took that Marxist comment as a compliment, by the way. Believe me, he has told me that off the record. He tells us that he is speaking on behalf of the NDP. He cheers when he hears that the Prime Minister has blocked every LNG project.

That is going to be very interesting news for me to take to northern British Columbia and the first nations people, such as the Nisga'a. He cheers at the thought that the Nisga'a will lose out on their proposed liquefied natural gas project. That is the NDP of today. They used to stand up for the workers who had lunch buckets. They used to stand up for first nations people. That is a bygone era. Now, they cheer every time a working-class person loses a job and a community loses its industry. Shame on them. The good news is that they will not be part of my government.

We will stand with the Nisga'a. We will stand with the Haisla. We will stand with the other first nations of northern Ontario that want to see the ring of fire go ahead. The first nations people want to harvest our resources to empower their people and end poverty. We, as Conservatives, will remove the government gatekeepers and the radical ideologues, such that NDP member and the current environment minister, so we can get things built and bring it home to our country.

● (1230)

Those powerful paycheques would fund schools, roads and hospitals. They would improve our finances. That is what I mean when I say, “Fix the budget”. Yes, we have to cap spending and cut waste. That is the spending side of the income statement. However, we also have to bring in more revenue at lower tax rates.

How would we do that? We would allow more production. We would have bigger and more powerful industrial projects and resource achievements, and we would have more paycheques for the people in the communities who would work on those job sites. We would generate the tax revenue at a lower cost to the overall population so that we could fund our cherished social safety net, with real money, sustainably into the future. That is how one fixes the budget: make more and cost less to deliver better results for the Canadian people.

The most basic result, though, would be for people to have rooves over their heads. After eight years of the Prime Minister, that is not possible. We would remove the bureaucracy that stands in the way of homebuilding. The reason we have the fewest homes per capita in the G7 is that we have the worst bureaucracy and the slowest permitting. My common-sense plan would require local bureaucracies to permit 15% more homes per year as a condition of getting federal money. Those who beat the target would get more money, and those who miss the target would get less, in exact proportion to their success or failure. We pay realtors based on the homes they sell, and we pay builders based on the homes they

Government Orders

build. We should pay local bureaucracies based on the homes they permit. That would speed them up and get them moving. By the way, we would do it in a non-prescriptive way.

There are countless different ways a municipality could allow more housing. For example, today we learned one of the ways that cities block housing is by making renovations harder to permit. People might think, “What does a renovation have to do with new homes?” If one wants to renovate their home to create a basement suite, an over-the-garage suite or perhaps a guest house converted from an old garage or something like that on their property, they would need a renovation permit. That might be holding up housing. My plan would give a credit to the city, and therefore more federal money, if it were to allow a rapid conversion of one house into two or of a basement into a suite.

The reason I focus on this is that the Prime Minister has a proposal right now that he calls the “housing accelerator”, where he is having federal bureaucrats assess the processes of municipal bureaucrats, and the bureaucrats talk about the way things work. That would be like scoring a hockey game by having the referee go to the practices of the players to test whether they are doing the right skating drills, whether they are doing the right pre-game stretching and whether their diet plan is the best plan, rather than the simple and obvious way we score hockey games, which is by counting the number of pucks in nets. I want to judge a municipality's results based on keys in doors. There are pucks in nets and keys in doors.

The municipality can figure out how to do it. It is not our job to micromanage how cities increase their housing stocks. Some might sell land. Some might get rid of zoning procedures. Some might get their bureaucrats working faster and smarter. Some might allow more renovations of homes into duplexes. Some might find any other manner of creative ways to do it. It is not the federal government's job to micromanage. What we would do would be to pay for the result. That is how we would get the homes built so that, just like when I was minister and housing was affordable, it could once again be affordable in the future, and our young people could hope to get married and start families, which is something that has become next to impossible in most of our big cities.

These homes would be in safe neighbourhoods. The Prime Minister has unleashed crime and chaos with his catch-and-release system, which allowed the same 40 violent offenders to do 6,000 crimes in one year in the city of Vancouver. A common-sense Conservative government would make repeat violent offenders ineligible for bail so they would stay behind bars rather than reoffend. We would bring jail, not bail. We would bring in treatment, not more drugs, for our addicts, so we could bring our loved ones home, drug-free.

Government Orders

• (1235)

We would also reverse the Prime Minister's ban on our sport shooters and our lawful hunters. Instead, we would go after the real violent criminals and seal our borders. We would put the billions of dollars the Prime Minister is wasting going after lawful hunters and put them into scanning the boxes that come into our country, which bring in the drugs and guns, and scanning those shipping containers that are taking away our stolen cars, so we can stop them from leaving the country and keep our cars here, getting our insurance rates down so people can afford to drive again and do not have to sleep with one eye open during this looting of our vehicles the Prime Minister has allowed to happen.

The Prime Minister wants to protect turkeys from hunters. I want to protect Canadians from criminals. It is common sense. That is the common-sense agenda of the Conservative opposition in this forthcoming Parliament. We would axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime.

To axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime are things on which we should all agree, so I call on the other parties to dispense with their radical ideologies and plans and unite around this common-sense effort to set four clear priorities. Who is ready to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime? Is everybody ready to do that? Let us bring it home.

I would like to introduce the following amendment. I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following:

"the House declines to give second reading to Bill C-59, An Act to implement certain provisions of the fall economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 21, 2023 and certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, since the bill fails to repeal the carbon tax on farmers, First Nations and families."

• (1240)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The amendment is in order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the leader of the Conservative Party's fixation on the bumper sticker that reads, "Axe the tax" has caused the Conservative Party and the MAGA right to ultimately say things like they do not support the trade agreement with Ukraine. There are so many bizarre things coming from the far right under the leadership of the Conservative Party.

How does the member justify providing misinformation, or selected information, to the constituents I represent? When he says he wants to axe the tax, he is really telling the majority of the residents in Winnipeg North that he would also get rid of the rebate, which means there is going to be less disposable income because he has a desire for a bumper sticker. How does he justify that?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, that member is once again misinforming his constituents. Actually, I should not say that because they do not believe him, so he is not informing them of anything. He has misinformed himself because, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, 60% of Canadians pay more in carbon tax costs than they get back in these phony rebates.

Now we have their big solution. They are going to give it a new name. They are going to rename the carbon tax. They think people will not notice their heating bills, gas bills and grocery bills are going through the roof under this tax if they just give it a new name. This is a carbon tax that rips off the people of Winnipeg, and he should be ashamed for allowing a temporary pause on the tax for some people in other regions while denying the people in his own riding, one of the coldest major cities in this country, that same pause. We will axe the tax in Winnipeg. We will axe the tax for everyone, everywhere, forever.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I see that my colleague is using his speaking time in the House to chant campaign slogans and even announce some new candidates for the next election, which is scheduled to take place in a year and a half, rather than talking about the bill before us.

That being said, I have not heard him mention the environment even once in all his famous election promises, even though he seems to want to win over Quebeckers. One thing I do know about Quebeckers is that they are worried about the climate crisis. We experienced unprecedented forest fires and floods this summer. One need only go to the Magdalen Islands, the Gaspé or my riding. In the last snowstorm, 30 feet of shoreline were lost to the sea because no more ice is forming. The well-known highway 132, which circles the Gaspé peninsula, will soon be under water. I think Quebeckers are worried about the climate crisis and expect their elected representatives to propose solutions to address it.

I would like to hear what the Conservative leader is proposing to fight the climate crisis.

• (1245)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question and for being honest enough to say that the Bloc Québécois wants to keep this government in office for another year and a half. Her leader has said before that he wants to keep this Prime Minister in office. The Bloc Québécois voted for all of the economic policies that led to this increase in inflation and the doubling of housing costs. The Bloc Québécois completely agrees with the Prime Minister.

With regard to the environment, I did mention it in my speech. I said that the best way to protect the environment is to repatriate mineral and energy production to Canada. We have the highest standards in the world. The Bloc Québécois and the Liberals want to give that money to China, where they burn coal and use other processes to produce electric batteries.

I believe that we should repatriate production by giving the green light to projects such as hydroelectric dams in Quebec, carbon capture in western Canada and nuclear energy, which is emission-free. We should give the green light to those projects so that we can produce more emission-free electricity.

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That is common sense.

[*English*]

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have had the opportunity on at least two separate occasions to listen to the Conservative leader speak at length to Bill C-59. It will come as no surprise to folks in the House and to many Canadians that there are certainly many things about which I disagree with the Conservative leader, and there are some things on which we may find some agreement.

However, one thing that continues to surprise me is that we hear an analysis from the Conservative leader about the hardships Canadians are facing and the problem of inflation, but nowhere is there a mention of the fact that over 25% of the inflation Canadians have been subjected to over the last while, according to some credible economists who have published studies to this effect, has to do with outsized price increases by corporations that are well above the increases in costs they have faced.

The fact is that corporate greed is playing an important role in the inflation Canadians are experiencing, but that is nowhere in the analysis from the corporate-controlled Conservatives. It is not a coincidence, it seems, because by glossing over this incredible contributor to inflation, the Conservatives are doing a solid for their corporate pals.

I would like to hear the Conservative leader talk about the role of corporate greed in inflation and what he would propose to do about it.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: The first point I would make, Madam Speaker, is that the member seems to be suggesting that corporations were not greedy eight years ago because food prices were much lower then and that suddenly now, maybe it is something in the water, the level of greed in the country has grown dramatically over the last eight years, and that is the sudden cause of food price increases.

The reality is that big corporations always do well in an inflationary environment, and the reason is very simple. If we have stuff, then we get richer when stuff goes up in price; if we need stuff, we get poorer when stuff goes up in price. That is why inflation is always a tax on the poorest people to the benefit of a tiny minority on top. It is not just those who sell stuff, but also those who own assets who become better off.

That is why I warned, in the House of Commons, in the fall of 2020, that printing \$600 billion was going to lead the billionaire class to become extremely wealthy, and it did. The gap between rich and poor has grown. I knew this would happen because when hundreds of billions of dollars are funnelled into the financial system, it balloons the assets of the people who have, and it increases the costs on those who have not.

Inflation is the most immoral tax. It is the tax that takes from the have-nots to give to the have-yachts. Not only will Conservatives get rid of the carbon tax on food, but also we will get rid of the inflation tax on everybody.

• (1250)

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Madam Speaker, I visited with three farmers in my riding over the Christmas break. The three farmers paid a combined total of about \$630,000 in carbon tax in 2023 and got zero back.

I wonder what the Leader of the Opposition has to say about the Liberals' comment that people are getting back more than they are paying in when those three average farmers in my riding paid \$600,000-plus in carbon tax in 2023 alone. That is with the 20% exemption rate and not the full carbon tax. They are only paying 20%.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, that is the story I hear from the farmers in my constituency. I stood and mentioned the Medeiros farm in south Carleton. I read their bills into the record and asked the Prime Minister how he expects them to pay those bills when he quadruples the tax. This is the worst part of the Liberal-NDP carbon tax. They plan to quadruple it.

As bad as one's bills are today, if they get re-elected, the NDP and the Prime Minister will quadruple the tax to 61¢ a litre for gasoline. Similar proportional increases on natural gas, propane and oil heating will follow. That is their plan.

To be very clear, the choice in the next election will be between the costly coalition, which will tax one's food, punish one's work, take one's money, double one's housing cost and unleash crime and chaos in one's community, and the common-sense Conservatives who will axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

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

That, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House, at the conclusion of Oral Questions later this day, the House observe a moment of silence for the Honourable Ed Broadbent, and that afterwards, the member for Burnaby South, followed by a member of each of the other recognized parties and a member of the Green Party each be permitted to make a statement to pay tribute, and that the time taken for these proceedings shall be added to the time provided for Government Orders.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion will please say nay.

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

(Motion agreed to)

Government Orders

[Translation]

FALL ECONOMIC STATEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-59, An Act to implement certain provisions of the fall economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 21, 2023 and certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by asking for unanimous consent to share my time.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Terrebonne.

Before I begin, I want to wish you, Madam Speaker, and all my colleagues, a happy new year. This is the first opportunity we have had to do so. I also wish a happy new year to everyone in Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia.

I would like to mention that today I am wearing a small green square, like many other members, because January 29 is the National Day of Remembrance of the Quebec City Mosque Attack and Action Against Islamophobia. This small gesture is made in support of the families and loved ones of the victims of the Quebec City mosque attack.

We are here to debate Bill C-59, which seeks to implement the budget. This bill can be described as an omnibus bill. It is a bit of a hodgepodge. There is a tremendous amount of items in there that affect many different topics. Today, I will be talking about the environment, housing, pregnancy, vaping, business transfers, psychotherapy and tax havens. Why will I be focusing on all these topics? It is because Bill C-59 addresses them all and many more, but these are the ones that interest me the most.

When I was in my riding over the holidays, I kept hearing the same thing when I met with constituents. Based on what I was told, people sometimes get the impression that they have no idea what we do in Ottawa or what measures we are working on. When they listen to the radio and watch television, they hear slogans from the different parties geared to the next election. The election is not due for another year and a half. In the meantime, we have work to do as parliamentarians, as elected members. That is what people elected us for.

There are bills that are currently before Parliament, including this economic statement. I think that we need to analyze them. Even though it may be a rather tedious job, we need to analyze everything in the bill and determine what is good and what is not so good. Obviously, as with any omnibus bill, there are some things that are good and some that are less good, and we need to strike a balance between the two.

Unfortunately, there are two key measures in Bill C-59 that make it impossible for the Bloc Québécois to support it. Because of those two measures, we cannot vote in favour of the bill, despite the fact

that, as I was saying, it does contain some good and important measures, although some of them could use a bit of tweaking. Quite simply, voting in favour of the bill would fly in the face of our party's values and those of Quebeckers. I am talking about our environmental values and the importance that we place on protecting the jurisdictions of the provinces and Quebec. What poses a problem for us is the measures that the government describes as environmental, which I would say are more pseudo-environmental, and one of the housing measures.

I want to start with these two measures. First, the government is offering a total of \$30.3 billion in subsidies, in the form of tax credits, primarily to oil companies. This means that taxpayers will be paying oil companies to try and pollute less. That is essentially my understanding of the tax credits that are being offered.

As for the second measure I was talking about, the government is going to create a federal department of municipal affairs. A similar department already exists in Quebec and the provinces, and it manages municipal affairs. The federal government has decided to legislate in this area and create a department of housing, infrastructure and communities. This means more interference, more disputes and more delays. Why is it taking so long for Quebec and the federal government to agree on certain projects? It is because the federal government wants to impose conditions, and that delays the process. I fail to see how creating another department will help facilitate that process.

Let us begin with the much-discussed tax credits for oil companies. Quite frankly, they do not need any handouts. According to the Centre for Future Work, the oil and gas extraction sector has raked in record profits in recent years, to the tune of roughly \$38 billion over three years. Everyone heard me correctly. I said the government wanted to add another \$30 billion to that \$38 billion, as though they needed it. When I look at those astronomical amounts, I think about all the other areas where the federal government could invest money, for example to help people cope with the rising cost of living.

It is being reported that roughly 70% of shareholders in the oil and gas sector are foreign. In other words, that money is going to leave the country. In the last two budgets, the government announced its plans to introduce no fewer than six tax credits largely for oil companies. According to information and figures provided by the Department of Finance, these investments will total a whopping \$83 billion by 2035.

• (1255)

People talk about the climate crisis and say that we need to do more to fight it. This government's solution is to give the oil companies more money to create more pollution. I have a hard time following that logic.

Government Orders

This bill will amend the Income Tax Act by creating two tax credits. The first is a tax credit for investments in clean technology. We are talking about a \$17.8-billion investment in clean technology. That sounds promising and desirable, but on closer inspection, it becomes clear that the tax credit is tailor-made for increased bitumen extraction and gas exports.

The oil sands are essentially tar mixed with soil. Extracting it is energy-intensive. Hot water or steam has to be injected into the ground to liquefy the tar, which then floats on polluted water to be recovered. Oil companies currently use gas to heat this water.

However, the industry would rather export its gas than use it to extract oil. That is timely, since there is a new liquefied natural gas terminal being built on the coast of British Columbia. It is a gateway to Asia. TC Energy has almost completed the Coastal GasLink pipeline and the Shell and LNG Canada liquefied natural gas terminal should be operational in about a year. The only thing left is to make more gas available for export and that is where the clean technology investment tax credit comes in.

Under Bill C-59 the oil companies would be paid to buy small nuclear reactors. That nuclear energy, which would replace the gas they are currently using, would allow them to extract more bitumen and make more gas available for export, all at taxpayers' expense. I am not going to get into that today, but we have already talked about how small nuclear reactors are not such a good idea, for various reasons.

Yes, the tax credit can be used for other purposes, such as a real transition to renewable energy. Some good examples are in the manufacturing sector, including the use of biomass by paper mills and the development of carbon-neutral aluminum. I think that would be a good way to use this tax credit. However, given the enormity of the investments needed for the oil companies to use nuclear energy to extract more bitumen, we can expect the oil companies to pocket most of the profits.

As for the second tax credit, the one for carbon capture, utilization and storage, we are talking about an investment of \$12.5 billion. Since I have only two minutes left, I will unfortunately not have time to talk about the positive aspects. That is too bad, because I really wanted to explain to my constituents all the little measures I mentioned at the beginning. I will therefore continue to talk about the tax credit for carbon capture, utilization and storage, because I find it quite interesting that the government is touting this as an environmental measure when, once again, the government is merely helping the oil companies perhaps pollute a little less. Rather than accelerating the transition to renewable energy, the government would rather help them in that way. Oddly enough, this tax credit is only available to businesses in Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia.

Carbon capture and storage is an experimental technology through which big polluters would recover some of the carbon dioxide that they emit and store it underground, usually in old empty oil wells. That is a key element of the oil companies' and the government's pseudo-environmental strategy, even though the International Energy Agency, which is part of the OECD, believes that countries would be making a serious mistake if they were to make carbon capture the focus of their environmental strategy. The

International Energy Agency believes that such technology is smoke and mirrors, that it is as of yet unproven and that, if it were to one day be used on an industrial scale, it would produce only marginal results at an exorbitant cost.

Even knowing all that, the federal government wants to move forward with this technology. Why? To pander to the oil companies, of course. Independent media outlet The Narwhal released a document obtained through the Access to Information Act that shows that Suncor helped to write the government's environmental policy, particularly the section on carbon capture found in Bill C-59. In December, we learned that the government met with oil and gas lobbies at least 2,000 times between 2022 and 2023.

• (1300)

That shows just how involved the oil companies are in writing the Liberal government's strategies. This will do nothing to help Quebecers and Canadians fight the climate crisis. That is why we will be voting against this bill.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think of foreign investment, government policy on legislation and budgetary measures. Working with Canadians, on a per-capita basis, when we talk about gross number of dollars being invested in Canada, Canada is actually number one in the world with respect to foreign investment. Much of that investment goes toward renewable energy. Canada is now a leader when it comes to electric batteries. The value of communities are increasing greatly because of the mega-plants going into them, Volkswagen being one of them.

Does the member recognize, whether through things like trade agreements and government policies, that we have seen an enhancement in investment that will ultimately contribute to the world because of many of the green projects that are taking place in Canada today?

• (1305)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Madam Speaker, of course, when the government wants to invest just over \$30 billion in clean technologies, names like that make a good impression. The government gets to feel like it is clearly investing in the environment. However, knowing that most of this money is going to the most polluting sectors of our economy, I wonder whether there is a way to ensure that this money is invested solely in renewable energy, not in the most polluting sectors. I do not know whether the strategy can be rewritten, but surely there is a way.

Government Orders

At this time, I cannot congratulate the federal government for investing in green energy when I see that it is investing most of its money in carbon storage, utilization and capture. As I was saying, this technology is still unproven. It is very expensive and yields very few results. Most companies have not yet begun to implement these technologies, and yet our greenhouse gas reduction targets are just around the corner.

How are we going to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, even if we invest all this money? I do not know.

[*English*]

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Madam Speaker, given that we are discussing the fall economic statement, is she concerned with the increase in the size of the national debt? In 2015, the national debt was \$600 billion. After eight years, the government actually managed to double it. In fact, it has spent more money than all other prime ministers combined.

Is she not concerned that we are on the wrong trajectory and that we need to get our budgets under control?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Madam Speaker, I agree that we need to spend smarter. We do not need new investments. The money we are already investing needs to be spent on different things.

This \$30 billion is going mostly to oil, but why not invest it in health transfers to the provinces instead? The government could also give more to Quebec for housing and allow Quebec to implement its own projects with the municipalities. There are plans on the table, and organizations are just waiting for federal funding. In my own region, apparently people got the green light from Quebec City and wanted to move forward, but there is no more money because the CMHC affordable housing fund is empty.

Why not invest the money better and then balance public finances?

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech, which clearly set out the Liberal government's inconsistencies and contradictions when it comes to the environment.

She had an excellent question for the Conservative leader, who does not talk about the environment and the climate crisis at all.

What does she think about the Conservatives' specious solution of using carbon capture to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions?

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Madam Speaker, carbon capture and storage is not a solution. The UN tells us so. The OECD and the International Energy Agency tell us not to focus all our efforts on that, not to put all our eggs in the carbon storage basket, because it will not work. We will not be able to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions as much as we would like or hope.

The government is quite ambitious, I must say. It has set its greenhouse gas reduction targets fairly high. However, it is not doing anything to reach them. The commissioner of the environment and sustainable development told us not long ago, in 2023, that a few measures here and there were good, but that the government

was dragging its feet on implementing them. That is why it is not delivering results.

The Conservative Party says that we need to get into carbon capture and storage, which they say is a good idea. Clearly, the party has not been getting its information from scientists, because they say that carbon capture and storage is not a good idea.

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, since this is my first time rising to speak in 2024, I too would like to take a moment to wish you and the people of Terrebonne, whom I represent, a happy new year.

Speaking of 2024, the clouds continue to gather and cast a shadow over the sunny ways this government promised a long time ago. Every elected member of the House was able to see, when they went home for the holidays, that Canadians and Quebeckers may finally have something in common: They are very worried.

If we look closely at the key economic indicators, we have to admit that they are right to be worried. Housing prices continue to skyrocket, since vacancy rates are at record lows. What is more, food prices are soaring. We are still waiting for the postpandemic economic growth that was promised. When this economic statement was presented, there was no denying that urgent action was needed. Urgent action is still needed now.

This government keeps assuring us that it is there to continue making progress for Canadians and that it will continue to be there. It was therefore with little hope that the Bloc Québécois and I did a deep dive into this economic statement. We wanted to see how, faced with so many challenges, the Liberal government would try to take action.

Let us start at the beginning, with small and medium-sized enterprises. Last month, Statistics Canada published its figures on the health of our SMEs. Urgent action was needed for nearly 170,000 Canadian businesses that were in complete uncertainty. They were in limbo then, and they still are now. They had a choice between owing a lot of money, up to \$60,000, to the government or owing money to a financial institution that, as we know, offers loans with very high interest rates. Some business owners have paid back the \$40,000 by remortgaging their home or by dipping into their line of credit. Just imagine how much pressure these people are under after devoting their life to their business. If we do the math, we see that these 170,000 businesses represent a little less than 13% of all Canadian businesses with employees. More than one in 10 businesses is currently operating in a state of uncertainty, unable to repay its loan or unsure about its ability to repay it.

Government Orders

Businesses, particularly SMEs, are not just the backbone of our economy. They are also a key part of the social fabric of many of our communities. However, in the economic statement, the government does absolutely nothing to help our SMEs and has decided to ignore the unanimous calls from the Quebec National Assembly, all of the premiers of all of the provinces, including Quebec, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and the Association Restauration Québec. They have all asked that the CEBA loan repayment deadline be extended. The government ignored them. It is simple. We have been and are still calling for the government to set up a direct line of communication with businesses that are having problems or that have questions. We are calling for flexibility regarding a program that the government created and then offloaded onto financial institutions.

How can the government fail to understand that urgent action must be taken, when all politicians and businesses are unanimously asking it to prevent a wave of bankruptcies? This is urgent.

Urgent action is also needed to address the unprecedented housing crisis. Over the past five years, the average rent in Quebec has increased by 25%, and CMHC predicts that this trend will continue until 2025, with an increase of up to 30%. This means that a growing number of households are spending more and more of their disposable income on housing, while the price of other necessities also continues to rise. The cost of food, for example, increased by 5.9% in 2023, forcing the average family to pay an extra \$700 a year to put food on the table. Since household income is not keeping pace with price increases, people's purchasing power is shrinking. Every year, Quebecers and Canadians are gradually losing a huge proportion of their disposable incomes to pay for necessities like housing. In plain English, I am talking about how much they are paying just to get by.

An emergency homelessness fund is also urgently needed to address the unprecedented crisis currently affecting Quebec and Canada. In Quebec, homelessness has increased by 44% in five years, which translates into nearly 10,000 people experiencing visible homelessness. This does not include hidden homelessness, which at any given time affects 8% of the population, mostly women. These are the coldest months of the year, and tens of thousands of people do not have a roof over their heads. The Bloc Québécois understood that urgent action was needed to deal with the situation, so it proposed establishing an emergency fund to help cities and municipalities support people experiencing homelessness.

What does the economic statement have to say about that? Let us look at the housing page. Alas, there is nothing.

• (1310)

There is nothing planned until 2026. Is that what urgent action means to the current government? It seems like it. True, the government is eliminating the GST on housing construction, but Professor François Des Rosiers, who teaches real estate management at Université Laval, says that this measure will do nothing to solve the rental housing shortage because costs keep rising. This was hardly the best measure to propose when urgent action was needed.

Worse yet, to top it all off, the government announced in its economic update that it will be creating a new department of housing, infrastructure and communities, to give the impression that it is do-

ing something. The government essentially wants to establish a department of municipal affairs. That is called interference. We already have a federal department of housing, infrastructure and communities, but Quebec also has its own minister responsible for infrastructure.

This announcement is likely the most important one that was made in the economic statement, but it is also the emptiest. Rather than actually dealing with the crisis, like the Bloc Québécois suggested by calling for the implementation of an emergency fund or an interest-free or very low interest loan program to stimulate the construction of affordable rental and social housing, the government is promising money in two years and creating a department of interference.

The Bloc Québécois clearly identified priorities and even possible solutions to deal with the problems in each of these areas. We did the work for this government. However, the economic statement does not offer much in the way of new measures. At best, it reiterates the measures announced in the last budget. At worst, it completely ignores issues that are essential for the future of Quebec's and Canada's prosperity. Here is a very good example. In this budget, there is only one paragraph about the Canada emergency business account.

It sums up the announcement made in September about the extra 18 days to pay off a \$40,000 loan. Yes, 18 days. How generous. Clearly the government does not understand the meaning of the word "emergency" because, when there is an emergency, action needs to be taken. For eight years, this government has been hindering Quebec's prosperity. Whenever the Liberals are forced to take action, they consistently fail. Just look at the passport crisis, the housing crisis, the fight against climate change or even running water on reserves. They dislike taking action so much that they have to hire consultants to do the work for them.

In two months, the Deputy Prime Minister will table a new budget. I hope it will be better than this economic statement. I hope it will be better for Quebec. Regardless, it will be just be one more reminder that there will never be a better budget for Quebecers than a budget prepared by a sovereign Quebec.

• (1315)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I disagree with much of what the member said. I am sure she is not surprised by that particular comment. She referred to purpose-built housing, homes and apartments, where we are getting rid of the GST to encourage more growth. It is projected that there will be literally thousands of new units built as a direct result. Likewise, we now have provincial jurisdictions that are doing this with the PST.

Would the member not agree that, if the provinces are now trying to duplicate what the federal government is doing, in an attempt to increase the supply of purpose-built homes, it is a good thing? Would she not support that?

Government Orders

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné: Madam Speaker, my answer is quite simple: It is totally inadequate. It will probably not get any new rental and affordable housing built. Why? Interest rates are too high.

It may make sense on a small scale, but interest rates are so high right now that no one is interested in borrowing money to build rental and affordable housing. It is totally inadequate.

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleagues for their comments, which illustrate that the money provided by the federal government, by way of our taxes, I would point out, is not being invested in the right place.

Speaking of urgent needs, there are two files we have been working for years, even though they both concern federal programs and involve no interference. The federal government spends more time interfering than looking after its own affairs.

Old age security for our seniors is urgent, and so is employment insurance reform for workers in struggling socio-economic regions. These are two key measures for supporting Quebecers. I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

● (1320)

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague and friend for her excellent question.

Old age security is indeed essential for many people who have reached a certain age and need it to live on. We also know that inflation is causing major headaches for these people who still need to put food on the table and keep a roof over their heads. However, the government did not increase old age security for all age groups, as it should have, despite the bill that was passed and that had been introduced by the Bloc Québécois.

Another great example is employment insurance. It is one of the few files that is in the federal government's hands. How long have we been waiting for the reform, one year, two years or three years? I do not know how long it has been. Where is that reform? Why is there still nothing for employment insurance?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, when it comes to housing, we know that the government is not doing enough or acting quickly enough. However, there are ideas being floated, like creating an acquisition fund for non-profit organizations. There are other proposals.

I wonder what sort of action the member would like to see the federal government take on housing.

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné: Madam Speaker, my colleague gave the example of an acquisition fund. We completely agree with that idea. In fact, we asked the former housing minister directly what he thought about an acquisition fund. Unfortunately, we did not get any response. It would be a very good solution for quickly creating affordable rental housing and put a roof over people's heads.

We proposed establishing an emergency fund to address homelessness, which, as members know, has increased tremendously. I provided the figures in my speech. We are talking about another 10,000 persons who are experiencing homelessness. That is terri-

ble. We absolutely need to bring in emergency measures and not wait until 2026.

[*English*]

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am quite pleased to rise today to speak to this latest budget implementation act by the government.

I have been listening closely to the debate, so I would like to start by offering some comments on it so far. Then I am going to talk a bit more about the bill.

I had occasion to ask the Conservative leader not long ago here in the House about the problem of inflation that Canadians are experiencing. We know they are experiencing it, as we all are. When we go into a grocery store, we see the rising prices. We know people are struggling to stay in their homes. We see it on the street in our communities. We see more people pitching tents in order to have a roof over their head at night, such as it is. We hear stories, unfortunately, of cities focusing their energy on clearing out encampments of people with nowhere to go instead of trying to figure out how to create better homes that provide more warmth and support in a challenging winter. We are hearing about it from constituents, for instance, who are having to choose to cut pills or pay the rent. There are all sorts of ways in which this really difficult economic time is affecting Canadians, so the question for us here in Parliament is what to do about it.

Certainly, the Conservative leader has a lot of opinions on that. My question earlier was why, when he talks about inflation and the hardship that Canadians are experiencing, he does not mention whether it is just in Canada. There have been some incredible studies here in Canada saying that price increases over and above the increase in costs for large corporations are responsible for 25% or more of the inflation that Canadians have experienced, so I want to be really clear that those are not price increases. We know that, particularly, a lot of small and medium-sized businesses in our communities are experiencing higher costs and have to pass them on to their consumers. Even some big corporations are experiencing higher input costs, and some of that gets passed on to consumers. However, we are talking about price increases that go above and beyond that increase in costs.

Government Orders

It is no excuse to say that they are simply passing on those costs, because they are not. If 25% or so of inflation is attributable to price increases above the additional costs, it means corporations are taking that 25% home in profits. When we look at the profits of oil and gas companies, which increased by 1000% from 2019 to 2021, as an example, those were not increases of passing on costs. Some increases contributed to inflation by being additional price increases just for the purpose of paying higher dividends to corporate shareholders and bigger wages to corporate executives. Therefore, how can the Conservative leader pretend to be serious about addressing the problem of inflation when he is completely silent about the corporate greed that is driving a quarter or more of that very inflation? I would submit that it is not possible. It is not credible.

I am proud to be part of an NDP caucus in which the leader is willing to name that problem here in the House of Commons and acknowledge that we will not have a solution to the inflation problem in Canada if big corporations continue to feel they can increase prices with impunity. That is a major driver of inflation and hardship for Canadians. I think it speaks to the electoral choices that Canadians have. We have a Conservative opposition here that would frame itself as an alternative to the Liberals. However, if we actually look at this blind spot, the corporate-controlled Conservatives are not willing to acknowledge it, or do not see it, whichever it is. I will not speak to the question of intention here, but I will just say that it is a blind spot, whether wilful or not. What this means is that, if they were in government themselves, they would continue to do what the current government does. They would be prone to saying that the problems will go away if we just trust the market to deal with them. They would refuse to acknowledge the role that unbridled corporate greed is playing in creating the economic problem that Canadians are facing today.

One example of the ways this has manifested with the current government is with respect to housing. The real meat of its housing proposal in the fall was all about “creating more room for the market to solve the housing crisis”.

• (1325)

I do not really think we are going to get market solutions to the housing crisis. I do not think that is a revelation. I do not think that is particularly controversial. I know that the market, since the federal government, in the mid-90s, stepped away from producing non-market housing, has had 30 years to solve our housing problems. Instead of solving them, it has created a crisis that is accelerating and getting worse.

Simply freeing up Crown land and handing it off to developers to do what they will is not going to solve the problem. The same motive of corporate greed has been driving this housing crisis for decades now and has become particularly acute in the last few years, and nothing about that basic structure will have changed if we are still just expecting market players to solve this crisis.

We heard at the finance committee, from home developers, financiers and real estate people, that the market is not going to solve this problem. That is not to say that we do not need more market housing. It is not to say that there would not be more housing built by the market; of course there will be. That is not where we need the attention of government, though. The attention of government

has to be on the part that the market will not do and has not been doing, and that is non-market housing.

To say that we want to see the government focus specifically on non-market housing is not to discount the role of the market and market housing; it is just to say that the public policy attention of the government does not have to be there. In fact, the virtue of the market is supposed to be that the government does not have to get involved, so let them do their thing, but let us have the attention and the investment focus of our federal government be on addressing the very real problem of non-market housing, which has been neglected for 30 years and absolutely must return, in a significant way, in order for us to solve the housing crisis. It is a problem with the current government, and it will be a problem with any future Conservative government, because they share the same blind spot.

What are some of the other things we could do if we acknowledge the role that corporate greed is playing? That is where I think the NDP has played an important role in twisting the arm of the Liberal government to do some things, like a 2% share buyback fee, so that companies cannot just go ahead and, for various kinds of maximization of profit strategies for their shareholders or for the corporation itself, buy back shares as a way of transferring wealth to their shareholders without paying any tax at all.

It is of note, and something that New Democrats have been arguing for for a long time, well before this Parliament, that this legislation creates the possibility of implementing a digital services tax, which means a tax on the revenue of large, Internet-based companies, like Netflix and others, who, right now, are paying no tax in Canada at all. This does not make sense. They are not paying any corporate tax on the revenue that they raise in Canada. They get to walk it all out of the country for free.

That does not make sense, and it puts traditional broadcasters at a disadvantage. We are seeing the effects that is having on our media market and the ability to hire journalists and pay them to do the work that they do, which plays an important part. However much we may disagree sometimes with the way that news media outlets frame certain issues, their work is, nevertheless, important to a well-functioning democracy. The fact that their competitors have not had to pay any tax at all does a disservice not just to them but to Canadians, who rely on news content for the functioning of our democracy.

We have been pushing the government already in Bill C-56, and now again in the budget implementation bill, to make meaningful changes to the Competition Act that would allow for the Competition Bureau to play a greater and more effective role in ensuring that big corporations are not using their market power and their market position to pull one over on Canadians, to make the economy less competitive, and to have those outsized, excess price increases that I was talking about earlier, which are a significant factor in driving inflation.

Government Orders

● (1330)

Another thing we can do is to be willing to let corporations know, to the extent that they want to invest in Canada and create jobs in Canada, particularly in the natural resources sector, that there is an expectation that they are going to create good union jobs here in Canada in order to do it. That is why I am very proud of the labour conditions that are attached to the investment tax credits. This legislation would implement those labour conditions for the companies that are investing, with the use of this tax credit in clean technology, in carbon capture and storage. I am not actually that happy to hear about that technology, because I do not think that is the basket we should be putting our eggs in when it comes to emissions reduction; it's technology that has not been proven at scale. However, this government is determined to move ahead, and we hear a lot of positive comments about carbon capture and storage from Conservatives as well. Again, it is another shared blind spot of these two parties, the Liberals and Conservatives.

Nevertheless, if that investment is going to be taking place in Canada, I want it to create good union jobs, and I want companies to know that they have to be paying the prevailing wage of the collective agreements in the trade union sector. That means those companies are not going to come in competing on who can pay Canadians the least to do that work. They are going to come in and have to compete on the things we want them to be competing on: How efficient is the technology? How efficient are they at building it? What are their production techniques? That is the way they should be competing. When they are earning a contract, it should be on that basis and not on the basis of how little they are prepared to pay their workers.

Too often, in Canada, we have accepted a situation where we are happy to have companies come in and compete on the cost of labour and have a competition about who can pay Canadians the least to do a job that deserves a fair wage, good benefits and a proper pension. I am very proud that with this legislation we are going to be implementing, for the first time ever, conditions on an investment tax break that centres workers in the middle of it and has an apprenticeship requirement. Sometimes it can be a challenge to employers to hire apprentices. I have been an apprentice myself, and when I walked on the job site the first day, I did not know what I was doing. That is what an apprenticeship is like; it is meant to teach people. It is not always a profit maximization strategy for the employer in the short term.

In the long term, employers with foresight see the value of passing on that training and knowledge and creating a workforce they can avail themselves of, but we know there are employers for whom that is not their strategy. They have a short-term focus and want to bring on the journeypeople. They want someone else to train apprentices, and then they want to poach them later.

However, these tax credits will say that we, as a country, value training the trades workforce of tomorrow, and that if companies want a tax break on the investment, they have to be part of a culture of building that workforce and creating good jobs for Canadians, not just for today but also into the future, giving them the tools they need in order to be able to do that.

We saw a Conservative government in Ontario use bankruptcy laws to shut down a post-secondary education institution. My colleague for Timmins—James Bay did a lot of work on raising awareness about what was wrong with that; it should never be done again. New Democrats have spearheaded the effort to get that done, and in this budget bill what we see is a provision that says that the bankruptcy and insolvency laws of Canada and the CCAA will not be able to be used again in the future to perpetrate that kind of nasty closure on a public institution. I am very proud of the work my colleagues have done on that, and it is something that I think ought to go forward.

I want to come back to the housing question, because it is an important one. I said earlier that I thought in the fall that the Liberals' focus was on market solutions and that that is not where the focus of the government really needs to be, certainly not to the exclusion of working on non-market solutions. In this bill, what do we see? Well, the only thing that is really happening on the housing front is the creation of a new department of housing infrastructure and communities, which is just merging two departments that already exist. This is not what we do in the face of a crisis. This is not an administrative crisis; it is not that people are not pushing enough paper. It is that there is not enough housing getting built, and changing the name of the department without prioritizing things like recapitalizing the coinvestment fund, one of the few federal funds that is actually building non-market housing, does not make sense. It does not make sense to prioritize shuffling the words in the department name around over advancing that funding.

● (1335)

In the fall economic statement, the recapitalization that was much touted by the government as its action on the urgent housing crisis was back-loaded in the budget tables, meaning it will not be coming for another two years. This is particularly shameful when we consider that the territory of Nunavut alone has been asking, on an urgent basis, for \$250 million to address the housing crisis that it is seeing and to meet the needs that the territorial government is being asked to respond to.

We did not see a mention in the fall economic statement, and there is nothing in the bill, around the Kivalliq hydro link, which is a project that will help deliver power into parts of Nunavut. I hope it will also be accompanied with more broadband access in order to set the stage for more economic development in parts of Nunavut, as well as to try to reduce the reliance in Nunavut on diesel in order to power communities instead of bringing hydro up or, in the long term, perhaps, being able to produce enough electricity in a sustainable way that it could become a seller and bring own-source revenues to Inuit communities in Nunavut. That is the kind of long-term infrastructure investment that would make a lot of sense and that we do not see.

Government Orders

Another important investment would be to upgrade the Cambridge Bay airport, which is an important hub for Nunavut. When we talk about Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic, we know that the best way to enhance it is to invest in the people who live there and provide them the tools and resources they need in order to have a strong economy, live in appropriate housing and have access to the services that people rightly expect in the 21st century.

Instead, the rumour we have been faced with now for at least a month on Parliament Hill, a little longer if we go back to early December, is that the government is contemplating deep cuts at Indigenous Services Canada. New Democrats certainly want to know more about what the government is contemplating and the effects it will have on first nations, Inuit and Métis communities across the country. It is an area of significant concern for us and something that is not addressed here but that we expect to see addressed in the budget in terms of what the government's plan is and how we are going to ensure that indigenous communities are not once again left holding the bag when a government decides it wants to save money and continue a culture of corporate tax cuts.

I want to come back to the question of the role that large corporations are playing in driving inflation. A report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer as recently as December 2021 said that just 1% of Canada's population owns and controls 25% of all of the wealth of the country, and the bottom 40% of income earners in Canada share just 1% of all of the wealth that is produced in Canada. If we think about it, that 25% number is 5% higher than it was at the turn of the century.

What has happened since the year 2000 is that the proportion of wealth controlled by the top 1% increased by those five percentage points. I do not mean it increased by 5%; I mean that it went from 20% of overall wealth to 25% of overall wealth. In the same time, the corporate tax rate came down from 28% to just 15% today.

We talk about Canadians feeling the squeeze and about the middle class being expected to pay more in taxes to make up for government spending, but the big hole in government revenue comes from the people in that 1%, who are walking away with that much more of Canada's overall wealth than they used to because they pay significantly less tax than they used to.

That is why people wonder why it is that government cannot have a robust housing strategy. We used to be able to do it, and we did it coming out of the war. Well, yes, the marginal tax rate that the richest Canadians paid coming out of the war was way higher than it is today, and the corporate tax rate was way higher than it is today. Those things provided the revenue to invest in the middle class that then became the foundation for economic prosperity that lasted for decades. The reason that economic prosperity is drying up and the middle class is feeling the heat so much is that successive Liberal and Conservative governments have let the people at the top off from having to pay their fair share.

That is what is making the difference in Canada. The fact that the Conservative leader will not name it means he will not fix it, and that is what Canadians need to know heading into the next election.

• (1340)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to follow up on a question regarding housing, because the member spent a lot of time speaking to housing. In the last number of years, and I made reference to this earlier, we have seen the federal government really getting into the area of housing. For many years nothing was being done, nothing was being developed.

Today we can talk about the billions, but, more important, we can also talk about the need for the three levels of government to come to the table to address the housing issues that the member references. I am very sympathetic to the people living in bus shelters and so forth in the city of Winnipeg.

Would he not agree that all three levels of government need to step up to deal with the housing crisis today?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, there certainly is work to do at all levels of government to address the housing crisis. The foremost role of the federal government in all this is as funder. Those other levels of government will come to the table when there is enough funding on the table to talk about making a significant difference.

One of the things that would help, in addition to the funding itself, would be a far more regular offer. We are still having debates about when more money will be put into the co-investment fund, which is, as I said earlier, the fund that has produced the most non-market housing. Why is there not an annual offering? Why is this a question?

The housing crisis took decades to develop. It is going to take a long time to solve. The idea that the federal government is just going to offer this money willy-nilly and not regularly on an annualized basis, so other levels of government can plan for the level of investment that is coming not just over the short term but the medium and long term, is laughable.

The federal government needs to make annual commitments with a warning. We should not be needing to have this debate every time the fund is depleted. There is no way it is going to offer enough money in one offering to not have it depleted. Other levels of government need to know when the replenishment is coming so we can actually plan into the future for how we are going to solve this crisis.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was a little concerned about some of the comments the member was making. We all know that one of the reasons wealth has increased in Canada is in relationship to the increase in assets that many Canadians have through home ownership. One of the reasons those assets increased in value so much over the last number of years is because we did not build enough homes to keep up with the demand for housing.

Government Orders

Why does the New Democratic Party continue to prop up a government that has not done enough to get more homes built? Why will it not lose its confidence in the government so we can have an election and Canadians can make a decision for themselves about which party will make the best housing policies for our country?

• (1345)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, we respect the decision that Canadians made in an election about two short years ago, and we have seen it as our task to work in the context that Canadians created in order to deliver on the promises we made to Canadians, like a dental care plan, for instance, on which we have been working. People are receiving their letters to register for that program now. We will continue to do the work in the Parliament Canadians elected.

We have a lot to say both now and at election time about what the Liberals have done on housing, what we would do differently and the glaring deficiencies of the so-called Conservative plan when it comes to housing. The idea that somehow we are going to have an election and the housing crisis is going to go away because those guys are going to do something different than these guys, when they are both obsessed with market solutions, is a little rich. No, I do not believe that, and I am prepared to do the work in the Parliament Canadians elected.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, happy new year to you and to all of my colleagues. I hope we will be gracious in our debates in 2024, if such a thing is possible.

I thank my colleague for his speech, in which he talked extensively about housing. I think that off-market housing is, in fact, one of the solutions. We need to work on that. There are countries in Europe where between 20% and 30% of the housing stock is off-market housing. That is huge. In Canada, it is only 5%. We really have a lot of work to do. On the Island of Montreal, 1% of property owners own one-third of all the housing stock. The situation is the same in Vancouver and Toronto. We need to address that.

The financialization of housing is a phenomenon that basically did not exist at the time the federal government was investing in housing, or before 1993. Now it is a factor. What can we do to address that problem? Does my colleague have any solutions?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, obviously, I think there is not just one thing, but several things we can do to tackle this problem.

One of the things we could do is create an acquisition fund so that non-profits can have a chance to acquire a building when it comes on the market. Right now, they cannot access the necessary capital quickly enough to make an offer before a big company makes an offer and acquires that building. That is one solution.

Another is to make sure that the big companies that are in the housing market pay a reasonable amount of tax, because there are mechanisms they use to avoid paying the regular amount of tax.

I also think that building more off-market housing will have an effect on market value if people have the opportunity to buy off-market housing.

[*English*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I could not agree more with my hon. friend from Elmwood—Transcona and his analysis. When we talk about inflation, we cannot leave out excess corporate profits. He referred to the large, unprecedented profits from oil companies.

Does he agree with me that it essentially amounts to profits from war profiteering, because the profits went through the roof when Putin invaded Ukraine?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, we absolutely should have an excess profit tax on the oil and gas industry. We have seen it make a 1,000% increase in an industry that was already very profitable over the last number of years. This indicates that is not something where it is marking up prices to keep up with inflation. It saw an opportunity. The war was certainly part of that opportunity. It is shameful for companies to be using a global conflict to jack up its prices. They should not be allowed to do it.

We have the power in Canada. Some of our allies have exercised the power that they have in their own jurisdictions, including a Conservative government in the U.K., which implemented an excess profit tax on the oil and gas sector. Why, in Canada, can we not find people on the government benches with the courage to do the same and reinvest some of those excess profits in the Canadian economy and in Canadians themselves?

It is a real disappointment and it is certainly something that we will continue to talk to Canadians about, including at election time.

• (1350)

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to hear from the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona, who does a masterful job of highlighting the hypocrisies and contradictions of both Liberals and Conservatives. He raised a very important question today about workers.

He spoke about our responsibility to workers. I want to take a moment and highlight a recent visit we had to IBEW's training facility in Alberta, the 424 Union. It is doing a fantastic job training the next generation of workers in Alberta. We heard from it that our federal government had a responsibility.

When it comes to procurement, there are some construction and infrastructure contractors out there who do something called "double breasting". They make applications with union workers and then they come through and make applications with another side of their company with non-union workers, essentially driving down the prevailing wage on the backs of not just the workers but taxpayer investments as well.

Government Orders

Could the hon. member, who I know is a proud member of IBEW, speak to the importance of a good prevailing wage and the procurement power of a federal government to ensure that workers get paid that union rate with good benefits and great pensions?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, that important question highlights the important role that government decision-making plays in honouring the idea that workers deserve respect and they deserve fair wages. That is why it is important to have good labour laws. That is why I am proud that we are pushing for anti-scab legislation and that the bill is beginning to progress through the legislative process.

There are other things we can do to reinforce collective bargaining rights and we do not do that when we allow this kind of double-breasting to go on, which undermines workers.

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Speaker, happy new year to you and to all colleagues in the House.

Today, we have the opportunity to speak to Bill C-59, which is the legislation that would implement the initiatives in the fall economic statement before Christmas.

Before I get too much further, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Nepean.

One of the things I contemplated over the Christmas break was the decorum in this place. I know that will be something on which those who sit in the chair will be focused. I will commit to those who are here today, and indeed to the House, that we will have robust debate but we should try to keep it within the confines of respectful debate at the same time.

The fall economic statement from this government was focused on two core issues: affordability and housing. Those are top-of-mind issues at home in Kings—Hants. I want to talk first about the economic context, because affordability is a top-of-mind issue, but it is important for my constituents, and for Canadians across the country, to understand where we are at in the current economic context. If all they did was listen to the Conservative opposition bench, they would never really understand some of the positive things that are happening vis-à-vis Canada's economic growth and particularly our investment climate right now.

Inflation is a global issue. The last statistic by Statistics Canada shows that Canada had a 3.4% inflation rate in the month of December 2023, and we are working to try to help bring that under control. However, where does Canada rate in a global context? I pulled out some statistics from around the world: Germany, 3.7%; France, the same; U.K., just over 4%; and United States is on par with Canada. I would submit that Ireland, India, Australia and New Zealand are all comparable countries and they have higher inflation rates than Canada right now.

I know that is cold comfort. I do not say this to Canadians and to my constituents to suggest that this government will rest on its laurels, but it is important, because when we hear the opposition members talk, they suggest that Canada is a laggard in the world with respect to the affordability question. We have work to do and we will continue to do that work. However, make no mistake, it is important to contextualize that as we move forward.

How about our debt-to-GDP ratio? When we listen to the member for Carleton and the opposition, they would suggest that Canada is in a terrible situation vis-à-vis its debt-to-GDP ratio. That is not the case. Canada is actually a leader in the G7 with respect to net debt-to-GDP ratio and it also has the lowest deficit in the G7. Again, we do not hear that being said very much from the opposition benches. It is important for Canadians to understand that.

The number that I thought was quite important is investment in the country. Yes, we want Canadian equity firms and Canadian businesses investing in our country, but we know that in a globalized economy we want other countries and companies around the world to come to Canada and invest in our economic success as well.

A number that is quite striking is foreign direct investment in 2023. Canada was third overall in the entire world. We are 40 million people. We are a relatively small country with respect to population in the world, but of course rich in resources and ingenuity. We are third in the world, not per capita but over all, behind U.S. and Brazil. That is an incredible feat. It is something of which every Canadian, and every member of Parliament in the House, should be proud. It is being driven by this government's view of investing and driving future growth, particularly in a transition to a lower-carbon economy. This is a significant number that Canadians should understand.

However, when we talk about affordability, we have to also balance spending with responsibility. We are in an environment now where we saw the Bank of Canada, through the governor, Tiff Macklem, hold interest rates at 5%. His indication to the Canadians, to the public, and to this government is that we will expect to see decreases in the benchmark interest rate over the next couple of months. That is extremely important.

I am proud of the way in which this government has walked a very careful line between putting out supports to vulnerable Canadians, but at the same time being mindful that we do not want the spending that does take place to further drive inflation. The Bank of Canada has been very clear that this has not happened to date, and it is important that this government continue to do this. I for one, and I know my colleagues in all corners of this place, will be focused on that question as well.

• (1355)

With respect to housing, I want to tell a story. I represent Kings—Hants, a rural riding in Nova Scotia, just outside Halifax in the beautiful Annapolis Valley. Come see us sometime. Indeed, that invitation is to all Canadians. I remember knocking on doors during the 2019 election, as a new candidate. I would go to rural areas of my riding, where there would be a for sale sign on a property. I would go in and talk to the homeowner, and I would note, of course, that they were trying to sell their house. They would say they were concerned they would never be able to sell their house. They had had it on the market for two years and were worried they would never be able to get the equity to be able to retire or move on with their life.

Statements by Members

If one were to come to my riding right now, there is little to no real estate available whatsoever. I want people to understand that, in fact, in Nova Scotia, that is a good thing because for years, we were concerned about our demographic trends. In fact, for my generation, as someone who is 33 years old, when I was coming out of university, there were a lot of folks who were actually moving elsewhere in the country. We have reversed that trend in Atlantic Canada. That is a good thing.

Economic growth and population growth are good things, but we need to have the housing to keep pace. We have heard commentary in this place about past iterations of federal governments, both Liberal and Conservative, that have not invested in housing, particularly social housing. I am pleased to say that this is something that has changed under the current government. The philosophy is to invest in public housing, along with market housing, which that the hon. member for Elmwood—Transcona mentioned. Both have to happen at the same time. I would point Canadians to the fact of our most recent investment, which is removing the HST on purpose-based rental housing.

Again, owning one's own home is extremely important, and we will want all Canadians to have that opportunity. However, some people are in a situation where affordable rentals are also extremely important. I have seen the cost of rentals go up, in the community of Kentville, for example, from being in the range of \$1,200 a few years ago to now upwards of \$2,000, because of the pressure we have seen.

All three levels of government have to be part of this.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Shafqat Ali (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we mourn the lives lost in a Quebec mosque seven years ago today and recognize the trauma suffered by Canada's Muslim community on account of Islamophobia.

We also mourn the tens of thousands of civilians, including thousands of innocent children, who have been killed by Israel in Gaza. The majority of Gaza's traumatized surviving population has been displaced and needs humanitarian intervention.

Three days ago, the International Court of Justice ordered Israel to take immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Out of respect for the rule of law, Canada should help Israel to comply with that order.

Canada and its allies should reinstate UNRWA funding, considering the devastating humanitarian cases in Palestine.

LUNAR NEW YEAR

Mr. Han Dong (Don Valley North, Ind.): Madam Speaker, I wish a happy new year to you and to everyone in the House.

Over the past holiday season, our diverse communities in Don Valley North and across Canada have come together to celebrate a range of festivities, including Hanukkah, Shabe Yalda, Christmas and the new year.

Building on the spirit of celebration and diversity, I would like to remind the House of the motion passed in 2016 that recognized the lunar new year in order to highlight our vibrant Asian communities and the invaluable contributions Asian Canadians are making to our society. The auspicious dragon symbolizes strength and prosperity. This year the dragon heightens fortune for those born in the years of the rat, tiger, horse and rooster.

I want to wish everyone a happy, healthy, and prosperous lunar new year. *Gong xi fa cai. San nin fai lok. Saehae bok mani badeuseyo. Chúc mừng năm mới.*

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are many kinds of silence: the silence of indifference, the silence of complicity and the silence of cowardice. The government's refusal to take a clear position on South Africa's baseless case at the ICJ, its about-face on its once-respectable UN voting record and its abject failure to protect Jews in this country betray all three of those vices.

Calls for the extermination of Jews in Canada have been normalized by the morally bankrupt Liberal brain trust. On Canadian values, the Prime Minister responds with silence, only to amplify the hate. Worse, he stokes it. This weekend's International Holocaust Remembrance Day should have been a stark reminder that “never again” is right now.

Silence in the face of lies can be as damaging as the deliberately confusing position of the Prime Minister. He has one group of MPs say one thing to one community, and he sends another group to say the exact opposite to another community. The calculated silence may be deafening, but everyone hears their shameful cynicism loud and clear. Canadians will get the moral clarity they deserve when—

The Speaker: The hon. member for St. John's East.

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Ms. Joanne Thompson (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with 2024 in full swing, our team is tackling head-on the issues Canadians are facing, with affordable housing, the Canada child benefit, child care, dental care, affordable home heating, green jobs and more money back in their pockets.

For St. John's East, I am focused on supporting residents through my constituency office, ensuring that Newfoundland and Labrador's unique needs are heard in Ottawa and building more housing, supporting seniors and families, and creating more local jobs.

We are putting Canadian families first, and this does not involve cuts, far right tactics or exploiting people's fears. That may get social media likes, but it does not get the job done.

We are pushing forward with legislation to help Canadians, all of which the opposition has voted against, signalling what it would do if it is in government.

* * *

[Translation]

ROGER POMERLEAU

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Roger Pomerleau has died. He took with him a small piece of Quebec's very soul. He loved Quebec and its people as fiercely as he cherished its language and its culture.

Roger Pomerleau was a Bloc Québécois member of Parliament from 1993 to 1997 and again for Drummond starting in 2008, when he succeeded the late Pauline Picard.

Above all, Roger was an outstanding party supporter. Whether for the Bloc Québécois or the Parti Québécois, Roger was active in every campaign. Anyone who ever saw former MP Roger Pomerleau campaign on the phone will no doubt have a vivid memory of the experience. He was a man of conviction and unfailing integrity and, first and foremost, he was a man of action.

Roger Pomerleau has left us to join other illustrious members of our political family, members with names like Lévesque, Bourgault, Miron, Julien, Leclerc, Landry, Falardeau and many others. We stand on the shoulders of these giants who are now gone, having eased the way for us to finally keep our promise to give Roger the little bit of country that we owe him, in return for everything he did to achieve it.

Farewell, Roger.

* * *

● (1405)

WISHES FOR THE NEW YEAR

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the year begins, I want to wish everyone in Sherbrooke a happy new year. I wish them a year of opportunities, a year of kindness to preserve our sense of safety, a year of good health. I also want to take this opportunity to thank everyone in my team who, day after day, endeavour to meet the needs of the public with skill and compassion as they support me in every aspect of my work.

Olivia is professional and experienced; Jacques is passionate and sensitive; Gabriel is capable and understanding; Marie is creative and approachable; Clémence is courteous and effective; Clément is curious and multi-talented; and Jocelyne manages finances carefully and diligently. I am very grateful to be able to rely on such a skilled and dedicated team. Their commitment helps us provide

Statements by Members

quality service and creates a positive and inspiring work environment. I thank them.

I wish everyone a happy new year.

* * *

[English]

EMERGENCIES ACT

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberal government is not worth the cost to Canadians' freedom.

In a landmark victory for the freedoms of all Canadians, the federal court has just confirmed what most Canadians already knew, that the use of the Emergencies Act in 2022 was illegal and unconstitutional. Two years ago, the Prime Minister decided to violate the charter rights of Canadians to deal with a political crisis of his own making. The decision to invoke the Emergencies Act directly violated Canadians' most essential rights to freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression. The federal court found that in the illegal use of the act, reasons were not provided for the decision to declare a public order emergency, and that it did not satisfy the requirements of the Emergencies Act.

A Conservative government led by the Leader of the Opposition will ensure that the Emergencies Act can never again be used to silence political opposition. Conservatives will always defend the rights—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Kitchener South—Hespeler.

* * *

WENDI CAMPBELL

Ms. Valerie Bradford (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Monday, January 15, the Waterloo region lost a great community leader, with the passing of Wendi Campbell, the former CEO of the Waterloo region's food bank, a position she held for 15 years.

Wendi stepped up and completely revamped the delivery of food during the outbreak of COVID-19, which instantly precluded volunteers and staff from sorting food donations. She packed a lifetime of service in her short 53 years, procuring over 40 million pounds of food for the Waterloo region and surrounding areas.

Despite courageously battling cancer for 19 months, Wendi never lost the optimism that governed her life. My thoughts are with her husband, Craig; her parents, Robert and Barbara Oakes; and her children, Maddie and Ben, who lost their mother way too soon. She was truly inspirational and will be greatly missed by the entire community.

May her memory be a blessing.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, seven years ago, a heinous act took the lives of six men and injured 19 others at the Centre culturel islamique de Québec.

[English]

Ibrahim Barry, Mamadou Tanou Barry, Khaled Belkacemi, Abdelkrim Hassane, Azzeddine Soufiane and Aboubaker Thatbi were fathers, husbands, brothers and loved ones. They were targeted simply because of their faith, simply because they were Muslim.

Unfortunately, Canada has also seen an alarming rise in discrimination as a result of the conflict in Gaza. People who are Muslim, Palestinian and Arab feel what is happening intensely. They are yelling on the inside but are asked to be patient and to endure. They are feeling their freedom of speech curtailed.

Last year, the government appointed the first special representative on combatting Islamophobia. She has done an excellent job in addressing the issues.

* * *

● (1410)

[Translation]

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this Prime Minister, life has never been more difficult for Canadian families. Meanwhile, for him and his Liberal friends, life has never been better. Clearly, a Prime Minister who takes a free vacation worth \$84,000 is out of touch with the plight of Canadians who are struggling to make ends meet.

Many Canadians can no longer afford to live or to dream; they had to scale back or cancel their plans over the holidays because of Liberal policies that have driven up the cost of living. The Prime Minister has proven once again that he is out of touch with Canadians, that he thinks only of himself and that he is not the right man for the job. His office is doing its best to conceal his actions by using various manoeuvres and to lull us into believing a distorted version of the facts ahead of the ethics commissioner's appearance before the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

Canadians will not be fooled. They will remember this Prime Minister's luxurious activities and lifestyle.

* * *

[English]

TAMIL HERITAGE MONTH

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the month of January comes to an end, I want to take a moment to recognize Tamil Heritage Month.

I had the pleasure of visiting the Hindu temple in my riding to celebrate Thai Pongal. I want to thank the president of the Senior Tamils' Centre, Pari Srikanthan, for inviting me and Henry Soosaip-

illai for accompanying me. In keeping with the theme of “Tamilicious: Tamil Food”, we celebrated Thai Pongal.

We honour the vibrant and invaluable contributions Tamil Canadians have made to our country. We also recognize that Tamils faced discrimination and persecution, and many came to Canada to escape this. Today, the National Day of Remembrance of the Quebec City Mosque Attack and Action against Islamophobia, is a day that reminds us of this.

Let us build a Canada where all individuals, regardless of their backgrounds, feel they belong. Let us all fight discrimination and hate to keep Canada the inclusive and welcoming nation we are proud to call home.

* * *

CARBON TAX

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this NDP-Liberal government, life in Canada has become unaffordable. It is unthinkable to continue the inflationary carbon tax scheme while millions of Canadians are relying on food banks and are forced to choose between heating and eating.

The government surely understands there is no way to produce food without using energy to dry grain, to heat barns and to bring food to our grocery stores. The Prime Minister wants to quadruple the carbon tax from 14¢ per litre to 61¢ per litre. Farmers in my communities are paying thousands of dollars in carbon tax every month. The Prime Minister is just not worth the cost. The carbon tax carve-out is necessary for farmers to help fight food inflation. In response to the government's relentless pressure, the so-called independent senators gutted Bill C-234.

I call on the House to stop with the desperate tricks that are preventing farmers from getting the needed carve-out, drop the Senate amendments and send Bill C-234 back to the Senate in its original form.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the holidays, I heard how after eight years of this NDP-Liberal government, Canadians are struggling to pay their bills and keep roofs over their heads. They know that the Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

Our leader, my Conservative colleagues and I are back to show Canadians they have a simple choice in the next election. On the one hand they can have a costly coalition of the NDP and Liberals that takes their money, taxes their food, punishes their work, doubles their housing costs and unleashes crime and chaos in their communities or they can choose the common-sense Conservatives and our common-sense plan.

We are back to address the priorities facing Canadians, starting with a focus on passing Bill C-234 to take the carbon tax off farmers and to bring food prices down.

Our priorities are clear: axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime.

Let us bring it home.

* * *

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, seven years ago today, peaceful Muslim worshippers were gunned down in Quebec.

Three years ago, when the Afzaal family were brutally murdered because of their faith, every single political party leader in the House stood on the steps of the London mosque, recognized that Islamophobia is real and vowed to protect the Muslim community in the face of hatred.

Today, on the National Day of Remembrance of the Quebec City Mosque Attack and Action Against Islamophobia, we not only commemorate the victims and survivors but also reflect on whether we have taken action to combat Islamophobia in all of its forms, including the suppression of expression.

Our government declared January 29 a national day of remembrance, invested millions in our national anti-racism strategy and appointed a special representative on combatting Islamophobia.

More needs to be done by all political leaders in the House and indeed by all Canadians.

We remember.

* * *

● (1415)

[*Translation*]

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it was almost 8 p.m. on January 29, 2017, and evening prayers had just finished at the Quebec City mosque. Suddenly, a young man burst in and opened fire on those who were there. He killed six men and wounded 19 others in the worst racist terrorist attack in Quebec's history.

In the weeks and months leading up to this mass crime, the young man regularly visited the websites of right wing extremists and white supremacist influencers. Driven by fear and hate, he committed an unspeakable act. He coldly and methodically killed people because they were Muslim.

This reminds us that words and speech are important. Every word has power. We have a collective responsibility to fight Islamophobia and all forms of racism and dehumanization of any group of people. Let us work together to foster kindness, dialogue, understanding and friendship so we can build a world for everyone.

Statements by Members

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, seven years ago, a gunman killed six people and wounded 19 others at the Quebec City mosque just because they were Muslim.

This attack sent a shockwave across Quebec and made us all painfully aware that we are not immune to such hateful acts.

Justice was served and the gunman ended up in prison, where he belongs, but our society as a whole must now be vigilant to ensure that intolerance never becomes commonplace. In case some people need to hear it again, I want to say that freedom of religion is guaranteed in Quebec and that no one should feel threatened because of their faith.

Today, our thoughts are with the victims' families, with all Muslims in Quebec and with all Quebecers, who will always have to live with the consequences of this traumatic event. We all stand together in saying, "Never again".

* * *

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today is a difficult day for the Muslim community in Sainte-Foy and across Canada. In fact, it is a difficult day for all Canadians, as we mourn the six lives stolen by a heinous terrorist at the Centre culturel islamique de Québec on this day seven years ago.

[*English*]

Our thoughts are with their families, with the 19 people who suffered injuries in addition to those who were murdered and with the many others who are left with mental scars that will never fully heal.

As we reflect on the tragic fate they suffered as a result of this evil monster, we must also reflect on the promise of freedom, peace and safety that they were guaranteed as Canadians and that was viciously stolen by the forces of hate and Islamophobia.

It must never happen again. We must stand on guard for our Muslim friends and neighbours, for all Canadians, to have the right and the freedom to worship in peace and security.

* * *

SATHIAJOTHI SELVAKONE

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honour Dr. Sathiajothi Selvakone, a proud Tamil Canadian who lived a life of extraordinary service and impact. Like countless Tamil Canadians, Sathiajothi and her family were forced to flee the Tamil genocide in Sri Lanka, having personally endured the horrors of communal violence in the 1958 anti-Tamil pogrom.

Oral Questions

Sathiajothi became a pillar of the early Tamil community in British Columbia, helping to house and feed, and translate for, newly arrived Tamil refugees. She and her husband invested their time and resources to uplift the community while giving voice to the atrocities unfolding in their homeland. In 2022, Sathiajothi helped establish the Tamil chair at the University of Toronto to help preserve the Tamil language.

On January 3, surrounded by the love of her daughters, Suhanya and Meera, Sathiajothi peacefully departed from this world. She will be remembered as a loving mother, a lifelong learner and a fearless advocate for the Tamil people whose legacy lives on in the countless lives she has touched.

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● (1420)

[Translation]

NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE OF THE QUEBEC CITY MOSQUE ATTACK AND ACTION AGAINST ISLAMOPHOBIA

The Speaker: Following discussions among representatives of all parties of the House, I understand there is an agreement to observe a moment of silence to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance of the Quebec City Mosque Attack and Action against Islamophobia.

I would now invite hon. members to rise and honour the memory of the victims of the attack that happened seven years ago, on January 29, 2017.

[A moment of silence observed]

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me begin by welcoming the Prime Minister back to Canada after his big \$80,000-plus free vacation. It was a gift he received. He said the situation was like that of every other Canadian who has had a similar vacation.

Apparently, he has not spoken to the two million Canadians forced to use food banks to eat, or the students in Montreal who have to resort to alternative types of housing now that his policies have tripled the cost of rent in his hometown.

Will the Prime Minister reverse the inflationary policies that are preventing construction, so that our students can—

The Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, seven years ago today, six Muslim Canadians were murdered and 19 others were seriously injured in a terrorist attack at the Centre culturel islamique de Québec in Sainte-Foy, simply because of their religious beliefs.

We mourn the loss of those who were brutally murdered, and we stand with all those who have suffered because of Islamophobia, because of hate.

In the past few months, Muslim communities in Canada have witnessed a disturbing rise in hate speech and discrimination. Now, more than ever, we need to stand with—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, some two million Canadians are having to turn to food banks. Students are being forced to live in homeless shelters.

The cost of housing has doubled in Quebec City and tripled in Montreal. Across Canada, the cost of housing has doubled since this Prime Minister promised to reduce it.

Will the Prime Minister finally reverse the policies that are creating more bureaucracy and causing inflation, so that home builders can give Canadians an affordable place to call home?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative leader is resorting to personal insults to derail the debate on housing and prevent people from recognizing that he has no plan. Canadians know that shouting slogans does not build housing.

The leader tried unsuccessfully to delay removing the GST from rental construction and he voted against the housing accelerator fund, which is contributing to the construction of over half a million new homes.

We have made a great deal of progress and we will continue to do so.

* * *

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome the Prime Minister back from his \$80,000 vacation, which he got for free. He said, like most Canadians, friends welcomed him for that vacation. He took not one but two private jets paid for by the taxpayer, burning 100 tonnes of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. He wants to tax the heat and the food of Canadians.

Did he pay the full carbon tax on each of the 100 tonnes of emissions that he put into the atmosphere as part of his \$80,000 vacation?

● (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative leader has simply no plan to address climate change in this country and has no plan to increase the resilience of our communities in the fight against climate change.

Oral Questions

A warming climate causes droughts. Droughts damage crops. Damaged crops increase the cost of groceries. However, the Conservative Party cannot even agree on whether climate change is real.

We will achieve our emissions reductions, all the while sending Canadians cheques to help with the cost of rising prices. There are real solutions.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister says that greenhouse gas emissions are driving up grocery prices. He put 100 tonnes of emissions into the atmosphere for his personal vacation. This is high-tax, high-flying, high-carbon hypocrisy. Meanwhile, Canadians in Edmonton were facing -50°C temperatures on which they were paying carbon taxes just to heat their homes and to stay alive.

Given that he gives himself a free vacation at other people's expense, will he at least allow Canadians to heat their homes without his tax?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative leader likes to talk about the challenges Canadians are facing around the cost of living, but he refuses to take action and support them. He chose to delay the passage of Bill C-59, which is also hurting his own caucus.

Does the member for Battlefords—Lloydminster now suddenly oppose maternity leave for adoptive parents? Surely, the member for Cumberland—Colchester will not back down on his advocacy to remove the GST on therapy and counselling services.

While the Conservative leader is muzzling his own caucus and putting himself first, we will keep putting Canadians—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

* * *

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this one is just too easy. He walked into it. He had to muzzle a member from Newfoundland who called for an end to his leadership, joining another senator who did the same. They understand that their constituents are literally starving and unable to heat their homes because the Prime Minister is quadrupling the carbon tax, doubling housing costs and giving the worst inflation in 40 years.

Why will he not listen to, instead of intimidating, his member from Newfoundland and put his leadership of the Liberal Party up for a review?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the course of the fall, we have announced projects on housing that are going to create a half a million new homes across this country over the year. We are working hand in hand with community leaders and with mayors. We are making sure that we are moving forward on the priorities that are facing Canadians.

In terms of standing up for his caucus, the leader across the way will not even mention the fact that the person sitting three seats to his left sat and dined with a far-right Conservative German politician and wants to abolish the United Nations.

Is abolishing the United Nations now the official position of the Conservative Party of Canada?

* * *

[*Translation*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is going to take a while.

The House unanimously adopted a motion calling on the government to consult Quebec and the provinces on immigration targets. However, the government seems to be using the policies suggested by McKinsey and the Century Initiative, and even more, because at this rate, the population will hit 100 million by the end of the century.

Is the government disregarding the House's unanimous vote and injunction or will it review its policies with Quebec and the provinces?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, immigration is essential for Quebec and for Canada. Immigrants contribute to building new housing, they work in our health care system, they participate in growing economies and local businesses and much more.

We are meeting our economic needs, we are remaining true to our humanitarian commitments and we are developing a stabilized approach to immigration.

Our immigration levels are based on our capacity to welcome and integrate newcomers. We will continue to work in close collaboration with the provinces and territories, especially Quebec, to ensure that everyone has the—

● (1430)

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

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if things are stabilized at the current number, then things will be good in the coming decades. It seems to me like we are hearing the same thing as we did at the end of the last session. We are beginning a new session. Let us do so with a new state of mind.

The Premier of Quebec sent a letter asking the Canadian government to ensure the fair distribution of asylum seekers across Canada. That seems very reasonable to me. We are talking about humanitarian issues, not economic ones.

Will the Prime Minister do that, while also ensuring that Quebec's demographic weight is respected?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that Quebec has always been extremely generous to asylum seekers. We saw it at Roxham Road and we are seeing it in the current situation.

Oral Questions

The reality is that we will continue to be there to support Quebec's system and the communities that are so generous in welcoming people, while ensuring that everyone contributes.

Yes, we are working with Quebec and other provinces to ensure better distribution, as well as to address the challenges resulting from the increased number of temporary residents and asylum seekers.

* * *

[English]

HOUSING

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, things have gotten bad, really bad. The City of Edmonton had to declare a housing and homeless emergency.

The Conservatives are laughing about homeless people and a housing crisis, but Toronto had to declare one as well. Again, we hear the Conservatives laughing because they have no concern for people who are struggling with housing or who are homeless.

The Liberal government does not care either. The Liberals have been in power for nine years, and they do not get it. The Prime Minister does not get it, the Liberal minister in Edmonton does not get it and the 24 Liberal MPs in Toronto do not get it.

Why does this government wait until things are at a breaking point before acting?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

[Translation]

The Speaker: Everything was going well up until this point. I would ask the hon. members for Edmonton West and South Shore—St. Margarets not to speak unless the Chair has recognized them.

The right hon. Prime Minister.

[English]

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we said we would use every tool at our disposal to address housing affordability, we meant it. The Minister of Housing recently announced that post-secondary institutions can now access the apartment construction loan program for low-interest financing to build student housing. This builds on our work to find innovative and bold ideas to accelerate construction, including unlocking over 500,000 new homes through the housing accelerator agreement. These are more examples of the federal government in action.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister just does not get it.

[Translation]

Surprise, surprise, the Prime Minister has broken another promise. While the country's renovation rate is at an all-time high, he is refusing to take on the big investors as he promised to do.

Why does the Prime Minister say one thing on the campaign trail and then defend his friends' profits once in power?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we are taking action on several fronts. We are

promoting apartment and co-op construction by eliminating the GST on construction. We are removing barriers in order to get more homes built faster by working directly with municipalities, and we are helping Canadians save for a home with the first home savings account. We know there is still work to be done.

I invite all governments across the country to take bold steps alongside us to improve the cost of housing and speed up the construction of affordable housing.

* * *

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister must still have sand in his ears from his Jamaican vacation. That must be why he cannot hear the outcry from Canadians suffering from his carbon tax. While he was lining up at the all-inclusive, Canadians were lining up at food banks, and grocery prices jumped again, 38% higher than baseline inflation.

Now, a common-sense Conservative bill, Bill C-234, would help bring prices down by taking the tax off farm production. The only problem is this: Liberal senators gutted the bill.

Will the government reject the Senate amendments so the tax can come off and food prices can come down?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government absolutely understands that housing and the cost of living are challenges for Canadians. That is why we are aggressively working across the country to build more homes faster. The housing accelerator fund, with more than 30 agreements in place across Canada, will lead to 500,000 new homes being built. However, the question is this: What will the Conservatives cut? They know how to cut, but they do not know how to build. Canada needs builders right now.

• (1435)

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we will cut the waste and mismanagement driving up inflation in the first place by cutting the Infrastructure Bank, high-priced consultants and money sent to the Asian infrastructure bank to build projects overseas instead of here at home.

Oral Questions

However, the question was about the carbon tax and why the Prime Minister is so pathologically obsessed with it. He does not care that Canadians are going to food banks, that mothers are watering down milk or that seniors are skipping meals. He even sent one of his ministers to go bully Liberal senators into gutting the bill.

Once again, will they reject the Senate amendments so the tax can come off farming and food prices can come down?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the Conservatives talk about working families, everyone knows that those are crocodile tears. This is a party that has voted against early learning and child care, a revolutionary national program that is bringing down costs for hundreds of thousands of families across the country and allowing women to go to work. The Conservatives have voted against the Canada child benefit, which is a huge support for families across the country, and they are going to vote against dental care too.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the Prime Minister has an opportunity to help families struggling with high food costs. Bill C-234 is back in the House after Liberal-appointed senators delayed and gutted the bill. This is a common-sense Conservative bill that would give a carbon tax carve-out to farmers and ensure that Canadians have access to affordable, Canadian-grown food.

When the Prime Minister quadruples his carbon tax, farmers will pay \$1 billion a year, driving up food costs even higher. Will the Liberals reject the Senate amendments, take the carbon tax off farming and lower food prices for Canadians?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me tell members what is common sense for working families across our country: It is common sense to have a national system for early learning and child care, with fees reduced by 50% across the country and down to \$10 a day in seven provinces and territories. It is common sense to support hard-working families with the Canada child benefit, which has lifted millions of children and families out of poverty. It is common sense to do what we are going to do this year, which is providing dental care to our seniors, having provided it to our children.

The Conservatives opposed every single one of those things.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is uncommon to see a government ignore the fact that two million Canadians are going to a food bank every single month, yet the Liberal-NDP carbon tax coalition wants to quadruple the carbon tax, making farming unsustainable. When we tax the farmer who grows the food and tax the trucker who hauls the food, we are increasing taxes on Canadians who buy the food. Again, millions of Canadians are going to a food bank every month, but Bill C-234 in its original form would provide relief now.

Will the Liberals reject the Senate amendments, take the tax off and ensure that Canadians can afford to put food on their tables?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, being a farmer, I fully understand how important an environmental plan is for the government. I am sorry that his party does not have an environmental plan. As a government, we do have an environmental plan, and with that environ-

mental plan, for example, we were able to invest \$1.5 billion into farmers and ranchers across this country to make sure they stay on the cutting edge. We have made sure and will continue to make sure that farmers and ranchers stay on the cutting edge.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, never before have we seen ignorance used as a political strategy the way the current Liberal government uses it. It is shameful. At the end of the day, Canadians are struggling, day in and day out, to be able to heat their homes, to be able to put food on their tables and to be able to care for their families. The carbon tax only increases that cost more, and on April 1, the carbon tax is scheduled to go up yet again. The government is going to hike it again on April 1.

Would the government choose to put its feet into reality and acknowledge the struggle everyday Canadians face? Will it show a bit of compassion, scrap the tax and stop the increase?

• (1440)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier today the Conservatives were talking about hypocrisy, a subject they know a lot about. They are particularly hypocritical when it comes to talking about supporting working families and the most vulnerable. Since we formed government, 2.3 million Canadians have been lifted out of poverty. The poverty rate in Canada has been cut in half. Next, the Conservatives want to take carbon price rebate cheques out of the bank accounts of Canadian families. That is \$1,000 in Ontario and more than \$1,000 in Alberta and Saskatchewan. That would hurt Canadians.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is the government's false perception of reality, and then there is the reality that everyday Canadians are experiencing. I would invite the hon. member to consider what that reality actually is. If she could only come down from her high horse and enter the everyday life of Canadians, she might understand that not everyone lives in downtown Toronto and has access to the luxuries she does.

Canadians are struggling. They are struggling to put food on their tables. They are struggling to pay their heating bills. They are struggling to be able to care for their families. Record numbers of Canadians are using food banks, and that has a lot to do with the carbon tax, which is scheduled to increase on April 1.

Will the government axe the tax?

Oral Questions

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is certainly the case that the vast majority of Canadians do not have access to the luxuries that the Leader of the Opposition enjoys: government-provided housing, a chef or people caring for his home. People who live in glass houses should be more careful about throwing stones. When it comes to the price on pollution, it returns more money to eight out of every 10 Canadians. Families in Alberta will be getting more than \$1,000 back. That helps them.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is a new year, but the same problems remain at the federal level. Quebec is overwhelmed from welcoming asylum seekers. We welcomed more than 65,000 people in 2023. That is 45% of the total for Canada as a whole, when we represent 22% of the population.

That is a lot more than our fair share. Quebec is reaching a breaking point. Those are not our words. The Premier of Quebec said so in a letter dated January 17 addressed to the Prime Minister of Canada.

When will the federal government ensure that the provinces are welcoming their fair share of asylum seekers?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by welcoming my colleague from the Bloc back to Parliament. I understand that, for the Bloc, this is about the essence of immigration. Let us just make sure we work in the interests of immigrants.

I had a good conversation with Minister Fréchette on Friday. We are prepared to do more. It is clear that Quebec has done more than its fair share, but we are here to work together.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would invite all of the political parties to be mindful when they talk about immigration. The immigration minister already has one strike against him.

At this point, one would think that the Liberals would have learned that when they fail to address problems, they never get resolved. They only get worse.

When the House recessed in December, the federal government owed Quebecers \$460 million for taking in asylum seekers for whom Ottawa is responsible.

Not only did the federal government do nothing, but it told us that it was not an ATM. As a result, the bill is now up to \$470 million.

When will the government reimburse Quebec?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, good news is coming this week.

It is clear that relationships go both ways. We will continue to work with Quebec to deal with the record number of asylum seekers who have arrived this year. That is not something that is going

to end any time soon. More work needs to be done by both levels of government.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that is better already. Quebec is also demanding that the federal government reinstate visas for Mexicans. Since the Liberals suspended visas, the number of refugee claims by Mexicans has risen from 110 in 2015 to 24,000 last year.

Most of these applications are denied, meaning that the majority of these people are not refugees. Worse still, we know that these people can be trafficked by Mexican criminal groups that have a strong presence at Canada's borders. They are being exploited.

Will the minister reinstate visas for Mexicans?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are facing historic influxes, and not just from Mexico. It is clear that restrictions are needed, as I have said publicly.

The member opposite has enough experience in politics and in the House to know that the details of such matters cannot be discussed in the public arena, knowing that people who do not have Canada's interests at heart could well make decisions based on what they hear.

I urge my colleague to be patient, but it is clear that we are going to take action.

* * *

● (1445)

[English]

HOUSING

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every time the Prime Minister comes back from another extravagant vacation he did not pay for, or cabinet decides to have a meeting in a luxury hotel, more Canadians are left without an affordable home. Even more are worried about losing their homes.

After eight years, the Liberals have doubled the cost of a home, the price of rent and the down payment that is needed to buy one. Interest payments on a mortgage are going up a staggering 30% this year. Eight years of the Liberal-NDP government's inflationary spending have made owning a home unattainable.

How can anyone trust the people who created the crisis to fix it?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the opposition seems interested in drawing on the anxieties that people are experiencing, which are very real, when it comes to housing affordability in this country.

However, when we actually look at the plan the Conservatives are putting forward, it is clear they have no idea what they are talking about. Where we are reducing taxes for home builders, they want to put taxes back on. Where we are making investments to promote affordable housing, they plan on making cuts. In fact, the Conservatives want to do away with the housing accelerator fund, which has now created 30 agreements that will see half a million homes added over the next decade.

We will build the homes; they would make the cuts. Canadians can make their choice.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, those are photo ops the minister is talking about.

Home construction was down 7% last year. That is even worse than his nameless predecessor, who was fired from the gig. People cannot live in a photo op. The videos will not bring warmth to the 300,000 people without homes. His tweets will not help the single mom who is trying to make her mortgage payment next month. His press conferences will not help the thousands of young people trying to move out of their parents' basements.

Why will the minister not stop subsidizing the bureaucracy that is blocking construction to focus on getting builders with shovels in the ground?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the Conservatives dismiss as photo ops are binding agreements with cities that have led them to already change their rules to get more homes built.

What they dismiss as press conferences included a new measure this morning that is going to extend low-cost loans to colleges, universities and builders to help those young people find a home and free up supply in communities.

If the Conservatives are concerned with housing stats as the appropriate metric, I would point out that never once when the opposition leader was the housing minister did he get as many homes built as we did last year.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, Canada's housing crisis keeps getting worse. Canada saw over 17,000 fewer housing starts in 2023 than in 2022, and the average asking rent in British Columbia is now \$2,500 a month. Working-class people are living in their cars in parking lots, and its own housing agency even said that there is no plan to build the number of houses that Canadians need in this country.

The Prime Minister is just not worth the cost. When will the Prime Minister have a plan to build houses, not bureaucracy?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have a plan to build houses. In fact, we have a plan to build houses in real communities.

Let us take the hon. member's constituency as an example. She represents the good people of Kelowna. Not only have we put programs in place that supported affordable housing in her community, but we have also invested \$31.5 million to change the way that homes get built permanently in Kelowna. This is going to add up to 20,000 new homes of stock in the city she represents.

Oral Questions

On both the plan to change the way the city builds homes and this specific project, the member voted against the programs that fund them. I think we can rest our case.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, hate led to the murder of six worshippers at the Quebec City mosque seven years ago today. They were killed in cold blood because they were Muslim. The perpetrator of this Islamophobic terrorism was influenced by hate, which continues to multiply online. The Prime Minister promised to take action to combat online hate within his first 100 days in office. Years have passed, and there is still no action.

When are the Liberals finally going to crack down on online hate? When will they take action?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge that today is the seventh anniversary of a terrorist attack at the Quebec City mosque. We commit ourselves to commemorating those victims and to taking action on Islamophobia.

The point the member is raising about Islamophobia and all forms of hate is a very important one. We know that the radicalization of people who take violent and sometimes lethal acts in this country is fuelled by what they learn online. That is why we are committed to addressing this matter in a comprehensive piece of legislation that would tackle this pernicious issue and address and promote the safety of Canadians.

* * *

• (1450)

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the same day that the ICJ ruled that there is a risk of genocide in Gaza, the Liberals paused funding to UNRWA, which is a lifeline for millions of innocent Palestinians. People will lose their lives, and unbelievably, the Conservative leader has accused 30,000 UNRWA humanitarian workers of being terrorists. He does not deserve to lead.

New Democrats support an investigation into the 12 former staff, but defunding UNRWA is collective punishment, and it is illegal. When will the Liberals stop abandoning Palestinians?

Oral Questions

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, these allegations are extremely disturbing, and we take them very seriously. We have communicated that to the head of UNRWA, Philippe Lazzarini.

What we are doing, which is the prudent thing to do, is pausing funding while the investigation is ongoing. We will continue to be there for Palestinian civilians through working with like-minded partners on the ground, trusted partners, who are doing important work to deliver life-saving food, medicine and other much-needed supplies to the people of Gaza.

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HOUSING

Mr. Wilson Miao (Richmond Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, through the housing accelerator fund, our government is partnering with the City of Richmond with a tremendous investment in housing in our community, building over 1,000 new housing units, which is way more than what the Conservative government did. While the Conservative leader continues to marginalize our municipal partners, our government is committed to working together with municipalities such as Richmond to build more homes faster.

Can the minister share with my community how we are working with local municipalities to build more homes faster in the city of Richmond?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his work not just to secure \$35.9 million for the City of Richmond but also for the thousands of homes that will be built as a result of the changes we are incentivizing.

We are putting federal money on the table to permanently change the way that cities build homes to create more density near the services, infrastructure and post-secondary education institutions that people need to do well in their communities. This program is creating hundreds of thousands of homes across the country, including in Richmond, and I once again want to thank my colleague and congratulate him on his important work.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this government, in the Prime Minister's riding, the cost of rent has gone from \$760 a month to \$2,249 a month. That is three times as much. The Prime Minister thinks only of himself. He travels to Jamaica at a cost of over \$9,000 a night on our dime.

Can he come back to Canada's reality and address the housing problems of Canadians, beginning with those in his own riding of Papineau, in Montreal?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the Leader of the Opposition's solution is to say that mayors are incompetent. That is inappropriate under the circumstances.

We are investing to build affordable housing in la belle province. For example, we signed an agreement with Quebec to build 8,000 new affordable housing units. We continue to make very important and essential investments to build a lot of housing very quickly.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wish I had been a fly on the wall when the Prime Minister and the mayor of Montreal had their talk about housing. The Plante administration blocked the construction of 25,000 homes and apartments, yet this Prime Minister is rewarding it for its incompetence by continuing to send cheques. Clearly, the meeting amounted to nothing.

Why not tie municipal funding to the number of housing units built? That is simple common sense.

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that to achieve success in housing, we have to learn to communicate with each other, to co-operate with cities and the private sector, to work together. That is the complete opposite of what the Leader of the Opposition did when he came to Quebec. He insulted the mayor of Montreal, the mayor of Quebec City and mayors everywhere. He comes to insult all Quebecers, and we do not need him.

We know how to build housing, and together with the Minister of Housing, we are going to build housing. The Leader of the Opposition needs to stop insulting Quebecers.

• (1455)

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this Prime Minister, the rents that Canadians are paying have reached an all-time high. Rent costs have doubled, and the housing shortage is only making matters worse. We are now learning that hundreds of homeless encampments are popping up in the regions, including my region, the Saguenay. Welcome to Canada under this government. Canadians are living on the streets, either because they cannot afford to keep a roof over their heads or because there is not enough housing.

When will the Liberals listen to our common-sense plan and build housing?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, instead of tossing around insults, I would like to remind my colleague that, a few weeks ago, the member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier insulted residents of the Magdalen Islands and we are still waiting for an apology.

My question is simple. Will this member denounce my colleague's comments or will he hide his head in the sand? We are proud residents of the Magdalen Islands, of Quebec and its regions. We are waiting for a response. The Conservatives need to grow a spine and apologize.

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister should be encouraging the ingenuity of mayors who have managed to accelerate housing construction in places like Victoriaville, Trois-Rivières and Saguenay. Montreal has seen a 37% drop in housing starts compared to last year, and Quebec City has seen a 40% drop. Once elected, our leader will give federal bonuses to cities that accelerate housing construction.

Oral Questions

Once again, when will the Liberals listen to our common-sense plan and finally build more housing?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is extraordinary that an anglophone from Nova Scotia has to stand in the House of Commons and explain that it is the federal government that must enter into agreements with the provinces, not the municipalities. This is important in Quebec.

We continue to make investments to build more affordable housing faster. I hope the Conservative Party will join us.

* * *

SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the federal government's inflexibility with the CEBA loans is leading our SMEs into bankruptcy. Since the January 18 deadline, some SMEs have lost their \$20,000 subsidy. In other words, our struggling businesses, those who were already having a tough time paying back \$40,000, now owe the federal government \$60,000. That is a death sentence. However, the federal government can still do two things: let the businesses keep the \$20,000 subsidy and guarantee their loan with their financial institution.

Why not give businesses an opportunity to pay back their loan?

Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Small Business, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that small businesses are still going through a tough time.

They still have nearly three years to pay back their CEBA loan. We extended the term loan repayment deadline to ensure that small businesses can focus on their post-pandemic recovery.

We are also cutting taxes for growing small businesses and lowering credit card fees up to a quarter.

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, sounds like it is all sunshine and lollipops. If everything was so peachy, business owners would not have to refinance their homes or to take on personal loans to reimburse the federal government.

For the thousands who were unable to reimburse the \$40,000, an extra \$20,000 will truly finish them off.

The federal government will lose everything unless it is willing to undertake thousands of collection efforts. If we want these businesses to reimburse their loans, we have to keep them afloat. We have to open a direct line of communication. We have to be flexible and let them keep the \$20,000 subsidy.

When will the government finally understand?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois, who seem to be very concerned, that 80% of businesses have already reimbursed their loans in their entirety.

I also want to remind them that it was this federal government that invested to help businesses during COVID-19 with rent assistance and wage subsidies. We have a long list of programs with Canada Economic Development and our CFDCs. We are there for small businesses.

• (1500)

[English]

FINANCE

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in just two years, the Liberal-NDP Prime Minister has doubled the interest payments on his explosive debt. That is more tax dollars going to bankers, bondholders and his finance minister's Bay Street buddies than to health care. After eight years, the Prime Minister is not worth the cost or his waste, like the \$35-billion Infrastructure Bank that has built zero projects, yet lined the pockets of Liberal cronies.

When will the Prime Minister cut the waste, cut the corruption, fix the budget to bring home lower prices and bring down inflation and interest rates?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have already heard Conservative hypocrisy. Now we are hearing Conservative alarmism. Therefore, let us set the facts straight. The reality is that Canada's public finances are sustainable, and that is not me talking. That is the credit ratings agencies, which have awarded Canada a AAA rating. It does not get better than that.

The real question that Canadians need to ask themselves is this. What would the Conservatives cut in their reckless and ideological pursuit of austerity? We have heard from them on health care. That is the first place they would go to make cuts.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first, we will cut the number of Liberal seats in the House and replace them with a common-sense Conservative government.

Let me give the fast and furious finance minister some free non-consultant advice. Why do the Liberals not cut woke policies and axe the carbon tax to bring down the cost of gas, groceries and home heating, and pass Bill C-234 for our farmers? Why do they not cut the \$20 billion the Prime Minister gives to Liberal consultants to cover up the incompetency by his own cabinet?

After eight years, we all know the Prime Minister is not worth the cost. When will the Liberals fix the budget to bring down inflation and interest rates?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will tell members one thing we know they would cut for sure, because that is what their votes during the marathon voting session showed. They would cut, shamefully, our support for Ukraine. They would not send weapons to Ukraine.

Oral Questions

The member opposite is an MP for Alberta. I would like to ask him what his heckling colleagues have just shouted. Why do they support Putin? Have they no shame?

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government has been in power for eight years, and in that time, the debt has doubled, inflation has hit a new record and not one single budget has been balanced. The Bloc Québécois has given its full support to all of that.

We Conservatives will balance the budget. How? We will get rid of wasteful Liberal spending on things like ArriveCAN and the unused \$54 million. Will the Prime Minister take responsibility for this fiasco and hand over the reins to people with good sense?

The Speaker: Following the previous response and before I give the floor to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, I would like to remind the House that the Chair has issued a statement about associating a given political party with an unacceptable regime.

In the interest of maintaining decorum and respect in the House, it is very important not to associate a party with regimes that are not well regarded.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has the floor.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to public finance, it is important to be clear and tell Canadians the truth. That is why it is important to quote objective arbiters, such as credit rating agencies, which are still giving Canada a AAA credit rating.

What Canadians and Quebeckers should be asking about the Conservative austerity ideology is, “Where will they be making cuts?”

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HOUSING

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians work hard to pay their rent and afford to buy a house. The Leader of the Opposition believes that partisan sloganeering and attacking municipal leaders will somehow cause more homes to be built.

On this side of the House, we know that the federal government is responsible for focusing its efforts on making housing more affordable.

Could the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance explain how the measures contained in last fall's economic statement will allow for more homes to be built faster?

• (1505)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. Our government knows that we need to build more homes faster. That is why the economic statement includes a \$15-billion investment for new loans through the apartment construction loan program, which will build 100,000 new homes over the next few years.

We are removing the GST on new co-op housing projects. We will keep working to build more homes faster.

* * *

[English]

ETHICS

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, it is clear that the Prime Minister is not worth the cost. He gave us three different versions of his Jamaican vacation. First, he claimed he was paying all the expenses for his family's stay. Second, he claimed he was staying at no cost at a location owned by a family friend. Then he claimed that he and his family stayed with friends.

All three different versions cannot be accurate at the same time. Which version did he tell the Ethics Commissioner?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and his family took a Christmas vacation. Before the trip, the office of the Ethics Commissioner was consulted on the details to ensure the rules were followed. The Prime Minister and his family then proceeded with the trip and all the rules were followed.

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PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, senior public servants have spoken out about lies and abuse of process in the arrive scam scandal. We have now learned that shortly after their critical whistleblowing testimony, these senior public servants were put on leave without pay. They were told they were under investigation less than three weeks after their testimony and they were suspended before the investigation had even concluded.

The NDP-Liberal government is punishing public servants for their ArriveCAN testimony.

What are these Liberals trying to hide with this retaliation and intimidation of witnesses?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, senior officials of the Canada Border Services Agency who are responsible for ensuring that all the appropriate contracting practices are followed have appeared before the committee. My conversation in early January with the president of CBSA was to the effect that we should share with the committee looking into this information obtained by the internal audit.

CBSA is doing its important work to ensure that everyone is responsible for following the rules. It has called in the police where necessary, has done internal audits and will continue to do all of this to ensure taxpayer value.

*Oral Questions***PUBLIC SAFETY**

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the Prime Minister is just not worth the chaos and crime. Canadian businesses across the country are being extorted by international gangsters because of the NDP-Liberal government's ideological, soft-on-crime policies.

Businesses and family homes are being shot at. In Edmonton, since November, over a dozen houses under construction by different home builders have been burnt down.

It was the Liberal government that made it easier for criminals to get bail and allowed for shorter jail terms by scrapping mandatory minimum sentences.

When will the Liberals start cracking down on serious crime?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to bail, what I would underscore is the unanimity with which the House spoke on amending the bail provisions so that we could keep communities safe. That was a sign of success in terms of what parliamentarians, when we co-operate on community safety, can achieve.

What we continue to do is keep addressing crime as the top-most priority of our government. That means keeping communities safe. That means protecting victims. We will continue to do that with respect to various issues that are facing Canadians, including the auto theft summit, which is coming up in a few short days.

* * *

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week marks Red Tape Awareness Week. I would like to thank all the small businesses in my riding that have continued to show entrepreneurship and work hard to foster economic development in Canada.

We know that many of these businesses face administrative challenges in day-to-day operations, and our government has been there every step of the way to listen and adapt regulations to better suit their needs. The Conservative Party claims to care for small businesses, yet calls supports for businesses inflationary.

Could the President of the Treasury Board please tell the House how our government is supporting small businesses to build a stronger economy for all Canadians?

• (1510)

Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, small businesses are the backbone of the Canadian economy. We stood with small businesses during and after the pandemic, including in terms of reducing credit card transaction fees, establishing a program for small businesses in federal procurement and assisting the tourism sector.

Unlike the Conservatives, who have no plan to reduce red tape, we will continue to stand with small businesses with Bill S-6. It is at second reading. We are bringing it back before the House. We will create an efficient and effective economy for all small businesses.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are worried about the climate and they expect their government to take action.

People are struggling to pay their bills, yet oil and gas CEOs are polluting our planet while raking in record profits and bonuses. In some cases, they have upped their own salaries by 75%.

For far too long, the Liberal government has been stacking the deck in favour of billionaires at the expense of Canadian workers and the environment.

Will the Liberals rein in these obscene bonuses by making oil and gas CEOs pay what they owe?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome back my hon. colleague to the House. I agree with her. I think that the profits of these companies must be addressed in the House and that is what our government is doing by putting in place measures like no other country in the world has.

We have put forward the world's most ambitious target to reduce methane emissions, a very powerful greenhouse gas, and reduce them by at least 75% by 2030. We have eliminated fossil fuel subsidies, the only country in the G20 to have done so. We are also in the process of putting a cap on the emissions of the oil and gas sector.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, we are on a theme of Liberal promises that keep being broken.

Here is a question. We have Bill C-50, which is the sustainable jobs act, which kicked down the road coming up with a sustainable jobs plan until December 31, 2025. It then went to committee, where all the Liberal MPs present and all the NDP MPs present voted to extend that deadline to December 31, 2040.

Could the hon. minister tell us how this is going to be fixed? Can it be repaired? It so reminds me of Bismarck: Laws are like sausages, better not to watch.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, following months of Conservative filibustering and obstructionist tactics, the Conservatives proposed over 21,000 amendments to the sustainable jobs act in an attempt to stop workers from getting a seat at the table. When it came to a vote on these amendments, the committee was chaotic. The Conservative members were actually shouting overtop of each other. A handful of the thousands of Conservative amendments were passed by the committee in the chaos.

Tribute

I encourage the Green Party leader to review the nine amendments that I have put on the Notice Paper which address and rectify this issue now.

* * *

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Lauri Hussar, Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Estonia; the Hon. Daiga Mierina, Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Latvia; and the Hon. Viktorija Cmilyte-Nielsen, Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

* * *

[*Translation*]

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, during question period, I heard the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, the member for Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine, say that I insulted Magdalen Islanders.

I invite everyone to listen to what was said here in the House. I would like the member to withdraw her remarks because I never said anything unkind about Magdalen Islanders.

The Speaker: That is verging on debate, but I will review the transcripts of the House of Commons.

The hon. member for Montcalm on a point of order.

• (1515)

Mr. Luc Thériault: Mr. Speaker, I have two points of order.

Would you please remind the member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis that members may not knowingly mislead the House? The Bloc Québécois voted against the Liberal budget. We do not support it.

The Speaker: That is a matter of debate.

The hon. member for Montcalm on a point of order.

Mr. Luc Thériault: Mr. Speaker, next time I will make it a proper question of privilege, as I have previously done in the House.

I am sorry to have to say this, Mr. Speaker, but before the holidays, you unfortunately did not have control of the House, and that interfered with my parliamentary privilege to hear questions and answers during question period. What is more, it also infringed on my right to have and preserve healthy hearing. Again today, I am of the opinion that you have lost control of the House. I could hear neither the questions nor the answers unless I turned the volume up to a level that affected the health of my hearing.

I would ask you to resolve the problem quickly, because it is my right to be able to understand what is going on in question period without risking damaging my hearing.

The Speaker: I am very grateful to the member for Montcalm for his intervention. It gives me another opportunity to remind all

members that they must remain silent when they do not have the floor, when the Chair has not given them the floor in the House of Commons. This is very important for the sake of order and decorum, but as the member for Montcalm pointed out, it is also a health issue. We need to avoid a situation where MPs have to turn up the volume to hear questions and answers properly in the House of Commons.

It is a duty that falls to all of us.

* * *

HON. ED BROADBENT

The Speaker: It being 3:17 p.m., pursuant to order adopted earlier today, I invite hon. members to rise and observe a moment of silence in honour of our former colleague, the late Hon. Ed Broadbent.

[*A moment of silence observed*]

The Speaker: Thank you. He was a great Canadian.

The House will now proceed to tributes in memory of our former colleague, the late Hon. Ed Broadbent.

The hon. member for Burnaby South.

[*English*]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by extending my condolences on behalf of all New Democrats to all those who loved Ed Broadbent: his partner, Frances, his family and his many friends.

I also want to take a moment to thank the Prime Minister and Canadian Heritage for yesterday's state funeral. It was a fitting tribute to Ed and his incredible life, and I want to thank everyone who helped organize it and participated, particularly the Broadbent Institute.

I shared this story at the funeral, and I will share it again. Every time I was at an event with Ed, I could see him in the crowd when I was speaking, and I would always take a moment to invite people to applaud the legendary Ed Broadbent. I am not sure he always wanted that type of attention, but I did it anyway. I also took a moment to say, looking him right in the eyes, "Ed, you are who I want to be when I grow up." Ed, as a very generous and compassionate person, would laugh as if it was the first time I had said it. Initially it was maybe a bit tongue in cheek, but every time I said it, I meant it more and more. I wish and I hope Ed knew how much I meant that.

The reason I meant that I wanted to be Ed when I grew up was that I looked at Ed's life, and he had spent it in public service. He committed his life to a clear vision of building a fair, more equitable world. He believed in that vision with his entire heart, and he dedicated his life to that vision.

Tribute

If we look at what he did, he was elected as a member of Parliament from the auto worker town of Oshawa by a huge margin of 15 votes. When he won, he went on to run and win as leader and then served for almost a decade and a half as the leader of the party. That would be a great political journey and was a significant contribution, and he could have called it a career, but that was not enough for him.

After having served as leader and retired, many years later he was asked to run again. Folks in the House will understand what it is like to be a previous leader and be asked to run again. However, he agreed, under Jack Layton, to run again, and he won a seat in Ottawa Centre as a member of Parliament once again. When he finally took his retirement, again one would say he had done his service. He had fought for working-class people the way he wanted to. However, it was not enough for him.

● (1520)

Most of us could think of lots of ways to spend our retirement, but in his retirement, Ed then founded an institute in his name. He did not just found the Broadbent Institute; he was an active participant, constantly finding ways to push forward and grow the institute so that it could be a place for working-class people, a place for activists and a place to train the future leadership of the movement. He was persistent in his clear pursuit of a vision of social democracy, but that is not all: On top of being very active with the institute he founded, most recently he wrote a book, again laying out his vision for social democracy.

This is why Ed is who I want to be when I grow up; he never stopped giving back, and he dedicated his life to a vision of a better world. He made it clear what a better world would look like.

Ed Broadbent believed in democracy, but for him democracy was not just the idea of having the right to vote; the political right or the civic right was not sufficient, not good enough. One also had to have the true elements of democracy, meaning people needed to have economic equality, economic justice. That meant we needed to have the right to vote but also to be able to earn a good living, to be able to have a safe place to call home, to be able to get to and from the polling station in safety and to be able to participate meaningfully in society. He was a true believer in democracy, in all of its elements.

Ed also made it clear that he was not satisfied with New Democrats just being the conscience of Parliament. He made it absolutely clear that he wanted to be prime minister. He believed that we needed to use our power in this place to make life better for working people.

● (1525)

[*Translation*]

Ed Broadbent believed that the government's power needed to be used for good, to deal with the most powerful and protect the most vulnerable. He believed that we needed to ensure that Ottawa was working for the people and not for the billionaires. He did not just want to be Parliament's conscience. He wanted to be Prime Minister. He did not engage in a false debate over whether to choose between respecting his principles and winning elections. He thought that it was necessary to do both. In fact, the only way to win was to

show Canadians a policy based on principles that put their interests first. As we mourn the loss of Ed Broadbent, we are also committed to pursuing his work. His legacy is the conviction that Canada can and must do better.

[*English*]

I want to talk a bit more of the legacy that he left behind. Back in 1989, almost 35 years ago, in the chamber, he put forward a motion to rid Canada of child poverty. At the time, nearly a million kids in our country were suffering child poverty. He thought that, in a country as rich as ours, that should not be the case. That was something he put forward, and it was voted on unanimously. I think many people thought it was just a proposition or a values statement, but for Ed, he believed fundamentally that that is the work of government, to make sure people are protected and to use the power we have to lift up the people around us.

Sadly, there have been some advances, but there have also been a lot of steps back. To this day, right now, there are still a million kids that, according to many reports, are living in poverty. UNICEF put out a report that for the first time, in 2021, the rate or number of children in child poverty was increasing. This should give us some serious pause. It really reminds us that the legacy of Ed Broadbent's work is that we must continue to fight hard.

Another thing about Ed is that he would never have said that Canada is broken. He would say that Canada needs to do more, can do a lot more and must do more to lift up the people around us. He was committed to that.

Ed Broadbent fundamentally believed in the power of persuasion to see the better way forward, and that we should never stop listening to each other, even if we disagreed. He was not afraid to fight. He would take on a fight directly with political opponents, but he was also someone who was known for his ability to work together with people, to find the common ground to work together to build a brighter future for everyone.

He believed fundamentally that we needed to lift up wages. He spoke about not just the rights of women but the economic rights of women many years ago, when it maybe was not as common for people to bring that up. He reminded us of our fundamental commitment to indigenous people, something that remained a major priority throughout his life.

Ed spoke to me on a number of occasions and, as a new leader of a political party, one that he was such a legend in, I have to thank him from the bottom of my heart for something that he did that was very special to me. Maybe when I was elected as leader I was not what people imagined when they thought about what a leader would look like. When I was first elected, finally, as a member of Parliament and was formally introduced in our caucus meeting, Ed Broadbent was there. He wanted to use the respect that he had gained, not just in the New Democratic Party, but across the country, to say, as he stood beside me, that, yes, I belonged. I thank him to this day for that generosity. In fact, any time I asked Ed for help, he always said yes, whether it was providing advice, meeting up for lunch, coming to introduce me at caucus or campaigning in the Lansdowne farmers' market, he was there for me.

Tribute

I cannot imagine what that meant for someone who at that age could have been doing so many other things with his time. For him mentor a young leader again shows that generosity of spirit, his willingness to continue to give back. I hope that in the future I can give back, even to a small degree, the way he did throughout his life.

I also want to reflect on the advice he gave me about the supply and confidence agreement. He was very proud of the work that we did. He told me he was proud of the dental care program, that it was in the tradition of Tommy Douglas to make sure people had access to dental care. He was proud of it. However, he was concerned about a number of things. He was concerned, and in the very New Democratic tradition, he wanted us to do more, and he wanted it to be faster. He was also very concerned about the Liberals. He did not want them to be let off the hook. I promised him that I would make sure I did all those things.

I want say a big thank you to Ed. I want him to know that we will not let him down. We will keep on fighting for that vision of the more equitable society that he believed in. We have done lots of work. We are going to keep on fighting. Ed is still who I want to be when I grow up.

● (1530)

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the House to pay tribute, on behalf of the Government of Canada and the Liberal caucus, to an eminent Canadian who sadly left us earlier this month, the Hon. Ed Broadbent. On January 11, Canada lost a man who for decades had been a fixture of our democratic life. For over half a century, he was one of Canada's most compassionate and respected voices.

He was at the epicentre of some of the most defining debates in modern Canadian history. They were debates on repatriating the constitution and enacting the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the 1980s, as well as the national debate over free trade with the United States of America. He elevated the plight of children in poverty to the national consciousness, and he tirelessly advocated for more ambition in putting an end to that, something that my honourable friend, the leader of the New Democratic Party, just referred to. He brought compassion and thoughtfulness to every debate.

[*Translation*]

He was born in Oshawa, Ontario, in 1936, when Canada was still mired in the hardships of the Great Depression. His parents named him John Edward Broadbent, but of course, we know him as Ed, a shortened first name that reflected his profoundly unpretentious nature. He always treated others with respect. That fundamental characteristic was at the core of everything Mr. Broadbent did as a young academic, as a member of Parliament, as leader of the federal New Democratic Party and as an advocate for human rights and democracy here in the House and around the world.

[*English*]

Mr. Broadbent was an unlikely politician, but one whose determination and deeply rooted values propelled him to the forefront of our national conversations. In the 1968 federal election, after a stint in academia, he ran for the federal NDP in the then riding of Os-

hawa—Whitby. As my colleague the NDP leader said, he defeated his closest opponent that night by just 15 votes in what was a close three-way race.

That would mark the beginning of a remarkable career as a member of Parliament that would stretch over decades, and in 1975, following an earlier unsuccessful attempt for the NDP leadership mantle, Mr. Broadbent was elected as leader of his political party. His tenure at the helm would last 14 years, until 1989, and it saw him steer the party through four general elections.

[*Translation*]

Throughout that time, his passionate style elicited a response from all and sundry.

As he led his troops in the House, he was relentless about putting his priorities on the agenda. His trenchant question period style sparked heated exchanges with the prime ministers he took on. A skilled debater, he regularly pitted his rhetorical talents against those of Trudeau, Clark and Mulroney.

He was a particularly tenacious leader, earning the respect of everyone on the other side of the aisle. When Ed Broadbent spoke, his parliamentary colleagues stopped what they were doing and listened.

He showed us the best side of the House of Commons. He showed us that, in a parliamentary democracy, we can engage in debate with each other without debasing ourselves. He showed us that the true essence of the House of Commons is to serve as a space for exchanging and debating ideas.

[*English*]

● (1535)

After retiring from Parliament in 1989, he was appointed the founding director of the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, leading the non-profit's work in countries around the world until 1996. In 2004, as my colleague just noted, he returned to the political arena, winning the riding of Ottawa Centre for the New Democratic Party. Though his second stint would last only two years, during that time, Mr. Broadbent brought his trademark thoughtfulness to his interventions and was a source of counsel to many of his colleagues, including me.

In 2011, he founded the Broadbent Institute, a social democratic policy think tank built on the Broadbent principles. Thus, his legacy continues to this day.

On a personal note, I was privileged to get to know Ed and his wife Lucille as they were long-time and close friends of my mother and stepfather's. I will always treasure the many evenings at my mother's home, sometimes with a cigar, when Mr. Broadbent and my stepfather were there. It was always the source of an interesting conversation, wise advice and wise counsel. Like for so many who had the privilege of getting to know Mr. Broadbent personally, he also had an important impact on my political thinking. For that I will always be grateful.

Tribute

Canada is a better place for having had Ed Broadbent as one of its citizens and one of its servants, and this chamber is a better place for having had Mr. Broadbent as one of its members. On behalf of the Government of Canada and my colleagues in the Liberal caucus, I want to extend our deepest condolences to Mr. Broadbent's family. May he rest in peace, and may his wonderful legacy live on through the generations.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Oshawa's constituents and the Conservative caucus, I rise this afternoon to join members in paying tribute to one of my esteemed predecessors, the late Hon. Ed Broadbent, who served as the member for the riding of Oshawa—Whitby and then Oshawa from 1968 to 1989.

Across my community, from the shop floors at General Motors and the Local 222 hall, in hockey rinks or in any of Oshawa's countless cultural centres, there was only one Ed. After World War II, Oshawa underwent a surge of immigration from Europe. Though many may have struggled with their adopted tongue early on, most would learn to instantly recognize the name "Ed". In many cases, Ed was the first name they had ever voted for in a democratic election.

Ed was a gifted, brilliant and clear thinker. He bore a sharp mind and a sharp wit. He was a scholar, a philosopher and a doting teacher.

Ed was an icon within his beloved New Democratic family, and he was a strong ally of Canada's unions. He was lively and engaged, a man who exhibited heart, spirit and determination. That is the one thing about Ed: He was always so darned determined and effective.

Ed surprised many in Oshawa during the general election in 1968. He edged out our beloved late friend, Canada's first Ukrainian Canadian cabinet minister, the Hon. Michael Starr, by a mere 15 votes. After one of our city's closest election contests, one beloved Oshawa legend bequeathed his legacy of service and compassion to a rising star.

I first met Ed at my front door. He was doing the usual politician thing during an election. To set the Oshawa scene of the day, there was a sea of NDP signs; the exception was a big PC sign in front of my house. I struck around to witness the encounter between my dad, a staunch Conservative, and Ed. I thought it was going to be good fun to watch. Ed insisted on speaking with my dad, listened to what he had to say, respectfully bid adieu and agreed to disagree. My father remarked, "Right guy, wrong party."

Ed's hometown success was not just due to his political stripe but also to his deep resolve, his profound sense of purpose and his common touch. This is something that never changed with Ed over the years, even after politics. Whether driving his Chevette through Oshawa in the 1980s or, in more recent years, out for a jaunt on his bike here in his Centretown neighbourhood, he had a smile and kind word for everyone.

In 2004, we were both elected; my win in Oshawa was very close, although not quite the 15-vote win that Ed first experienced. We met on the floor of the House later in the fall. It was a day I will not forget. He greeted me with a big handshake and a warm grin,

his hallmark. He shared several words of advice and encouragement, but he was also concerned that, as an Oshawa boy, I had somehow ended up on the wrong team. To that, I replied, "We're both on the same team, Ed. We're on team Oshawa, and we both drive the right cars." He gave me a big pat on the back and said, "That's the spirit. Let's get to it."

Whenever we ran into each other during the few years we served together, Ed always had suggestions and some quite pointed remarks, just as a stern teacher would. In 2005, Speaker Milliken hosted a parliamentary dinner for the newer MPs, and I was pleasantly honoured to be able to sit next to Ed. We had a wonderful chat, filled with Oshawa stories. I told him that I had learned from him, and he pleasantly replied, "Maybe a bit too much."

Ed came from the era when politicians could be strong opponents but remain cordial and supportive. I am pleased to have been here long enough to say that I miss those days. As we parted that evening, I remember his words to me. He said, "I wish you the best of luck and future, personally". I think it was Ed's humorous way of saying "Right man, wrong party."

Gracious with his time, Ed made everyone feel that they were important and that what they had to say was important. He always put relationships first. Ed cared deeply about those who studied, worked or campaigned with him.

Although he will be remembered as one of Canada's most influential leaders, we should recall a man who believed deeply in humanity. Many folks never agreed with his policies or platforms, but there was always an unquestionable earnestness and sincerity about Ed. His efforts were always directed at driving us closer to his understanding of our shared aspirations. I believe this is why so many people in Oshawa and across Canada feel Ed's passing in such a personal way.

● (1540)

We extend our most sincere condolences to Ed's surviving family, including his stepson, Paul; daughter, Christine; grandchildren, Nicole, Gareth, Caitlin and Brett; great-grandchildren, Alice and Freya; life partner, Frances; and former spouse, Yvonne.

Oshawa is forever grateful that the Broadbent family shared Ed with us. We, in turn, are proud to have known him and to have shared Oshawa's son, our Ed, with all Canadians.

Meegwetch. Merci. Thank you.

Tribute

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois and as the dean of the House, I have the honour to rise to celebrate the memory of Ed Broadbent, the third leader of the New Democratic Party, who passed away at the age of 87.

Canada's big NDP family lost more than a former leader on January 11. It lost the embodiment of a vision that, 35 years after his time as leader of the party, has virtually become its identity.

Believe it or not, I served with Ed Broadbent in the House for five years, from 1984 to 1989, when he was the leader of the NDP. Today, I also have the honour of serving alongside a caucus of 25 of his successors.

I can see that the influence of the man who was known as “Honest Ed” has not faded over the years. That is most probably because he was the longest serving leader in the party's history, from 1975 to 1989. During the four elections he was at the helm, the NDP secured a more solid footing in Ottawa and experienced its greatest electoral successes.

His engaging personality certainly played a part in these accomplishments. At the pinnacle of his career, he led the polls as Canadians' favourite politician. It is, however, his vision for a more egalitarian Canada that carried his influence over the decades.

Born in a working-class family in Oshawa—a riding he later represented in the House starting in 1968—Mr. Broadbent made it a mission to represent workers and ordinary people on the federal stage. He fought for democracy, but a type of democracy that went beyond individual and political freedoms to include every person's social and economic rights, a type of democracy that affords every individual the right to live in dignity and the opportunity to realize their full potential.

His vision of social justice played a major part in strengthening the bonds between his political party and the union movement. It also enabled the NDP to stand out on the left of the political spectrum and to find long-lasting support among the Canadian people.

Ed was a formidable parliamentarian. With his rich vocabulary, keen analytical mind and outstanding oratory talents, he could make ministers tremble in their boots during question period. If I may, I would like to share a memory. Ed always prepared his two questions very carefully and enunciated them very clearly. At one point, during a big strike in Canada, he came to the House with a very carefully crafted question for the minister responsible for this file. The minister rose and said that he wished to inform the leader of the New Democratic Party that an agreement had been reached and that the strike had ended half an hour previously. Everyone thought that Mr. Broadbent was sunk for his second question. With great dignity, he rose and said that the minister had worked very hard on this file and deserved a round of applause. He saved face, and everyone was deeply impressed by his unscripted but very fair reaction to the minister on the strike matter.

In 1988, for the first time in its history, the NDP, under Canada's most popular leader of the day, became a credible option across

Canada. Being the most popular leader in Canada, however, did not translate into success in every part of the country.

● (1545)

Ed Broadbent stepped down as leader of the NDP in 1989, but it was only the leadership role that he left. He never left the NDP or politics. As members will recall, he made a brief return to the House of Commons as an MP from 2004 to 2006. However, it was mainly behind the scenes that he would continue contributing to his political party and to political thinking across Canada for the rest of his life.

The highlight of his second career was, without a doubt, the founding of the institute that bears his name in 2011. The creation of the Broadbent Institute, a think tank, will ensure the legacy of his vision of politics. Equipped with its own media outlet and offering activist training, the Institute will continue to disseminate Mr. Broadbent's ideas among new generations of political influencers, including people like Montreal Mayor Valérie Plante, who once sat on its board of directors.

Mr. Broadbent is no longer with us, but his influence will live on, just as his memory will live on in the hearts and minds of those who loved him. On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would like to offer my sincere condolences to John Edward Broadbent's partner, two children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. I also offer my condolences to his NDP political family and to everyone who knew him professionally or personally.

I thank Ed Broadbent for dedicating his life to public service.

● (1550)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour for me to rise this afternoon to add my comments to the extraordinary words of our colleague, the dean of the House of Commons. I thank him for his speech.

[*English*]

I want to also say thank you for the strong words and memories shared by the hon. member for Beauséjour. I was particularly moved by the hon. member for Oshawa, who expressed so clearly the sense of what politics used to be like. At yesterday's state funeral, Brian Topp, in his address, referred to Ed Broadbent's time in politics as being a place where he continually displayed that one could disagree without being disagreeable.

I had the honour to know Ed Broadbent before I got into politics. I did not even join a political party until 2006, but I was kind of noisy from my role as an environmental activist. I can remember times when Ed Broadbent and I got along fabulously well. Once I entered politics, we had the occasional moment when we disagreed. Famously, though, I never did get to debate Ed Broadbent in any leaders' debates, but in 1988 he actually referred to my resignation from the government of the day over a point of principal to rather make a point of the failures on some of the aspects of environmental policies. He put it to Brian Mulroney. Nothing quite alerts someone who is watching a long leaders' debate like finding themselves mentioned by Ed Broadbent in the midst of the debate. I was deeply grateful then for his support for the stand I took, and I am grateful to this day.

I want to say thank you to the Prime Minister for the decision to have a state funeral. It is not easily done and is rare, but as said by the hon. member for Burnaby South, we all appreciated the opportunity to share with Ed's family in expressing our deep sorrow at his loss and our gratitude for a life well lived.

In the course of yesterday's funeral, I think it was Jonathan Sas, the co-writer of Ed's new book, who referred to Ed Broadbent's first speech in this place. I remember his last speech, and I went back and found it to see whether I remembered it accurately. It was on May 5, 2005. I recommend it to people who want to watch something wonderful. I watched it on YouTube. He was surrounded by so many other people I really loved, such as Bill Blaikie and Alexa McDonough.

Ed Broadbent's last speech shared some advice I think is worth repeating for all of us who remain working in this place. It has been mentioned already that he served in this place as the member for Oshawa from 1968 to 1990 but came back in 2004 as the hon. member for Ottawa Centre. In his speech, he reflected on how many people had asked him whether, in the interregnum between leaving the House of Commons in 1990 and returning 14 years later in 2004, he saw a difference. He reflected in that speech on the decline, which will sound familiar to the Speaker, in decorum and the increasingly partisan nature of debate. He said he noted "the decline in civility in the debate".

He said, on May 5, 2005, that if he were a high school teacher, he would not want to bring his students here anymore. He said, "There is a difference between personal remarks based on animosity and vigorous debate" and urged the members of Parliament present, and those words should extend to us here right now, "to restore to our politics...a civilized tone". In closing he turned to the words of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to say that they apply in this place. He read the words that we must, as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says, recognize "the inherent dignity and...the equal and unalienable rights of all members of the human family". That recognition of inherent rights is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in this world.

In honour of Ed Broadbent, in honour of his legacy and for all those parliamentarians who have served in the House of Commons before us and those who will follow after us, let us try to listen to our better angels, as the Premier of Manitoba, the Hon. Wab Kinew, said yesterday. Let the quality and the character of our debate be elevated as we recognize in each other our shared humanity, our com-

mon commitment to Canada and that we agree on far more things than we disagree on and serve our god, our country, our community and our planet by expressing ourselves, grounded in mutual respect and recognition of our shared humanity.

Thank you for your leadership, Ed Broadbent. May you rest in peace.

• (1555)

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the tributes to Ed Broadbent, Government Orders will be extended by 37 minutes.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's responses to 102 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, happy new year. It is good to be back to the chamber and to represent the good people of the riding of Waterloo.

Pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 56th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, regarding the membership of committees of the House. If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the 56th report later this day.

[Translation]

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying, entitled "MAID and Mental Disorders: the Road Ahead".

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

*Routine Proceedings**[English]*

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to table the Conservatives' dissenting report on medical assistance in dying where mental health is the sole underlying condition. This report was completed because Conservative members of the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying believe that the main report did not fully reflect the sense of urgency we heard from stakeholders and witnesses on this very serious question.

For years, Conservatives have been calling for the government to introduce legislation ensuring that Canada's most vulnerable will not fall victim to a system that has often already failed them, and that the pause on extension to MAID where mental health is the sole underlying condition be made permanent. It is time for the government to finally take action.

[Translation]

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move that the 56th report of Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House today, be concurred in.

• (1600)

[English]

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

It is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I do believe that you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That the membership of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be amended as follows: Ms. Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe) for Mr. Green (Hamilton Centre).

[Translation]

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

It is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House during the debate, pursuant to Standing Order 66 on Motion No. 45 to concur in the 12th

report of the Standing Committee on Finance, and Motion No. 46 to concur in the 14th report of the Standing Committee of Public Accounts, no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair, and that at the conclusion of the time provided for debate, or when no member rises to speak, whichever is earlier, all questions necessary to dispose of the motions be deemed put and a recorded division be deemed requested and deferred, pursuant to Standing Order 66.

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

It is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ) Mr. Speaker, I move that the 55th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented on Thursday, December 14, 2023, be concurred in.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish a wonderful 2024 to all the citizens of the riding of Salaberry—Suroît. I wish them happiness and health for the coming year.

Today, I am rising to speak to a report from the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. It describes the study that looked into the behaviour of the Speaker, the member for Hull—Aylmer. In our opinion, it should perhaps be reviewed. For the benefit of those who have forgotten or who did not follow this story, I will take the liberty of recapping some important elements.

Bloc Québécois members have principles. We are also frank and honest. We congratulated the Speaker when he was elected, but we pointed out that he was facing a major challenge because he was what can only be described as a very partisan member leaving his seat to occupy the chair, a role that demands unimpeachable impartiality. The chair requires of its occupant that they have the confidence of all members and, above all, that they maintain that confidence. I clearly remember telling him that the task would be difficult, that the Bloc Québécois wished him the best, and that we would be keeping a close eye on him because it would be no small feat to do so.

Two weeks in, we saw him make what we believe was a serious error in judgment. He made a partisan speech. He showed up for an event dressed in his Speaker's uniform, complete with robe and hat. In short, it was quite clear that the Speaker was addressing Ontario Liberal supporters in his official capacity as Speaker. The video clearly showed that he was introduced as the Speaker of the House of Commons. That happened somewhere around December 2 or 3. We quickly determined that a Speaker cannot participate in such events in his official capacity. It undermines parliamentarians' confidence in him because he really needs to be completely devoid of partisanship.

Routine Proceedings

That caused a lot of turmoil because members were so surprised that the Speaker had given that speech. While we were discussing and debating the matter, the Speaker decided to go on a parliamentary mission to Washington in his capacity as Speaker, while the House was sitting on December 5 and 6. When we looked into the matter in committee, we learned that he had already planned that visit to celebrate a retired friend. Since he was the Speaker, he tacked on a few official meetings to justify taking a trip in the midst of all the turmoil.

We in the Bloc Québécois asked ourselves a question. The Speaker does not understand that, when someone occupies the highest office, the chair, their conduct must be impeccable in order to retain the confidence of the House.

The Speaker was generous on December 11 when he appeared before the committee. He delivered a long statement with sincerity, I know. However, the Speaker waited until that December 11 appearance to acknowledge his mistake and apologize. He was brave; that was not easy for him. He apologized, admitted to his mistake and said he would not make it again.

After that study, the Bloc Québécois realized he had to go. It was abundantly clear that those two major gaffes had lost him the confidence of the House. Let us not forget that at least 149 members withdrew their confidence. Even so, he decided to stay. The Bloc Québécois was not satisfied with the report's recommendations. That is why we submitted a dissenting opinion.

● (1605)

Today, we are revisiting that issue because, during the last week of sittings in December, another incident occurred. The Speaker made another appearance at a political event in the riding of Liberal MNA André Fortin. The Speaker was photographed with his colleague, the member for Pontiac, and Mr. Fortin at a cocktail fundraiser.

I can honestly say that we do not understand what happened. We do not understand why, after spending days debating and adopting a report that recognized the Speaker's error, we are now dealing with another similar incident. We noticed, however, that the Liberal MNA's cocktail fundraiser happened before the video of the Speaker was shown at the Ontario Liberal Party convention.

I had many questions. I wondered why, when he appeared before the Procedure and House Affairs Committee on December 11, the Speaker did not disclose that he had attended the cocktail party. As I said earlier, the Speaker acknowledged that he had made a mistake. He apologized to the House and said he would not do this kind of thing again, as it undermined the House's confidence in him.

Why, then, did he not take the opportunity to disclose that he had attended the cocktail party? Why, as we were analyzing what had happened on December 3, did he not say that he had also attended a cocktail fundraiser on November 17 in the riding of a Liberal colleague who sits in the Quebec National Assembly, and apologize for it? Why did he not bring that up? For whatever reason, he did not. I did not understand that. I thought either he did not understand that this kind of behaviour was inappropriate and unacceptable and that it would continue to undermine the confidence of the members

of the House, or he had not understood. Today, I stand before the Chair to raise this unanswered question again. That is why I will be moving a motion in the near future proposing that the Procedure and House Affairs Committee reconvene to discuss the issue.

I still want to say something, though. Ever since I started speaking publicly about everything that happened and about the Speaker's actions, I have received all sorts of unkind emails and messages. I have been unfairly labelled. I am speaking up on behalf of the Bloc Québécois because we in the Bloc Québécois have respect for the institution, its procedures, the Speaker and the Speaker's authority. Every time that we, in the Bloc Québécois, have risen to speak, we have done so respectfully because, in all honesty, I have nothing against the member for Hull—Aylmer. He is a nice person, but we do not believe that he has what it takes to regain the confidence of the House. Some people are impugning my motives, saying that I am going after the Speaker because I may harbour certain ideas.

Allow me to read out an excerpt of the motion that was unanimously passed, in other words, passed by all of the parties in the House. It was the motion that triggered the study into the Speaker's missteps.

Here is the excerpt:

...as Speaker of the House of Commons, constitute a breach of the tradition and expectation of impartiality required for that high office, constituting a serious error of judgment which undermines the trust required to discharge his duties and responsibilities...

What I just read is not a statement from the Bloc Québécois or the member for Salaberry—Suroit. It is a unanimous motion passed by all members of the House. When the Speaker appeared in committee on December 11, he said he agreed that he had made a grave mistake and that he would do better going forward.

● (1610)

Let me get back to my question.

We in the Bloc Québécois have been good sports. We congratulated the Speaker when he was elected. The House leader of the Bloc Québécois, the member for La Prairie, even praised him when he was elected. A few days after the Speaker was elected, all the House leaders and whips witnessed a discussion. As whip of the Bloc Québécois, I warned the Speaker that we were keeping a close eye on him. Anyone who knows the member for Hull—Aylmer knows that he is a long-time activist. He had an activist background. He campaigned, ran, and was elected on that, right up until he was elected Speaker. It has been quite an extraordinary journey. However, once someone occupies that chair and has the great authority of the House, they cannot afford to make any mistakes that call their impartiality into question. There can be no flexibility on this, because if the Speaker loses the confidence of the House, its very ability to function is threatened.

Routine Proceedings

As we speak, 149 members of the House have clearly expressed that the Speaker has lost their confidence because of his repeated errors in judgment and the evidence of his lack of impartiality. The Bloc Québécois made some suggestions in the dissenting opinion that we presented. Had we obtained unanimous consent, perhaps things would have been different today. In our dissenting opinion, we made two suggestions. Obviously, we urged the Speaker to exercise judgment and resign so that another Speaker who has the confidence of the House could be elected. Failing this, we proposed that a secret ballot vote be held about him. In other words, we proposed giving every member of the House the opportunity to vote again on whether he should be the Speaker. If he won the election again, then we would have been willing to give him a second chance because democracy would have spoken. However, the members of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs did not support those recommendations.

I am back before the House again today, and I must say that I am stunned. I do not understand why I have to come back to this issue because of the events of November 17 or 15, when he attended a federal Liberal fundraiser. I would like to ask him this question: That time, did he also consult his chief of staff? Did he consult the Clerk? Did he use all the resources available to him to double-check whether he could attend a partisan cocktail fundraiser? It does not matter whether the event was for the provincial Liberals, the PQ or Québec Solidaire. A Speaker must not participate in any partisan activities while occupying the chair. He must not even give the impression of partisan involvement.

The Speaker is also friends with ministers. He is also friends with the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, who represents the next riding over. With all the lingering doubts, we wonder if he will be able to resist demands or questions from the colleagues he is friends with. Based on the analysis we are conducting today, we think the Speaker needs to come back before the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs to explain why, during his appearance on December 11, he did not simply tell us that he had attended an event.

• (1615)

The Bloc Québécois is not attacking the member for Hull—Aylmer as a person. As I said, he is a good person, but this is about principles, the principle of retaining parliamentarians' confidence in the authority of the House. I hope the members listening will support the Bloc Québécois in getting to the bottom of this and in giving the Speaker a chance to explain himself with respect to the mistake he made in November.

I will read the amendment we wish to move: That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word “That” and substituting the following: the 50th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented on December 14, 2023, be not now concurred in, but that it be referred back to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs with the following instructions: (a) study new facts relating to the Speaker's participation in a political activity described as a *cocktail militant*, or activist cocktail reception, with the provincial member for the riding of Pontiac on November 16, 2023, and any other facts relating to the Speaker's participation in political activities since assuming the office of Speaker, if any; and (b) amend the report to include the new

information and amend the committee's recommendations and conclusions in accordance with this new information.

• (1620)

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. I thought I heard the member move an amendment. Did she move an amendment? Are you going to read that first, Mr. Speaker?

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: I do not think that was an amendment. I will seek clarification.

Did the member move an amendment to her motion?

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, I think I made a mistake. As my colleague pointed out, I cannot amend my own motion.

The Deputy Speaker: That is correct. The member cannot move an amendment to her own motion. It is not in order.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I guess we will pick up our debate where we left off on the Friday before we recessed for the Christmas break.

What we discovered and what we talked about in my speech on that Friday prior to our leaving for the Christmas season was that this is actually nothing new. As a matter of fact, when the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle was the Speaker of the House of Commons, he went to a fundraiser, and paid \$100 to go to it, for the member for Regina—Wascana at the time. He was there. There are pictures of him there. He was there with the now Leader of the Opposition. They have pictures documenting this. Therefore, this is not something unique to this particular Speaker. This is apparently something that has been going on. Coming from a riding that had the longest-serving Speaker of the House of Commons, I am fully aware of what a Speaker will do and how they will engage in their riding and perhaps in just one or two of the neighbouring ridings.

Therefore, I am curious. Can the member from the Bloc inform the House, with respect to when the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle did the exact same thing, how many times the Bloc called for his resignation at that time? Was it one, two, three or four? Perhaps the members from the Bloc never even bothered to question it when it was the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

We are being fed this story right now that this is somehow just this Speaker because he did something wrong. It is nothing personal about the Speaker, yet the Bloc does not have a history of calling this out in the past when it has happened. I wonder if the member can inform the House as to how many times the Bloc Québécois raised the issue when it was the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle going to a fundraiser in the member for Regina—Wascana's riding and paying \$100 to go there.

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, before I answer the question, I would like to make a brief comment. I do not know why the member is speaking so loudly. Every time he speaks, he seems shocked. I think I was calm. I speak French and I do not know if the member was wearing his earpiece, but I am calm. I am not being antagonistic at all. The member wants me to make a comparison and say who was right and who was wrong, but that is not the issue.

The Bloc Québécois is simply pointing out that there is a new element that the members of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs did not study when they prepared their report and made their recommendations. What we are asking is that the committee be reconvened to examine the new facts. It seems to me that this is not all that complicated and it would settle the matter of the Speaker's mistakes.

I know that my colleague might find it amusing to try to engage me in a conflict, but that is not what I want. What I want is for us to discuss the matter calmly. The member cannot deny that the Speaker made another misstep when he attended Liberal MNA André Fortin's cocktail fundraiser. This was yet another lapse in judgment that further undermines the confidence of the House. That is all we are asking for.

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I share the member's concern about some of the enthusiasm we hear. I also want to say that when some people speak in this House, I definitely take my headset off, because I do not like to be yelled at in two directions.

I think some of the concerns being brought forward are serious ones. We just spent a period of time talking about the amazing NDP leader Ed Broadbent and the tremendous work he brought forward, part of which was bringing people together.

I know other Speakers have participated in fundraising events that were quite concerning. I wonder if the member shares my concern that we need to review these rules and make sure they are clearer so the House can better hold Speakers to account.

• (1625)

[Translation]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, I cannot disagree with my colleague's proposal to review the rules.

However, I consider it so self-evident and clear that the Speaker must avoid raising the shadow of a doubt in the minds of members by participating in partisan activities. This was not a one-time occurrence. There was a video shown at an Ontario Liberal convention and a trip to Washington while we were in turmoil here and discussing our confidence in the Speaker. In addition to that, he attended a cocktail fundraiser. That is a lot for such a short time in office. I am a strong believer in training and education, but all this is so obvious that I fail to understand how the Speaker could have participated in these activities without even wondering whether he was doing something wrong.

[English]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, like the hon. member for North Island—Powell River, I also take my earpiece out, not because it is loud, but because I quite frankly do not want to hear what the other side has to say.

This is an important issue, because it speaks to the confidence the House has in the Speaker to make objective rulings in a non-partisan manner. My expectation, and I am sure that of my colleague in the Bloc, is that the Speaker is to make those rulings in an objective, non-partisan manner, but the activities of partisanship and the continued bad judgment speak to a real problem.

My question is a pointed one. Does the hon. member have confidence in the Speaker to be objective and non-partisan and to act in the manner they should as they take that chair?

[Translation]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, I have been candid in a way that, incidentally, has been acknowledged by the Speaker. My confidence is shaken. All of the Bloc Québécois members are going to find it difficult to recover their full confidence in the Speaker.

Another concern of mine is the precedent this sets. It means that in the next Parliament or when the next Speaker is elected, we are accepting from the outset that he could make a mistake, be partisan, go to a cocktail party, shoot a video at a partisan convention. We are automatically accepting that this may happen, that he will apologize, that he will reimburse the little bit it cost in terms of House resources, and then the whole thing will blow over. That is what bothers me, because frankly, we are talking about a democratic institution in which the Speaker plays a central role. He represents the authority of the House. He must retain the confidence of the members.

Honestly, the precedent we are setting by refusing to revisit the issue at the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs lowers the bar for important democratic standards.

I respectfully and calmly invite my colleagues back to the table to debate this issue again.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, ever since the member for Hull—Aylmer was elected as Speaker, he has been making missteps. Historically, this has never been seen before in the House.

I was there when the Speaker appeared before the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. I listened to what he had to say. At that time, we did not know that he had attended Mr. Fortin's cocktail fundraiser for the Quebec Liberal Party. I think that, given the discussions we had in committee, he should have mentioned that. He should have done the honourable thing, but he did not. Between the time when we received the committee's report on the many events that took place involving the Speaker and today—

• (1630)

The Deputy Speaker: The Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons on a point of order.

Routine Proceedings

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, the member just said the Speaker did not act honourably. You and he certainly know the rules that say we are not to imply that any member of this House does not act in an honourable fashion. Perhaps you could ask him to rephrase that and apologize for using that terminology.

The Deputy Speaker: I did not hear the exact phrase the hon. member heard, so I would simply say that we should all be judicious in the things that we say.

[Translation]

Members should follow protocol when speaking.

The hon. member for La Prairie.

Mr. Alain Therrien: Mr. Speaker, I did not say anything of the kind. I will continue.

There are two fundamental rules for a good Speaker: good judgment and non-partisanship. What I am saying is that between the time when the report was tabled and today, new information has come to light. That is why the Bloc Québécois thinks that we should redo the work.

I have a question for my colleague. At the meeting of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, was there an opportunity for the Speaker to do the honourable thing? Did he have an opportunity to do that?

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, during his testimony on December 11, the Speaker was generous in that he stayed long enough to give a lengthy statement and answer questions from all the members of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

Honestly though, I really wish we had heard the news from the Speaker himself, instead of learning about it afterwards when we saw an Instagram post from his colleague from Pontiac, who posted the photo and was so proud that he was at André Fortin's cocktail party. He could have been upfront with us. He should have. That would have improved the way we perceived both his acknowledgment of his error and his awareness of his actions.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been discussions among the parties and I suspect, if you were to seek it, you would get permission for me to deal with questions on the Order Paper for today.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will go as quickly as I can through this. The following questions will be answered today: Nos. 1945, 1950, 1953 to 1955, 1957 to 1960, 1971, 1972, 1974, 1976, 1983, 1984, 1988, 1989, 1992 to 1995, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2011, 2016 to 2018, 2020, 2021, 2027, 2028, 2031, 2036 to 2038, 2040,

2041, 2046, 2054, 2057 to 2060, 2062, 2066, 2067, 2073, 2079, 2080, 2090 to 2092, 2094, 2097, 2098, 2105, 2106, 2112, 2115, 2118, 2119, 2122, 2129, 2130, 2133, 2136, 2139, 2141 to 2146, 2149, 2150, 2153, 2154, 2158, 2162, 2163, 2167, 2168, 2170, 2172, 2174, 2178, 2179, 2183, 2184, 2192, 2193, 2194 and 2201.

[Text]

Question No. 1945—**Mr. Arnold Viersen:**

With regard to the 6,880 suspicious transactions related to the Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children referred by the Philippines to FINTRAC and shared with the RCMP during the 18 month period ending on December 2022: (a) how many RCMP investigations related to suspicious transactions have either been initiated or are ongoing; and (b) what were the results of the investigations in (a)?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the RCMP's National Child Exploitation Crime Centre, NCECC, receives disclosures from the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre, FINTRAC, related to online child sexual exploitation and abuse. The information contained in the disclosures may be used by the NCECC to help support investigations by law enforcement, including where the RCMP serves as police of jurisdiction.

The NCECC also receives reports pertaining to online child sexual exploitation from various Canadian and international sources, such as law enforcement agencies; cyber tip.ca, Canada's public reporting tip line; and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, NCMEC, in the United States. The NCECC also receives reports from various service providers, such as social media applications and online gaming platforms. The NCECC assesses and triages all reports received, prepares investigative packages for all actionable reports and distributes the packages to the police agency of jurisdiction for further investigation.

The RCMP undertook an extensive preliminary search in order to determine the amount of information that would fall within the scope of the question and the amount of time that would be required to prepare a comprehensive response. The level of detail of the information requested is not systematically tracked in a centralized database. The RCMP concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question would require a manual collection of information that is not possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

Question No. 1950—**Mr. Stephen Ellis:**

With regard to the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF): what is the breakdown of the religions or denominations that CAF members identify as, in total, and broken down by branch of the CAF, including the number and percentage of CAF members for each?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, building a defence team where all members feel protected, supported, respected and empowered to serve is a top priority. As such, the Canadian Armed Forces, CAF, makes certain to respect and protect, in a holistic manner, the spiritual dimension and needs of all its members.

Routine Proceedings

The CAF does not track religious denomination or faith tradition information from members who are enrolling unless they volunteer the information. When this information is volunteered, it is protected by the Privacy Act.

Question No. 1953—**Mr. Eric Duncan:**

With regard to Sustainable Development Technology Canada (SDTC): what specific interests and potential conflicts were identified in the ethical disclosures for each member of SDTC's executive team, broken down by individual?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in processing parliamentary returns, the government applies the Privacy Act and the principles set out in the Access to Information Act. The requested information is being withheld because it constitutes personal information.

Question No. 1954—**Mr. Colin Carrie:**

With regard to Health Canada's (HC) approval of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines: (a) did Pfizer disclose that Process 1 vaccine formula was used during the original trial to obtain their safety and efficacy data while Process 2 was invoked following the Interim Order to massively upscale production of vaccine doses whereby DNA was cloned into a bacterial plasmid vector for amplification in *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) before linearization with the possibility of potential residual DNA; (b) was HC aware of the quantum of linearized DNA fragments present in each dose of the Pfizer vaccine prior to releasing the vaccine to Canadians, and, if so, what was the amount of acceptable residual DNA per vaccine dose and the method used to measure it; (c) if the response to (b) is negative, has HC since confirmed the quantum of linearized DNA per vaccine dose per mRNA manufacturer, and, if so, what method was used; (d) do the risks of residual DNA meet HC's standards for transfected foreign DNA; (e) did Pfizer and BioNTech disclose to HC the presence of the Simian Virus 40 (SV40) promoter-enhancer-ori used to amplify the production of Spike mRNA in the DNA plasmid used to produce the mRNA; (f) has HC confirmed the presence of SV40 sequences in the Pfizer vaccine, and, if so, is the amount of SV40 within safe limits and how was it tested; (g) if the response to (f) is negative, when and who will conduct the study to confirm the presence of SV40 and by what method; (h) how were contaminants and impurities addressed throughout the regulatory process for both Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna products; (i) are further studies planned to investigate how these contaminants and impurities will impact human subjects given transfection for both products, and, if so, who will conduct the investigation and when will it be conducted; (j) is HC considering regulating these products as gene therapy products; and (k) how does HC plan to inform those Canadians who received the mRNA products about the adulteration of these products, specifically SV40 in Pfizer and heightened levels of DNA plasmids in both Pfizer and Moderna products, to ensure fully informed consent?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), Pfizer's submission provided information that process one was used for clinical trials and process two was used for commercial scale-ups. The residual DNA limit is the same for both processes and is in line with the recommendation from the World Health Organization. The comparability of the vaccine produced by these two processes was demonstrated based on their biological, chemical and physical characteristics.

With regard to part (b), Health Canada was aware of the presence of residual plasmid DNA because in the manufacture of any vaccine, residual elements are part of the standard manufacturing process and may remain. There are strict limits and controls for the presence of these residual fragments to ensure that there is no effect on the safety or effectiveness of the vaccine.

The limit for residual DNA in biologic drugs required by Health Canada for approval is not more than 10 nanograms per human dose. This is in line with the World Health Organization's recommendation concerning residual DNA in biological drugs and is consistent with the quality limits of other international regulators.

It is important to assess the results using the authorized validated assays performed by the vaccine manufacturers to ensure that the quality of commercial vaccine lots is comparable to that of lots shown to be safe and efficacious in clinical studies.

With regard to part (c), refer to part (b).

With regard to part (d), Health Canada initially authorized the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 mRNA vaccine in December 2020 and subsequently has authorized updated versions, including the most recent vaccine targeting the XBB omicron subvariant in September 2023. Each assessment included a determination that the vaccine met the department's stringent regulatory safety, efficacy and quality requirements for use in Canada.

As a regulator, Health Canada sets quality standards and requirements for manufacturers to follow, including providing comprehensive and detailed information about the vaccine itself and about the manufacturing process. In the manufacture of any vaccine, residual elements that are part of the standard manufacturing process may remain. There are strict limits and controls for the presence of these residual fragments to ensure that there is no effect on the safety or effectiveness of the vaccine.

The simian virus 40, SV40, promoter enhancer sequence was found to be a residual DNA fragment in the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. The fragment is inactive, has no functional role and was measured to be consistently below the limit required by Health Canada and other international regulators.

With regard to parts (e) and (f), in the case of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, the full DNA sequence of the Pfizer plasmid was provided at the time of initial filing. The SV40 promoter enhancer sequence was found to be a residual DNA fragment in the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. The fragment is inactive, has no functional role and was measured to be consistently below the limit required by Health Canada and other international regulators. Monitoring of the residual DNA fragments is conducted by the manufacturers using methods that have been reviewed and validated by Health Canada as appropriate for its purposes. All Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID 19 vaccine commercial batches released in Canada complied with the requirements approved by Health Canada, including the residual DNA.

With regard to part (g), refer to part (f).

Routine Proceedings

With regard to part (h), as a regulator of vaccines, Health Canada sets quality standards and requirements for manufacturers to follow, including providing comprehensive and detailed information about the vaccine itself and about the manufacturing process. In the manufacture of any vaccine, residual elements that are part of the standard manufacturing process may remain. There are strict limits and controls for the presence of these residual fragments to ensure that there is no effect on the safety or effectiveness of the vaccine.

With regard to part (i), Health Canada continues to monitor the COVID-19 vaccines to ensure that they continue to meet the highest standards for safety, effectiveness and quality and that their benefits continue to outweigh any potential risks.

With regard to part (j), Health Canada is not considering regulating mRNA vaccines as gene therapy products, as these vaccines cannot modify genes. Gene therapy involves the use of genes as medicine to treat genetic disease where the faulty gene is fixed, replaced or supplemented with a healthy gene so that it can function normally. The new gene has to enter the cell nucleus. The mRNA from the vaccines does not enter the cell nucleus or interact with the DNA at all, so it does not constitute gene therapy. Furthermore, vaccines must meet the high standard of quality, safety and efficacy for medicinal products. Consistent with the international approach to regulating these products, Health Canada will continue to regulate mRNA vaccines as vaccines.

With regard to part (k), Health Canada initially authorized the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 mRNA vaccine in December 2020 and subsequently has authorized updated versions, including the most recent vaccine targeting the XBB omicron subvariant in September 2023.

As a regulator of vaccines, Health Canada sets quality standards and requirements for manufacturers to follow, including providing comprehensive and detailed information about the vaccine itself and about the manufacturing process. In the manufacture of any vaccine, it is expected that there may be variabilities or residual elements that are part of the standard manufacturing process. To manage this, Health Canada requires strict quality limits and controls for the presence of these residual fragments to ensure that the vaccine continues to be safe and that any residual fragments are inactive and have no functional role in the vaccine. All versions of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines that have been marketed in Canada continue to meet the strict quality standards required by Health Canada. Health Canada takes immediate action should any marketed vaccine product be found to be non-compliant with regulatory standards in Canada.

Question No. 1955—Mr. Luc Berthold:

With regard to the grocery rebate announcement made by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance at Rabba Fine Foods in early July 2023: (a) did any of the minister's staff members remove, or request that the store remove, the price tags from the food in the background of the announcement, and, if so, why was this done; and (b) if the answer to (a) is negative, what is the minister's explanation as to why there were no prices visible in the background of her announcement?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Finance does not have records pertaining to this specific matter of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance's announcement on July 5, 2023.

Question No. 1957—Mr. Richard Bragdon:

With regard to the October 26, 2023 announcement temporarily pausing the carbon tax on deliveries of heating oil: when the three year pause is completed in November 2026, does the government plan to tax home heating oil at the current carbon tax rate of \$65 per tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e), or will it be taxed at a higher rate, and, if so, what will that rate be?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on October 26, 2023, the government announced its intent to temporarily pause the fuel charge on deliveries of light fuel oil exclusively for use to provide heat to a home or building. This pause is proposed to apply to deliveries on or after November 9, 2023, and before April 1, 2027.

The fuel charge rate for light fuel oil in 2027-28 can be found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/forms-publications/publications/fcrates/fuel-charge-rates.html>.

Question No. 1958—Mr. Marty Morantz:

With regard to the Prime Minister: has the Prime Minister ever received any formal requests from any of the Liberal members of Parliament representing ridings in Manitoba asking that the carbon tax be paused or removed from natural gas or other sources of home heating, and, if so, what are the details, including the (i) requester, (ii) date the request was made, (iii) summary, (iv) Prime Minister's response?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as global market forces and inflation continue to affect Canadians, too many families are feeling the pressure on their monthly energy bills. To put more money back in the pockets of Canadians, while ensuring there is less pollution in our air, the Government of Canada is helping more households make the switch to clean, affordable home heating options. To support this measure, the Government of Canada is doubling the pollution price rural top up and temporarily pausing the pollution price on heating oil.

Heating oil is highly polluting and particularly expensive, costing two to four times as much as natural gas to heat a home. This temporary pause is a targeted measure to address that reality while support rolls out to help Canadians switch to a clean, affordable electric heat pump.

The Department of Finance has no records on the specific matter of formal requests.

Question No. 1959—Mr. Tom Kmiec:

With regard to the current Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages: (a) has the minister advocated or taken other action to convince the Prime Minister to remove or pause the carbon tax from natural gas or other sources of home heating; (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, what are the details, including for each action, the (i) date, (ii) description of the action taken, (iii) response received; and (c) if the answer to (a) is negative, why not?

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Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in cabinet and cabinet committees, as well as in meetings, phone calls and other conversations with cabinet colleagues, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages works to ensure that the voices of Alberta businesses, stakeholders, industries, communities and residents are heard.

As Albertans and Canadians across the country continue to face the impacts of climate change, including the devastating impacts of fires, floods, heat waves, and atmospheric rivers that have threatened lives and our communities, the minister continues to support urgent climate action. As confirmed by leading economists, the most effective market-based mechanism for reducing carbon emissions is a price on pollution. In jurisdictions where the federal carbon pricing backstop applies, such as Alberta, Canadians receive climate action incentive, or CAI, payments from the federal government to help individuals and families offset the cost of the federal pollution pricing. It consists of a basic amount and a supplement for residents of small and rural communities. In Alberta, an average family of four will receive \$1,544 this year.

The Government of Canada has changed the payment method for the CAI from a refundable credit claimed annually on personal income tax returns to quarterly tax-free payments made through the benefit system starting in July 2022.

On October 26, 2023, it was announced the government is moving ahead with doubling the CAI payment rural top-up rate in Alberta and elsewhere, increasing it from 10% to 20% of the baseline amount starting in April 2024. People who live in rural communities face unique realities, and this measure will help put even more money back in the pockets of families dealing with higher energy costs because they live outside a large city.

Furthermore, the Government of Canada continues to support the adoption of heat pumps as an alternative source of home heating across the country. Albertans qualify for a \$5,000 grant to support the installation of a ground source heat pump that meets Canada's efficiency regulations.

Question No. 1960—**Mr. John Barlow:**

With regard to the Prime Minister: has the Prime Minister ever received any formal requests from the member for Edmonton Centre or the member for Calgary Skyview asking that the carbon tax be paused or removed from natural gas or other sources of home heating, and, if so, what are the details of the requests, including the (i) requester, (ii) date the request was made, (iii) summary, (iv) Prime Minister's response?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as global market forces and inflation continue to affect Canadians, too many families are feeling the pressure on their monthly energy bills. To put more money back in the pockets of Canadians, while ensuring there is less pollution in our air, the Government of Canada is helping more households make the switch to clean, affordable home heating options. To support this measure, the Government of Canada is doubling the pollution price rural top-up and temporarily pausing the pollution price on heating oil.

Heating oil is highly polluting and particularly expensive, costing two to four times as much as natural gas to heat a home. This

temporary pause is a targeted measure to address that reality while support rolls out to help Canadians switch to a clean, affordable electric heat pump.

The Department of Finance has no records on the specific matter of formal requests.

Question No. 1971—**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe:**

With regard to the Canada–Philippines Enhanced Defence Agreement: (a) what progress has been made on the agreement, and has it been signed by both countries; (b) what assessment of the state of human rights in the Philippines was carried out before the agreement was negotiated; (c) does the agreement include conditions for human rights monitoring and, if so, what are these conditions, and are they sine qua non to maintain the agreement between the two countries; (d) what mechanisms allow for the human rights situation to be monitored; (e) will the mechanisms in (d) include the consideration of the agreement by a parliamentary committee with participation from civil society organizations; (f) when will the terms or the wording of the agreement be made public; and (g) how can citizens access information on the programs and funding associated with the agreement?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as outlined in Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy, Canada has committed to expanding existing military capacity building initiatives that advance joint priorities and interoperability with regional partners, including the Philippines.

As part of this commitment, National Defence is in the process of negotiating a non-legally binding defence cooperation arrangement, or Memorandum of Understanding, or MOU, with its counterpart in the Philippines. The MOU will provide a framework for cooperation between Canada and the Philippines in the field of defence and military matters. This may include cooperation in the areas of defence and security policy; humanitarian assistance and disaster relief; and maritime security, among others.

Prior to entering into an MOU, National Defence ensures compliance with all applicable federal laws and government policies, directives, and guidelines, including those established by Global Affairs Canada. Canada supports efforts by the Philippines to advance inclusive and accountable governance, diversity, human rights, and the rule of law. The negotiation process, which is underway, involves various levels of consultations, including those among federal departments; as such, specific details have yet to be determined.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1972—Ms. Melissa Lantsman:**

With regard to the government's response to evidence that Samidoun has ties to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and other entities that have been recognized by the government as terrorist entities: (a) when did Public Safety Canada (PS) first recognize Samidoun's ties to the PFLP, and what action, if any, has it taken in response to these ties; (b) what action, if any, was taken by PS to respond to events hosted by Samidoun that glorified terrorist and armed militants from the PFLP; (c) does the government recognize that Samidoun has raised money for the PFLP and entities tied to the PFLP, including the Union of Health Work Committees, and, if so, what action has the government taken to stop such financing; (d) has the government taken any action against Samidoun organizers, and, if so, what are the details, including dates of any such action; and (e) has PS examined whether Samidoun has ties to any organizations involved with or which have praised the October 7, 2023, terror attack committed by Hamas, and, if so, what were the findings?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada takes terrorist threats against Canada and its citizens seriously. Security and intelligence agencies are continuously monitoring entities that could pose such a threat and taking appropriate action.

One of the underlying objectives of the Criminal Code list of terrorist entities is to ensure that terrorist entities do not use Canada as a base from which to conduct terrorist activities, including fundraising, and to prohibit individuals from supporting terrorist entities. Assessing entities for possible listing under the Criminal Code is continuous. The process is rigorous, thorough and involves inter-departmental consultations. Pursuant to section 83.05(1) of the Criminal Code, if there are reasonable grounds to believe that an entity has knowingly carried out, attempted to carry out, participated in or facilitated a terrorist activity; or has knowingly acted on behalf of, at the direction of, or in association with, an entity involved in a terrorist activity; then the Minister of Public Safety may recommend to the Governor in Council, or GiC, that it be added to the list.

The government cannot comment specifically on the activities of groups or what groups are being assessed, or considered for listing.

Question No. 1974—Mr. Larry Brock:

With regard to the fact-finding report prepared for Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada by Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton (RCGT) dated September 26, 2023: (a) what are the government expenditures related to the report incurred to date, in total, and broken down by type of expenditure; (b) what are the details of the contract awarded to RCGT in relation to the report, including the (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) vendor, (iv) start and end date, (v) initial contract value, (vi) current contract value, (vii) scope of the work; and (c) what are the details of any limitations (Cabinet confidence, unavailable records, etc.) faced by RCGT in the fact-finding exercise?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a) of the question, the total government expenditure related to the Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton, or RCGT, report to date is \$300,500, or \$339,565 with tax.

With respect to part (b)(i), the contract is dated March 17, 2023; part (ii), the initial contract value is \$97,400, or \$110,062 with tax; part (iii), the vendor is Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton; part (iv), the start date is March 17, 2023, and the end date is March 29, 2024; part (v), the initial contract value is \$97,400, or \$110,062 with tax; part (vi), the current contract value is \$300,500, or \$339,565 with tax. The fact-finding exercise identified certain

facts that required additional procedures to further assess the relevant facts of the allegations. The additional procedures included a more in-depth analysis of sampled projects to assess conflict of interest, project eligibility and approval and monitoring requirements. With respect to part (b)(vii), the scope of the project included a review of relevant documentation, such as the allegations received by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, a sample of contribution agreements between Sustainable Development Technology Canada, or SDTC, and funding recipients, and program governance documents, and interviews with informants and key individuals, such as current and former employees and board members. The project also took into account the terms and conditions that apply to Governor in Council appointees, the Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector, SDTC's Values and Ethics Code and any other applicable standards of conduct.

Lastly, with respect to part (c), there were no limitations on the documents that were provided by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada to Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton to support this work. Most supporting documentation was provided directly by the corporation subject to this exercise.

Question No. 1976—Mr. Dean Allison:

With regard to Health Canada (HC) and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC): (a) what do HC and PHAC know about the origins of COVID-19; and (b) how and when was the knowledge in (a) obtained?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the precise origin of COVID-19 remains unknown. The first report of an unknown pneumonia outbreak in China, later called COVID-19, was detected by the Global Public Health Intelligence Network or GPHIN on December 30, 2019. The information was then distributed to Canadian public health practitioners on December 31, 2019, via the GPHIN Daily Report. The Public Health Agency of Canada or PHAC actively monitored the situation and initiated regular and ongoing communications with federal, provincial and territorial partners.

The Government of Canada is supportive of all efforts that will contribute to a clear understanding of the origins of the virus. Canada continues to work with international partners to better understand the origins of COVID-19.

Question No. 1983—Mr. Ben Lobb:

With regard to the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC): what were the expenditures incurred by NSERC related to the reception on November 1, 2023, titled "Celebrating Excellence: Honouring Canada's Top Natural Sciences and Engineering Researchers", in total, and broken down by item?

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Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, or NSERC, incurred \$4,796.85 in expenses for the November 1, 2023, reception titled “Celebrating Excellence: Honouring Canada’s Top Natural Sciences and Engineering Researchers”, including \$4,231.85 for hospitality and \$565 for the professional services of a photographer.

Question No. 1984—**Mr. Doug Shipley:**

With regard to the Climate Action Incentive Payment and the government's plan to increase the rural top-up rate from 10 to 20 percent of the baseline amount starting in April 2024: how will the rate increase be funded, including whether the increase will come from general revenue or from carbon tax revenue?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the price on pollution is revenue neutral for the Government of Canada. Climate action incentive payments, including the rural supplement for individuals residing in small and rural communities in provinces where the federal fuel charge applies, are fully sourced from carbon pricing proceeds. This will continue to be the case in 2024-25, when the rural supplement rate is proposed to increase from 10 percent to 20 percent.

Question No. 1988—**Mr. Dan Mazier:**

With regard to the statement made by Mr. Derek Hermanutz, Director General, Economic Analysis Directorate, for Environment and Climate Change Canada on November 9, 2023, at the Standing Committee of Environment and Sustainable Development that “I think we're probably in a world where we could say with some rough analysis that up to one-third, potentially, of the emission reductions that we're projecting to 2030 would come from carbon pricing,”: (a) what analysis did the government use to produce this projection; (b) has the government made this analysis and emission reduction projection public to Canadians, and, if so, where can Canadians locate it; (c) when was this analysis and projection initially made; (d) what are the titles of the individuals at the executive level or higher who conducted or oversaw the analysis in (c); and (e) does the government measure the annual amount of emissions that are directly reduced from federal carbon pricing, and, if so, (i) how is it measured, (ii) what is the amount of emissions that have been reduced in Canada directly and specifically from federal carbon pricing, broken down by year?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), to produce this projection, the government used the provincial-territorial computable general equilibrium model, EC-Pro, from Environment and Climate Change Canada, or ECCC.

EC-Pro simulates the response of the main economic sectors in each province and territory, and their interactions with each other, including interprovincial trade. It captures characteristics of each province and territory's production and consumption patterns through a detailed input-output table, and links the provinces and territories via bilateral trade. Each province and territory is explicitly represented as a region and the rest of the world is represented as import and export flows to the provinces and territories, which are assumed to be price takers in international markets. To support analysis of energy and climate policies, the model incorporates information on energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, or GHGs, related to the combustion of fossil fuels. It also tracks non-energy related GHG emissions.

Ideally, estimating the incremental impact of carbon pricing alone would involve developing a bottom-up baseline that does not include carbon pricing. However, given that carbon pricing is now in the historical data and that a significant number of complementary GHG-related measures and regulations have also been intro-

duced or planned, it is extremely challenging to develop a bottom-up baseline that does not include carbon pricing. Therefore, to develop a scenario that does not include carbon pricing, ECCC used a statistical technique that relies heavily on price elasticities, namely how consumers and industry respond to changing prices.

To quantify emissions in the absence of carbon pricing between now and 2030, the initial starting point for this analysis was the reference case with current measures, or Ref22, and with additional measures, or Ref22A, reported in the eighth National Communication Report and fifth Biennial report submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, or UNFCCC, on December 31, 2022.

The statistical technique to isolate the carbon pricing contribution is as follows: in the calibration of EC-Pro to Ref22 and Ref22A parameters, the carbon price prevailing in the relevant years is explicitly added. This includes the Output-Based Pricing System stringency and the fuel charge coverage, as well as provincial carbon pricing. By doing this, the model establishes a statistical relationship between the prevailing carbon price and fuel use and related emissions by sector by province by year and a baseline that explicitly includes carbon pricing as identified in Statistics Canada's Supply and Use Tables.

The next step is to develop a relationship between the EC-Pro parameters, namely elasticities and cost curves, to match the CO₂ and non-CO₂ emissions by sector, by region, and by source to target the emission levels in Ref22. For carbon capture and storage, or CCS, and other technologies that are being driven by carbon pricing, we account for what would have happened if there were no carbon pricing. For example, to assess how carbon pricing and policies to promote reductions influence CCS activities, the level of CCS is held to the current historical level allowing the model to then endogenously project CCS activities in response to policies.

The final step is to run this scenario where the carbon price in the Output-Based Pricing System and the fuel charge are set to zero.

With regard to (b), a 2018 study conducted before the full implementation of carbon pricing across Canada was released in December 2020 and can be found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/weather/climatechange/climate-action/pricing-carbon-pollution/estimated-impacts-federal-system.html>.

With regard to (c), an updated analysis, referring to (a), was completed in October 2023 drawing from projections reported in the eighth National Communication Report and the fifth Biennial report submitted to the UNFCCC on December 31, 2022.

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With regard to (d), the analysis was directed and overseen by the Director General, Economic Analysis Directorate, and by the Director, Model Development and Quantitative Research, Economic Analysis Directorate, Strategic Policy Branch, Environment and Climate Change Canada.

With regard to (e), the government does not measure the annual amount of emissions that are directly reduced by federal carbon pricing. Retroactively attributing specific GHG reductions to a specific action, such as carbon pricing, a discrete regulation, or a specific incentive, is difficult given the multiple interacting factors that influence emissions, including carbon pricing, tax incentives, funding programs, investor preferences and consumer demand. The National Inventory Report, which reports annually on historical GHG emissions, does not include this information.

Question No. 1989—Mr. Dan Muys:

With regard to the Ministers' Regional Office (MRO) in Toronto, between January 1, 2021, and December 31, 2022: (a) what were the total expenditures related to hosting or attending videoconferences at the MRO in Toronto, broken down by year; (b) what is the breakdown of the expenditures by videoconference, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) name and title of the minister or other individual hosting, (iii) purpose of the meeting, (iv) total expenditures, (v) breakdown of expenditures by type (audio-visual costs, Zoom fees, catering, etc.), (vi) number and titles of attendees, broken down by those at the MRO in Toronto versus those participating from another location?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Special Advisor for Water, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, ministers' regional offices, or MROs, provide secure accommodations, administrative and logistical support for on and off-site meetings and events for the Prime Minister, cabinet ministers and senior government officials. The offices are equipped with information technology infrastructure to facilitate client participation in virtual meetings.

MROs currently do not systematically track expenditures related to hosting or attending videoconferences in the department's financial system or a centralized database. Further, any expenditures incurred for catering services during events or meetings held in the facilities are the responsibility of the respective departments involved.

Question No. 1992—Mr. Terry Dowdall:

With regard to section 3.32 of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development's report "Hydrogen's Potential to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions": why did Natural Resources Canada not factor in the modelling how (i) the supply of hydrogen and associated costs that would be deployed to meet the projected demand, (ii) the existing grid and infrastructure could accommodate electrification ambitions, as well as hydrogen production from renewable generation?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources and Energy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hydrogen strategy for Canada released in 2020 provided initial analysis of the potential opportunity and role that low-carbon hydrogen could play in Canada. As such, it modelled what the full potential of hydrogen could be in Canada's energy system, including the economic, environmental and social benefits created by different scenarios and actions.

The modelling focused on the near term, and economically viable end-uses, such as heavy-duty transportation, natural gas blending, cement and steel manufacturing and low-carbon fuel production. These were identified through the engagement undertaken with other government departments, provinces and territories, academia and industry across Canada. The analysis included as-

pects of technology readiness levels, economic competitiveness, adoption potential and other factors, including supporting infrastructure. Projected demand was not within the scope of this initial modelling, thereby associated costs of supplying hydrogen that would be deployed to meet the projected demand were likewise out of scope.

The modelling undertaken for the hydrogen strategy for Canada was the first of its kind, as Canada had never previously undertaken nationally-based modelling specifically looking at the potential initial vision of using low-carbon hydrogen in various decarbonization applications such as those identified above. Since this was a nascent sector, the modelling had limited data on actual usage of low-carbon hydrogen. It relied on data and assumptions based on historical usage of hydrogen as an energy source. Future modelling will make use of data based on actual usage of low-carbon hydrogen as an energy source, based on pilot, demonstration and early deployment projects.

Natural Resources Canada, or NRCan, continues to track progress on low-carbon hydrogen production, infrastructure and end-use projects to improve projections in Canada around the potential role of low-carbon hydrogen in the future, including its role in electrification. In the upcoming progress report update of the hydrogen strategy, expected to be published in early 2024, NRCan will provide updated low-carbon hydrogen modelling projections from six different modelling initiatives that considered hydrogen in the context of net-zero by 2050. Each of these were undertaken since the publication of the hydrogen strategy for Canada in 2020, and the progress report will present the full range of new results.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1993—Mr. Terry Dowdall:**

With regard to exhibit 3.2 in the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development's report "Hydrogen's Potential to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions": (a) in reference to the near-term phase, what are the total cost projections and current costs of the (i) development of new hydrogen supply and distribution infrastructure and mature market application, (ii) launching of pilot projects in regional hubs, including pre-commercial applications for heavy-duty trucks, transport equipment for seaport goods, power generation, heat for buildings, and industrial feedstock, (iii) development and implementation of additional policy and regulatory measures needed to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050; (b) in reference to the mid-term phase, what are the total cost projections and current costs of the (i) addition of new regional hubs, (ii) rapid expansion of adoption of fuel cell electric vehicles and transit buses, (iii) increase in new and largescale hydrogen production, to be commercialized in regional hubs, to enable hydrogen and natural gas blending for industry and as feedstock for chemical production; and (c) in reference to the long-term phase, what are the total cost projections and current costs of (i) an increase of new commercial applications supported by supply and distribution infrastructure, (ii) the commercial launch and rapid expansion of new ways to use hydrogen in transportation, (iii) building of more dedicated hydrogen pipelines, (iv) an increase in the supply of low-carbon intensity hydrogen throughout Canada, allowing heavy-emitting industries to adapt operations to decrease carbon emissions, (v) increased production of hydrogen, which could also position Canada as a large scale exporter of hydrogen?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Exhibit 3.2 of the Auditor General's report "Hydrogen's Potential to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions" references pages 101 and 102 of the Hydrogen Strategy for Canada, in particular the section entitled "Roadmap to 2050".

This section outlined potential actions that could take place in the near, medium and long term, if the low-carbon hydrogen market were to develop in a correlated manner to the incremental or transformative scenarios described in the Hydrogen Strategy. The section does not reference specific federal government policies, programs, initiatives, or commitments. As such, it did not include cost projections for those actions. Costs of individual projects, including production, infrastructure, or pilot projects, are borne by project proponents, are project specific, commercially confidential, and vary based on jurisdiction.

Question No. 1994—Mr. John Barlow:

With regard to the targets outlined in the 2030 Emissions Reduction Plan: Clean Air, Strong Economy, since January 1, 2022: (a) what are the projected (i) job losses in Canada, broken down by province, (ii) loss of investment within Canada from entities from other countries, (iii) costs for the treasury to convert to carbon neutral, as a result of the government's plan to achieve the targets; and (b) what are the realized (i) job losses in Canada, broken down by province, (ii) loss of investment within Canada from entities from other countries, (iii) costs for the treasury to convert to carbon neutral, to date, resulting from the government's plan to achieve the target?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, climate change is an urgent and existential threat that poses significant risks to the well-being of Canadians and ecosystems. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has stated that increases in global warming reaching 1.5°C would cause unavoidable increases in multiple hazards and present significant risks to ecosystems and humans. At current rates, global warming of 1.5°C will likely be reached between 2030 and 2052, and it is only with deep reductions in greenhouse gas, or GHG, emissions that global warming can be limited to below 2°C.

The science is clear, accelerated efforts to reduce GHG emissions rapidly by 2030 and to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 are necessary in order to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. As a result, in 2021, Canada increased its 2030 Nationally Determined Contribution, its NDC under the Paris Agreement to 40-45% reduc-

tions below 2005 levels by 2030, from 439 to 403 megatonnes. This target represents a reduction of GHG emissions by 293 to 329 megatonnes from 2005 levels. In 2021, Canada enshrined into legislation its commitment to being net-zero by 2050 through the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act. Under the Act, the Government of Canada is required to set progressively more ambitious emissions targets for 2035, 2040, and 2045, supported by emissions reduction plans.

As you know, in March 2022, the Government released the 2030 Emissions Reduction Plan, the ERP, which shows a credible pathway to achieving Canada's enhanced 2030 target. The Plan highlights the emissions reduction potential for all economic sectors to reduce emissions by 2030 and includes concrete action that the Government will take to reach our target. The 2030 ERP builds on the foundation set by Canada's existing climate actions with a suite of new mitigation measures and strategies and \$9.1 billion in additional investments.

More recently, in December 2023, Canada released its first progress report for the 2030 Emissions Reduction Plan. The 2023 Progress Report provides an update on progress toward the 2030 target, based on Canada's most recent inventory of historical emissions and recently updated emissions projections. The 2023 Progress Report indicates that we are on a solid path toward our 2030 target. Canada is on pace to surpass our previous target of 30% below 2005 levels and is currently tracking to exceed our interim objective of 20% below 2005 levels by 2026. Between previously announced measures and the additional actions to be explored that are included in the Progress Report, Canada remains firmly on track to meet our ambitious but achievable 2030 target.

The Government of Canada does not currently conduct the level of analysis sought in your inquiry; however, it does know that Canada is already experiencing the impacts of the changing climate, and the costs will continue to climb the longer we postpone climate action. A 2020 report by the Canadian Climate Institute found that the average cost per natural disaster has jumped 1,250% since the 1970s. Over the last decade, the average yearly cost of weather-related disasters and catastrophic losses has risen to the equivalent of 5-6% of Canada's annual Gross Domestic Product growth.

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This past year is on track to being one of the costliest given the extent of climate-related disasters across Canada, including flooding and the worst wildfire year on record. The growing clean economy is building the net-zero industries of tomorrow. It will also create and maintain well-paying jobs for Canadians and businesses in Canada. Clean energy jobs are estimated to grow to 2.68 million by 2050, according to modelling by independent experts from Clean Energy Canada and Navius Research. Taking climate action now is a critical economic opportunity that will maintain and create Canadian jobs and make our economy more resilient and more competitive.

The Government of Canada recognizes that affordability and cost-of-living is top of mind for many Canadians right now. Making life more affordable for Canadians is a key objective of Canada's climate action. The 2030 Emissions Reduction Plan helps to reduce energy costs for our homes and buildings; makes it easier for Canadians to make the switch to electric vehicles; and creates good, middle-class jobs in every province in the country.

Canada's climate plans use an optimal mix of incentives and regulations to address climate change ensuring that our workers and business fully benefit from the economic opportunities as investors and consumers in Canada and around the world increasingly look for environmentally sustainable products and resources. Canada's federal carbon pricing system is flexible and carefully designed to ensure it remains affordable. Under the federal system, the Government will continue to provide support to Canadians and businesses as the carbon price rises to ensure that carbon pricing remains affordable, and most households are better off. Any province or territory can choose the federal pricing system or can design its own pricing system tailored to local needs.

The Government of Canada is committed to supporting a whole-of-government and whole-of-society effort to reduce emissions, create clean jobs and address the climate-related challenges communities are already facing, and we are working closely with industry and provinces and territories for all sectoral contributions in a way that creates economic opportunities in every sector. We will also reach those ambitions through investment, which we are doing through investments in clean technology, in the auto sector, and greener buildings, as an example. However, given the economic interdependencies and interactions within and between sectors, the exact areas for emissions reduction potential may shift in the future as Canada further decarbonizes and flexibilities will exist. For example, creating a clean electricity grid will go a long way towards supporting our zero-emission vehicles goals. The Government of Canada is always exploring new and innovative approaches to drive ambition toward its climate objectives. That is why the 2030 Emissions Reduction Plan is an evergreen plan that will evolve as Canada moves toward its 2030 and 2050 targets.

More information on our climate plans, our progress and our investments is available at <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/weather/climatechange.html>.

The Government of Canada will continue to work tirelessly for the health and wellbeing of Canadians, and for a cleaner, more resilient, and prosperous world for this and future generations.

Question No. 1995—**Mr. Dan Mazier:**

With regard to meetings and tours attended by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change: (a) how many meetings or tours attended by the minister were located on farms, since October 26, 2021; and (b) what are the details of each meeting or tour in (a), including the (i) date, (ii) category and type of farm, (iii) province or territory in which the farm was located, (iv) event description or the purpose of the minister's attendance?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadian farmers are on the front lines of the fight against climate change and are also playing a key role as part of the climate solution. Environment and Climate Change Canada, or ECCC, has had extensive engagement with farmers and the agricultural sector while they work together in seeking solutions to combat climate change.

ECCC continues to engage with agriculture stakeholders on various aspects of the Government of Canada's climate plan, the Sustainable Agriculture Strategy, which is under development, and the broader environmental agenda. The government remains committed to helping farmers meet the world's need for food, while safeguarding resources for future generations.

Many of my cabinet colleagues and I have met and will continue to meet with Canadians and industry representatives from across the country in the fight to clean up the environment, combat climate change, reduce greenhouse gases all while maintaining a strong economy. For additional information, the Registry of Lobbyists can be found at <https://lobbycanada.gc.ca/app/secure/ocl/lrs/do/guest>.

Question No. 1998—**Mr. Larry Maguire:**

With regard to the meeting between the office of the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and the Mayor of Swan River, Manitoba, referred to in the government's response to petition 441-01673: (a) what was the (i) date, (ii) time, (iii) location, of the meeting; (b) what were the titles of all attendees representing the government who attended the meeting; (c) why was the meeting initiated; (d) what were the outcomes of the meeting; (e) were there any presentations or briefing materials provided during, or in advance of the meeting, by the government; and (f) did the representatives in (b) take any notes during the meeting?

Mr. James Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Office of the Minister of Justice met with the Mayor of Swan River virtually on May 29, 2023, from 3:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., at the request of the Mayor. This meeting was attended by a Senior Policy Advisor from the Office of the Minister of Justice and by an Advisor, Parliamentary and Regional Affairs (West and North). The meeting was productive, and it was valuable to hear the perspective of the Mayor. The Mayor encouraged swift passage of Bill C-48, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (bail reform), which received Royal Assent in December 2023. Discussions were also had about work which could be done by the Province of Manitoba to address concerns around crime.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1999—Mr. Scot Davidson:**

With regard to memorandums or directives provided to government officials related to the conducting of background checks on visa applicants, since January 1, 2019: what are the details of all such memorandums or directives, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipients, (iv) type of documents, (v) title, (vi) details of the directive provided, if applicable, including which categories of visa applicants are subject to the directive?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Centre for Immigration and National Security Screening of the Canada Border Services Agency, or CBSA, oversees the delivery of the Immigration National Security Screening Program, which includes the collection, analysis and review of information and intelligence on foreign nationals to assess their admissibility for temporary or permanent residence and refugee status.

For the purpose of responding to this question, the CBSA interpreted “memorandums or directives provided to government officials” as referring to any formal written direction provided to CBSA personnel by, or on behalf of, the Minister of Public Safety or the President of the CBSA. No memorandums or directives, as defined earlier, have been identified since January 1, 2019.

Question No. 2001—Mr. Randy Hoback:

With regard to section 3.56 of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development's report entitled "Hydrogen's Potential to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions": of the models referred to in the section, what specific models were used and what were the conclusions of each model?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the 2022 Reports of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development to the Parliament of Canada, specifically, Report 3—“Hydrogen's Potential to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions”, found that Environment and Climate Change Canada, or ECCC, and Natural Resources Canada, or NRCan, had different approaches to assessing the role hydrogen should play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Environment and Climate Change Canada expected to achieve 15 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions reductions in 2030 whereas the Hydrogen Strategy for Canada, published by NRCan, projected up to 45 megatonnes. It should be noted that the difference between NRCan and ECCC's estimated reduction potential is due to the different scope and analytical approaches used by the departments.

To generate the 15 megatonnes reduction estimate, ECCC used the EC-Pro model. EC-Pro is a provincial-territorial multi-regional, multi-sector computable general equilibrium model. It covers up to 50 industries and three final demand categories across all 13 Canadian provinces and territories. It is calibrated to the most recent input-output data from Statistics Canada and energy, or emissions, data from the Energy, Emissions and Economy Model for Canada, or E3MC. ECCC focused on modelling the Hydrogen Strategy as one of the many policies and measures announced in Canada's strengthened climate plan and used a proxy, a 7.3 percent hydrogen-natural gas blending mandate, to incorporate potential emissions reductions from hydrogen.

As noted by the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, NRCan looked at a transformative scenario where hydrogen could fill the gap in energy demand not met by

other decarbonization means, such as electrification, biofuel, and emissions offset for fossil fuels. The Transformative Scenario was meant to represent the potential size of Canada's hydrogen opportunity if bold action is taken in the near term. NRCan commissioned a third-party consulting firm, ZEN and the Art of Clean Energy, or ZEN, to undertake modelling for the Hydrogen Strategy for Canada. Together with the Institute for Breakthrough Energy + Emission Technologies, the modelling explored the potential role that hydrogen could play in Canada's energy future including exploring issues such as hydrogen demand, deployment and emissions reduction potential for hydrogen use across all sectors of the economy, in the context of Canada's net-zero climate commitments. ZEN's modelling, which took a regional approach, considered six broad end-uses covering all aspects of the economy, namely transportation, the built environment, several industrial processes, oil and gas, clean fuels, blending with natural gas. The ZEN modelling estimated that hydrogen could contribute up to 45 megatonnes of reductions by 2030.

In addition to the transformative scenario, NRCan also considered an Incremental scenario, which was based on a business-as-usual approach with lighter policy measures and a slower start to adoption of hydrogen. Under this scenario, the potential reductions from hydrogen were expected to reach 22 megatonnes.

Question No. 2004—Mr. Dean Allison:

With regard to requests made by CBC/Radio-Canada to social media companies to take down, edit, ban, or change in any other way social media content, posts, or accounts, since January 1, 2020: what are the details of all such requests, including (i) who made the request, (ii) the date, (iii) the social media platform, (iv) the description of the original content including the name or the handle associated with the post, (v) the description of the change requested, (vi) whether the social media company abided by the request?

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, from January 1, 2020, to November 21, 2023, CBC/Radio-Canada asked various social media companies to act on content posted on their platforms that violate copyright of their platform community standards. CBC/Radio-Canada records do not contain the complete information required to provide a comprehensive response to this question.

An extensive manual search would be required to gather the information requested and remove any personal information, and the results could only partially answer this request. This could not be accomplished in the time allotted for this request.

Question No. 2005—Mr. Gerald Soroka:

With regard to the Parliamentary Budget Officer's analysis of the Supplementary Estimates (B), 2023-24: what is the breakdown of the \$500 million that is being frozen across 68 organizations to achieve the reductions in 2023-24, by organization and by object code?

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Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Refocusing Government Spending to Deliver for Canadians website at <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/topics/planned-government-spending/refocusing-government-spending.html> provides the breakdown of amounts frozen by organization for 2023–24. The budgetary expenditures by standard object for Supplementary Estimates (B), 2023–24, which can be found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/planned-government-spending/supplementary-estimates/supplementary-estimates-b-2023-24/budgetary-expenditures-standard-object.html>, are based on the authorities to date and do not include frozen amounts.

Question No. 2007—Mr. Jeremy Patzer:

With regard to the \$669,650 contract awarded to KPMG to provide advice on how to save money on consultants: (a) what advice did KPMG provide to the government; and (b) does the government consider the advice to be worth \$669,650?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources and Energy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the total amount of the contract awarded to KPMG on July 13, 2022, is \$630,000 (without tax). The contract was established to leverage the firm's experience to support the modernization of internal services and departmental operations. The work began prior to the President of the Treasury Board's Government of Canada spending initiative, which was detailed in budget 2023. In support of the spending initiative, Natural Resources Canada, or NRCan, submitted its proposals to refocus spending to the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat in October 2023.

With respect to part (a) of the question, KPMG conducted an independent financial review of internal service expenditures to identify cost-saving opportunities for the department, in line with the department's ongoing efforts to manage public resources efficiently. The department worked with the firm to analyze cost-saving opportunities, specifically in information technology, or IT, and real property. The analysis was much broader than spending on professional services.

KPMG's analysis revealed opportunities for efficiencies in operational IT areas such as IT service and software asset management, IT contractor usage, desktop computing, printer optimization, and application portfolio rationalization. Their analysis also pinpointed areas of potential efficiency improvements in real property, such as fleet management, space utilization, and the centralization of real property functions.

KPMG provided recommendations that covered areas of policy, procurement, governance, planning, organizational structure, and technology. These recommendations provided both short and long-term options and proposed operational efficiencies and risk mitigation for the department.

With respect to part (b) of the question, KPMG's advice was derived from: analyzing diverse data types, that is, financial data, internal service volume and website analytics; conducting consultations; and performing benchmarking analysis against similar organizations. This facilitated the development of methodologies, tools and templates for assessing potential efficiencies and proposing actionable next steps.

The analysis revealed efficiency opportunities in IT areas benefiting from optimization or lower cost alternatives, and helped the department ensure the continuity of ongoing activities and strategic real property activities.

KPMG provided an external perspective to the department to identify efficiency opportunities using industry best practices' benchmarking and data analysis methodologies.

Question No. 2008—Ms. Niki Ashton:

With regard to the surveillance infrastructure for tuberculosis (TB): (a) since 2015, broken down by province, what was the incidence of TB in Canada generally, and for First Nations, Inuit and Métis in Canada; (b) what date will the government publish the next Tuberculosis in Canada report; (c) how does Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, and Indigenous Services Canada collaborate with the recommendations outlined in the TB in Canada report; (d) what are the demographic criteria included in Canada's TB surveillance system to appropriately disaggregate data to identify gaps in care and is this disaggregated data shared with provincial health departments; (e) how much funding is dedicated to Canada's TB surveillance system and dissemination strategy, including the launch of the TB in Canada report; (f) what is the average response time between when a TB outbreak is declared by a public health authority, and when that data is reflected in the national TB surveillance system; and (g) what steps is the Public Health Agency of Canada taking to ensure that the recommendations of the Pan-Canadian Health Data Strategy are implemented for tuberculosis data?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a) and (b), the incidence rate of tuberculosis, or TB, in Canada is broken down by province and by territory and by Indigenous group, namely First Nations, Inuit and Métis, for the 2008–2018 time period and can be found at https://opencanada.blob.core.windows.net/opengovprod/resources/1ff8f1b6-02a8-425a-bd0b-af9495d2e53c/tb-in-canada_2008-2018_eng_march24-2022.pdf?sr=b&sp=r&sig=D6d5ljkzoXi4CwVF9%2BMAAxZrPYJN2tG8/yQBAvKkhzA%3D&sv=2019-07-07&sc=2024-01-30T02%3A27%3A38Z.

Surveillance data for the 2012–2021 reporting period will be published on the Government of Canada website in winter 2024 in a new report entitled "Tuberculosis in Canada: 2012–2021 Expanded report." The report will include updated data broken down by province and by territory, as well as descriptive statistics on a wide range of variables related to TB. A summary of TB data for the 2012 to 2021 time period was recently published and can be found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/tuberculosis-surveillance-canada-summary-2012-2021.html>. With regard to the incidence rate of TB in 2021, the data showed 135.1 cases per 100,000 among Inuit people, 16.1 cases per 100,000 among First Nations people and 2.1 per 100,000 among Métis people.

Additionally, an infographic with surveillance highlights entitled "Tuberculosis in Canada: Infographic (2021)," is available at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/tuberculosis-canada-2021-infographic.html>. It is expected that an infographic presenting 2022 data will be released by March 2024.

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With regard to (c), the Public Health Agency of Canada, or PHAC, Health Canada, and other federal departments such as Indigenous Services Canada and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada meet regularly to discuss national TB surveillance trends and interventions to support TB elimination such as support for outbreaks, access to TB medications, capacity building, and other activities. These departments and other partners, such as the provinces, territories, Indigenous groups and TB experts, use national TB surveillance reports to measure Canada's progress towards TB elimination targets and commitments which in turn help to inform TB policy and program decision making, research initiatives and innovation related to TB. TB surveillance reports are also used by provincial and territorial partners for benchmarking and to inform decision-making.

With regard to (d), demographic data collected through Canada's TB surveillance system originate from the provinces and territories. The data includes province or territory of residence, population group, namely the country of birth, immigration status, the year of arrival in Canada and Indigenous groups, age and sex. A complete list of variables can be found on our case report form available at <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/diseases/tuberculosis/active-tuberculosis-reporting-form-eng.pdf>.

The national surveillance system consists of TB related data submitted from provincial and territorial public health departments but does not include specific information on health care.

With regard to (e), the TB surveillance program at PHAC has a total funding of \$1,222,030 for fiscal year 2023-2024, which includes employee salaries, program operations and maintenance. Furthermore, the dissemination of the infographic and surveillance report have an estimated cost of \$6,500.

With regard to (f), active TB cases are reported to the National Tuberculosis Surveillance system on an annual basis in the summer months following the calendar year in which they were diagnosed. A national report is then produced usually in the fall and published in the winter. The time period between when data are submitted to PHAC and published include requirements for cleaning data, verifying quality, analyzing, reporting, and publishing.

With regard to (g), guided by recommendations from an Expert Advisory Group, there was significant collaboration between the federal, provincial, and territorial governments towards a pan-Canadian health data strategy, focused on common priorities such as modernizing and aligning health data standards, policies and governance, and building public trust. This work set the stage for enhanced collaboration across the country, under the Government of Canada's "Working Together to Improve Health Care for Canadians" Plan, announced in February 2023, and a Federal, Provincial, and Territorial Joint Action Plan on Health Data and Digital Health, which was endorsed by Ministers of Health on October 12, 2023. More information on the "Working Together to Improve Health Care for Canadians" Plan is available at <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/news/2023/02/working-together-to-improve-health-care-for-canadians.html>.

The Pan-Canadian Health Data Strategy, or PCHDS, led to the release of a final report in May 2022 led by an Expert Advisory Group which includes recommendations for health data partners

from all jurisdictions, namely federal, provincial and territorial, which can be found at <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/corporate/mandate/about-agency/external-advisory-bodies/list/pan-canadian-health-data-strategy-reports-summaries/expert-advisory-group-report-03-toward-world-class-health-data-system/expert-advisory-group-report-03-toward-world-class-health-data-system.pdf>.

Some of these recommendations align with the work being undertaken by PHAC's TB surveillance program. The program works collaboratively with federal, provincial and territorial surveillance stakeholders to collect common indicators for TB. In addition, to better understand data needs, gaps and expectations, bilateral discussions with provincial and territorial TB partners took place in the summer and fall 2023. This aligns with recommendation #5 from the PCHDS: Establish meaningful and ongoing engagement with the public and stakeholders to understand their health data needs and expectations.

Furthermore, the PHAC TB surveillance program is exploring the development of a new surveillance infrastructure to modernize the storage, management and analysis of data. This is expected to improve timeliness and data quality and aligns with recommendation #9: Establish common integrated health data standards and data architecture and drive and monitor their roll out.

Question No. 2011—Mr. Brad Redekopp:

With regard to government responses to document production orders adopted by the House of Commons and its committees: (a) does the government acknowledge the authority of the House and its committees to compel the production of documents through the power to send for papers and records; (b) does the "suggested key messages" briefed to the Office of the Deputy Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship by departmental officials, on May 2, 2022, that "Parliamentary committees may request documents from the government, but the government is of the view that they cannot compel their disclosure" represent the government's official position, and, if not, what is the government's official position; (c) if the answer to (b) is negative, what remedial action has been taken to ensure that the Department of Citizenship and Immigration is correctly informed about the House's constitutional authority to compel the production of documents; (d) are the key messages prepared for an assistant deputy minister of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration on April 28, 2022, for a briefing to be provided to the deputy minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, specifically that "even in the face of an order from the House of Commons, it remains open to protect personal information from disclosure if ministers wish to do so" reflective of the government's official position; (e) if the answer to (d) is negative, what remedial action has been taken to ensure that the department is correctly informed about ministers' authority to override orders of the House and its committees; and (f) is it the position of the government that ministers have any discretionary authorities to redact documents ordered by the House or its committees to be produced, and, if so, on what grounds and lawful authority may orders of the House and its committees be overridden "if ministers wish to do so"?

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Mr. James Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, parliamentarians perform a pivotal role in Canada's Westminster system of government by studying and passing legislation, deliberating on matters of national concern, and generally holding the government to account. The Government of Canada consistently strives to be as forthcoming with parliamentarians as possible, while respecting its legal obligations to treat certain types of information as confidential. That being said, Speaker Beaudoin stated in 1957 that "No matter how ample its powers may be, there are certain documents to which the house is not entitled, and that is those a cabinet minister refuses to produce on his own responsibility."

The Privacy Act, for example, provides that personal information under the control of a government institution shall not, without the consent of the individual to whom it relates, be disclosed except in accordance with the Act. When faced with requests by parliamentarians for personal information, government institutions consider all available authorities that may permit disclosure. Officials support ministers, notably with respect to the production of documents as well as in their relationship with the House of Commons, to which they are responsible for the policies and operations of the Government of Canada. All of this is in keeping with the constitutional principles that underly our system, including parliamentary sovereignty, parliamentary privilege, responsible government, and the rule of law.

As former Conservative Minister of Justice Rob Nicholson stated in the House of Commons on March 31, 2010, "The central issue before you, Mr. Speaker, is whether parliamentary privilege gives the House an absolute and unqualified right to order the production of documents and to receive the documents and whether any expression of views that it might not constitute a contempt of the House. On this point, I would remind the House that our parliamentary privileges are not indefinite, nor unlimited, but defined by the Constitution in the Parliament of Canada Act as those possessed by the United Kingdom House of Commons in 1867."

Question No. 2016—**Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman:**

With regard to the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and the October 6, 2023 directive for CAF reconstitution from the Chief of the Defence Staff and the deputy minister: (a) how many and what percentage of CAF members are considered non-essential; (b) how many and what percentage of those considered non-essential have been ordered to "temporarily cease activities" to focus on the reconstitution order; (c) what is the breakdown of how many CAF members have been reassigned to focus on the reconstitution order by the unit or squadron they were with; and (d) what are the details of each analysis conducted, including timelines, findings, and number of personnel involved, related to the part of the directive stating that "Before reductions in staffing processes and/or the ceasing of activities and tasks that do not directly contribute to CAF reconstitution efforts, an analysis shall be conducted to determine the impacts on Public Service processes and activities, and solutions will be devised in collaboration with ADM(HR-Civ) to mitigate negative second and third order effects"?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Chief of the Defence Staff, or CDS, and Deputy Minister, or DM, directive for Canadian Armed Forces, or CAF, reconstitution initiated a concerted, defence team-wide effort to rebuild the strength and numbers of its members and, at the same time, build on the structure and competencies that are necessary to defend and protect Canadians. The directive calls on the defence team to optimize its operational tempo, prioritize resource allocation to areas of increasing strategic rel-

evance and create capacity for reconstitution efforts. Notably, there are no CAF personnel who are deemed non-essential through this process.

The directive was initially produced by the Strategic Joint Staff, with support from organizations across National Defence. There is no dedicated team or set of individuals that have been re-assigned to focus on the directive's implementation. This is because the directive provides tasks and planning guidance for all members across the defence team to consider and incorporate into future planning.

Indeed, a number of tasks identified in the directive have been achieved due to close coordination and collaboration between individuals and teams across National Defence since October 2022. For example, the defence team has successfully executed an initial review of operations and contingency plans to initiate a short-term optimization of critical ranks and trades, streamlined the delivery of basic training and completed a review of all ceremonial tasks in order to prioritize reconstitution efforts.

As of December 18, 2023, these efforts have not necessitated analyses on public service processes and activities. Nonetheless, all elements and organizations within National Defence – military and civilian – continue to apply a reconstitution lens to all operations, plans and commitments, with due consideration given to priorities and capacity.

Reconstitution is an ongoing effort that will continue until the force is appropriately rebuilt. There will be continual reviews of the directive to ensure that the aims are still correct and being achieved and to ensure the tasks are appropriate and prioritized.

Question No. 2017—**Mr. Earl Dreeshen:**

With regard to the orders in council adopted since November 4, 2015: (a) how many orders in council have not been published on the Privy Council Office website; and (b) with respect to each order in council not published, (i) what is the number assigned to it, (ii) what is the date on which it was adopted, (iii) who was the minister who gave the recommendation to adopt it, (iv) which departments, agencies or Crown corporations did it concern, (v) what is its subject-matter, (vi) did it enact regulations exempted from examination, publication or registration under the Statutory Instruments Act?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Special Advisor for Water, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with few exceptions, orders in council are available to Canadians online on the Privy Council Office, or PCO, Orders in Council website and are published in the Canada Gazette.

Between November 5, 2015, and November 22, 2023, the Governor in Council approved 10,828 orders in council. Of those, 10,728 were posted on the PCO Orders in Council website. The remaining 100, representing less than 1% of the total number approved by the Governor in Council, are protected in accordance with Canadian legislation.

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Some statutes, including, the Statutory Instruments Act, the Access to Information Act, the Privacy Act, and the Investment Canada Act, contain provisions that restrict the publication of orders in council, temporarily or permanently, when their content relates to national security, military operations, sensitive personal or commercial information, or information that could interfere with the conduct of international or interprovincial affairs.

Question No. 2018—**Mr. Alex Ruff:**

With regard to Old Age Security (OAS), for the 2022 tax year: (a) how many OAS payment recipients were not residents of Canada for tax purposes; and (b) how much was paid out in OAS payments to the recipients in (a)?

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a) of the question, in 2022, an average of 155,477 Old Age Security or OAS program recipients residing outside Canada received benefits each month.

These recipients may or may not have non-resident status for tax purposes. Data limitations regarding the OAS and International Agreements administrative databases preclude the reliable identification of beneficiaries with non-resident status for tax purposes as granted by the Canada Revenue Agency.

With respect to part (b), in 2022, \$620,967,040 was paid to OAS program recipients residing outside Canada.

Question No. 2020—**Mr. Eric Melillo:**

With regard to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan 2023-2028: (a) what is the date each measure will (i) begin to be implemented, (ii) be fully implemented; and (b) for each measure in (a) where implementation dates are not available, why are dates not available?

Mr. James Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice undertook an extensive preliminary search in order to determine the amount of information that would fall within the scope of the question and the amount of time that would be required to prepare a comprehensive response. The level of detail of the information requested is not systematically tracked in a centralized database. The Department of Justice concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question would require a manual collection of information that is not possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples affirms the human rights of indigenous peoples as the minimum standard for the survival, dignity and well-being of indigenous peoples in Canada and around the world.

Together, first nations, Inuit and Métis and the Government of Canada are already working to implement the UN Declaration on the ground, including through the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, or UNDA, which created a lasting framework to advance federal implementation of the declaration in consultation and cooperation with indigenous peoples.

There are already many initiatives underway that contribute to achieving the objectives of the declaration. These include, but are not limited to: Indigenous Languages Act; First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Families and Youth Act and the urban, rural and northern indigenous housing strategy.

The UNDA action plan is intended to be implemented over five years, from 2023 to 2028. As is therefore to be expected, different action plan measures are at different stages and will proceed at different rates. For some, measures are already well underway or nearing completion: for example, Bill S-13, An Act to amend the Interpretation Act and to make related amendments to other Acts; Bill C-38, An Act to amend the Indian Act (new registration entitlements); and Bill C-53, An Act respecting the recognition of certain Métis governments in Alberta, Ontario and Saskatchewan, to give effect to treaties with those governments and to make consequential amendments to other Acts; for others, initial work planned has been shared with indigenous peoples, that is, shared priorities, or SP, 30 indigenous data sovereignty) and some discussions with indigenous peoples are already underway, such as SP 28 development of an indigenous justice strategy and SP 52 indigenous cross-border mobility). For others, dedicated consultation has yet to begin. Information about specific measures will be collected, confirmed and reported on as part of the UNDA annual reporting process.

To ensure indigenous peoples' continued participation in the action plan implementation process, the Department of Justice is providing funding to support indigenous participation in the various implementation, monitoring and oversight processes described in the action plan.

As with the other obligations set out in the UNDA and the commitments made in the action plan, the annual reports on progress must be developed in consultation and cooperation with indigenous peoples. Shared priorities measure 20 from the action plan commits to the development of metrics with indigenous peoples to ensure useful measurements are being reported on.

The next Annual Report to Parliament is scheduled to be completed in June 2024 and will be tabled shortly thereafter.

Question No. 2021—**Mr. Gérard Deltell:**

With regard to legal services and the Department of Justice: (a) what are the total legal costs incurred by the government for the case of Responsible Plastic Use Coalition v. Canada (Environment and Climate Change); and (b) what is the breakdown of the costs?

Mr. James Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to legal expenses incurred by the government related to the Responsible Plastic Use Coalition v. Canada (Environment and Climate Change) litigation, to the extent that the information that has been requested is or may be protected by any legal privileges, including solicitor-client privilege, the federal Crown asserts those privileges. In this case, it has only waived solicitor-client privilege, and only to the extent of revealing the total legal costs, as defined below.

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The total legal costs, namely the actual and notional costs, associated with the Responsible Plastic Use Coalition v. Canada (Environment and Climate Change) action amount to approximately \$1,307,200. The services targeted here are litigation services provided in this case by the Department of Justice, as well as litigation support services. Department of Justice lawyers, notaries and paralegals are salaried public servants and therefore no legal fees are incurred for their services. A “notional amount” can, however, be provided to account for the legal services they provide. The notional amount is calculated by multiplying the total hours recorded in the responsive files for the relevant period by the applicable approved internal legal services hourly rates. Actual costs represent file related legal disbursements paid by the Department of Justice and then cost-recovered from client departments or agencies. The total amount mentioned in this response is based on information contained in Department of Justice systems, as of November 29, 2023.

Question No. 2027—Ms. Niki Ashton:

With regard to the effective tax rate paid by high-income individuals and businesses: (a) from 2015 to 2023, what was the effective tax rate paid by those making above (i) 1 million, (ii) 2 million, (iii) 5 million, CAD; (b) what was the average effective tax rate paid by the top (i) 1%, (ii) 0.1%, (iii) 0.01%, of income earners from 2015 to 2023; and (c) what was the effective capital gains tax rate of the top (i) 1%, (ii) 0.1%, (iii) 0.01%, of capital gains earners from 2015 to 2023?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the previous question, what follows is the response from the Canada Revenue Agency, or CRA, for the time period of January 1, 2015, to November 27, 2023, that is, the date of the question.

The CRA is unable to provide a response to (a), (b) or (c).

Effective tax rates are not captured on tax forms or schedules, nor in the CRA's systems and databases, for either individuals or corporations. Computations of effective tax rates are not undertaken by the CRA. Providing the information requested would require an extensive data modeling exercise to produce a tax calculation for which the CRA neither has the requisite expertise nor a tried and tested methodology.

Question No. 2028—Mr. Adam Chambers:

With regard to the Bank of Canada's (BOC) digital Canadian dollar consultation: (a) what are the details of all memorandums or briefing notes that have been sent from or received by the BOC in relation to the topic, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) type of document, (iii) sender, (iv) recipient, (v) title, (vi) file number; (b) what are the details of all studies the BOC has done since 2016 related to the topic, including, for each, (i) the date, (ii) the methodology, (iii) who conducted the study, (iv) the results; and (c) what (i) was the input received, (ii) were the overall findings, from the digital Canadian dollar consultation, which occurred from May 8 to June 19, 2023?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to part (a) of the question, (i) with regard to the Bank of Canada's digital Canadian dollar consultation, the bank found one relevant briefing note or memorandum dated October 3, 2023; (ii) the type of document is a briefing note; (iii) the sender is the communications department of the Bank of Canada; (iv) the recipient is the executive council of the Bank of Canada; and (v) the title is “Overview of engagement to date and material for publication by the Bank”. Item (vi) is not applicable, as there is no file number associated with this document.

With respect to part (b) of the question, details of the relevant study are in the response to part (c) of the question. There are no additional studies related to the Bank of Canada's digital Canadian dollar consultation.

Lastly, with respect to part (c), on May 8, 2023, the Bank of Canada launched an open public questionnaire on the digital Canadian dollar, which ran for six weeks. On November 29, 2023, the bank released the results of its overall engagement and public consultation work in a report entitled, “A Digital Canadian Dollar: What we heard 2020–23 and what comes next”. The report includes an appendix prepared for the bank by a third-party service provider, Forum Research, on public questionnaire results. This includes an explanation of the methodology used for the questionnaire, an analysis of the quantitative results and a summary of the qualitative feedback.

Question No. 2031—Mrs. Karen Vecchio:

With regard to the government and Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+): what were the results of the GBA+ analysis and the subsequent actions taken for (i) Bill C-75, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and other Acts and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, (ii) Bill C-48, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (bail reform), (iii) Bill C-9, An Act to amend the Judges Act, (iv) Bill C-5, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act?

Mr. James Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice supports the Government of Canada's commitments to Gender-Based Analysis Plus, or GBA Plus, to help ensure that federal initiatives are responsive and inclusive. The department's Policy on Gender-Based Analysis Plus: Applying an Intersectional Approach to Foster Inclusion and Address Inequities defines the guiding principles and key steps for the integration of intersectional GBA Plus considerations in the development of legislation as well as other departmental initiatives. Members can consult annex C of the policy. The policy requires all Justice Canada officials to apply an intersectional GBA Plus approach in a systematic, evidence-based way to ensure that federal government legislation, policies, programs and other initiatives are responsive, inclusive and reflective of diverse experiences and realities in order to address existing inequities and barriers.

The GBA Plus assessment process is focused on understanding who is impacted by the issue being addressed, identifying how the initiative could be tailored to meet diverse needs of the people most impacted, and anticipating and mitigating any barriers to accessing or benefitting from the initiative. Applying an intersectional approach goes beyond gender and sex to include consideration of multiple identity factors, such as age, disability, economic status, education, sexual orientation, language, racialization, ethnicity, religion and spirituality. The analysis also includes creating meaningful GBA Plus indicators to monitor and report on the impacts of the initiative on diverse groups, as well as identifying existing and potential barriers and inequities experienced by specific groups and addressing them in a timely manner as needed.

Here is some information on the GBA Plus analysis and further actions taken in respect of the specific bills that were the subject of this inquiry.

Regarding the former Bill C-75, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Youth Criminal Justice Act and other Acts and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, the GBA Plus analysis was provided to the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs on May 10, 2019. The amendments were expected to have differential impacts on some identifiable groups, due to the demographic characteristics of individuals involved in the criminal justice system, the CJS. Since these amendments were not designed to address all social issues, without sufficient training for CJS actors, operational changes in the courts and administration of justice at the provincial and territorial level to support them, vulnerable populations were expected to continue to experience overrepresentation. Since the enactment of this legislation, Justice Canada has undertaken further work with the provinces and territories to implement the amendments and monitor any impacts of the legislation.

Justice Canada is currently developing a survey to examine CJS stakeholders' perceptions of CJS efficiencies in general, and more specifically in light of recent legislative changes, including those enacted by former Bill C-75. This will include an assessment of the overall impacts of these changes on Indigenous and racialized accused/offenders and other vulnerable populations.

With respect to Bill C-48, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (bail reform), the GBA Plus analysis was provided to the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs on September 27, 2023. It is available at https://sencanada.ca/Content/Sen/Committee/441/LCJC/briefs/2023-10-13_LCJC_C-48_Follow-up_GBAPlus_e.pdf. The Government of Canada recognizes that the lack of national bail statistics in Canada has resulted in knowledge and data gaps on the topic. Justice Canada is collaborating closely with Statistics Canada and with the provinces and territories to improve data collection and fill these gaps, which would help better understand the impacts of our bail system. Section 2 of Bill C-48 also requires a parliamentary review of the amendments to begin five years after Royal Assent to assess the impacts of the reforms. This review must begin by December 5, 2028, or as soon as reasonably feasible.

With respect to Bill C-9, An Act to amend the Judges Act, the GBA Plus analysis was provided to the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs on April 14, 2023. The reforms

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enacted by C-9 were carefully designed to improve the process for reviewing complaints against federally appointed judges, with a focus on its cost and efficiency, as well as its fairness, accountability and transparency, all without having a disproportionate impact on judges or complainants who are members of identifiable groups relevant to GBA Plus. The reforms are expected to have a positive impact on those who submit complaints related to discrimination, including based on race and gender. Whether the proposed reforms might have negative or unintended impacts for judges or complainants was considered, and none were identified. No further steps are considered necessary at this time.

With respect to Bill C-5, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the GBA Plus analysis was provided to the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs on October 18, 2022. It is available at https://sencanada.ca/Content/Sen/Committee/441/LCJC/briefs/C-5_Followup_Lametti_Full_e.pdf. Section 21 of Bill C-5 included a mandatory parliamentary review of the amendments four years after coming into force to assess the operation of the reforms. This review must begin by November 17, 2026. Justice Canada will continue to collaborate with partners to monitor the impacts of the amendments.

The Department of Justice will continue to improve its practices and promote the early and meaningful integration of intersectional GBA Plus considerations in legislation, policies, programs and other initiatives to advance equity and inclusion.

Question No. 2036—**Mr. Chris Warkentin:**

With regard to claims by the Prime Minister that senators appointed by him are independent: (a) what are the details of all messages sent by the Prime Minister, any minister, or any ministerial staff to Senator Marc Gold since January 1, 2023, including, for each, the (i) sender (ii) type of message (e-mail, text, letter), (iii) title, (iv) summary of the contents, (v) date; (b) what are the details of all government meetings where Senator Gold was invited, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) meeting title, (iii) names and titles of invitees, (iv) location; and (c) has Senator Gold ever been invited to any cabinet meetings, and, if so, how many?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions, and Inter-governmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in December 2015, the Prime Minister implemented an independent advisory board that makes merit-based recommendations for Senate appointments. Every new senator since that time has been appointed as an independent. The new independent Senate led to the creation of the Government Representative Office, led by the Government Representative, Senator Marc Gold. He does not sit in or lead a partisan caucus.

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Senator Gold's role is representing the Senate to the government, and vice versa. For the government, he is the first point of contact and holds the responsibility for steering the government's legislation through the Senate, while also maintaining and encouraging the independence of senators. Senator Gold is a member of the Privy Council. He attends Cabinet when deemed appropriate for facilitating his role in managing the government's legislative agenda in the Senate, and receives relevant correspondence as needed.

Question No. 2037—Mr. Damien C. Kurek:

With regard to the new passport's development, design, production, and distribution: (a) other than the \$284 million contract with the Canadian Bank Note Company, were any other contracts awarded related to the passport, and, if so, what are the details of each, including the (i) vendor, (ii) value, (iii) date, (iv) description of the goods or services provided, (v) manner in which the contract was awarded (competitive bid, sole-sourced)?

Mr. Paul Chiang (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, insofar as Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada or IRCC is concerned: yes, a contract was awarded related to the passport. Specifically, the department leveraged an existing contract with TRM Technologies Inc. via a task authorization or TA to conduct a privacy assessment of the technical solution producing the new passport.

The contract was awarded to TRM Technologies Inc. The TA value was \$33,052.50. The TA was awarded on October 17, 2022. The purpose of the TA was to analyze the new technical production solution for privacy issues, to identify associated risks and mitigation strategies and to draft an addendum to the existing ePassport Privacy Impact Assessment. This contract was awarded via a competitive bid.

Question No. 2038—Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:

With regard to the comments by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on November 8, 2023, that "tens of thousands of people across the Prairies are getting the chance to replace their home heating oil": what is the breakdown of the number of homes on the Prairies that currently use home heating oil, broken down by each of the Prairie provinces?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Natural Resources Canada, or NR-Can, produces the Comprehensive Energy Use Database, or CEUD. CEUD provides an overview of sectoral energy markets in Canada and in each region of the country and provides data on the stock of residential heating systems in each province and in the territories. CEUD data for the residential sector is derived from multiple sources, including Statistics Canada's Report on Energy Supply and Demand, Survey on Household Energy Use, or SHEU. The latest CEUD data is for 2020. CEUD 2021 data is expected in early 2024. The CEUD can be found online at https://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/corporate/statistics/neud/dpa/menus/trends/comprehensive_tables/list.cfm.

According to CEUD data, in 2020, it is estimated that there were 12,000 residential heating systems that use heating oil in Alberta, 12,800 in Saskatchewan, and 8,200 in Manitoba, totaling 33,000 across the Prairie provinces.

Question No. 2040—Ms. Melissa Lantsman:

With regard to the grant of approximately \$133,800 that the government provided to the Community Media Advocacy Centre (CMAC) and Laith Marouf: (a) how much of the \$120,000 paid out through the grant contract has been recovered to date and when was the money recovered; (b) if the money hasn't been recovered, what is the government's plan to recover the money, and by what date will the mon-

ey be recovered; (c) has the government examined any "anti-racism" training provided or developed by Marouf or the CMAC in relation to the grant for anti-Semitic elements, and, if so, what were the results; (d) what specific actions, if any, has the government taken to correct any harm caused by any anti-Semitism which was promoted through this grant by the CMAC or Marouf; and (e) what curriculum or training materials were developed in relation to the grant?

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to (a), as of December 4, the Department of Canadian Heritage has not been successful in its efforts to recover any of the \$122,661 in funds that had been issued to the Community Media Advocacy Centre, or CMAC.

With regard to (b), the contract with CMAC was terminated on September 23, 2022, and the Department of Canadian Heritage retained a third-party collection agency to recoup the \$122,661 paid to CMAC, as well as the services of an investigative agency. Additionally, the department asked the Canada Revenue Agency, or CRA, to apply their set-off program that allows amounts owed by an organization to be re-directed to set off debts. Following these efforts, a statement of claim was filed on November 17, 2023, by the Attorney General of Canada to take legal action against CMAC for breach of contract. The timing of the recovery of funds will be determined by the results of these efforts.

With regard to (c), the Anti-Racism Action Program, or ARAP, suspended the project on August 19, 2022, when it became aware of Mr. Marouf's hateful tweets. The department has not relied on any of the material that was developed by either Mr. Marouf or CMAC.

With regard to (d), following the discovery of hateful comments made by Mr. Marouf, the minister paused the programs that fall under Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy while the department conducted a comprehensive review of the grants and contributions under the programs, improved program integrity protocols and processes, and provided training to program employees.

The department made changes to the application guidelines of the Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Program, the declaration and attestation section of the application form and the contribution agreement template. The attestation requires that funding recipients attest that they will not undermine Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy, that they will respect the values underlying the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Canadian Human Rights Act, and that they will disclose any information about the applicant that could bring disrepute to the Government of Canada. These changes were posted on the departmental website and the online application portal on December 14, 2022.

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Additional program integrity review is also undertaken: enhanced assessment by program staff is conducted via web searches of a recipient's board members, people directly involved in project delivery and the organization's social media. Should potential risks be identified, such as allegations of racism, discrimination or harassment by board members or other individuals directly involved in the proposed project and named in the proponent's application, then an escalation protocol is triggered to further review the file and make a recommendation.

New training has been provided to all program advisors on the importance of each step in the evaluation process, as well as on the new enhanced assessment/re-assessment criteria for applicants and recipients that include parameters on in-depth environmental scans. This training also included application assessment, risk management tools and monitoring. The department has also provided anti-racism and antisemitism training to all program employees across the country, which included the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism.

Additional training on antisemitism, developed by the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre, was also offered to program staff, as well as staff in communications and human resources.

Lastly, with regard to (e), see response for part (c).

Question No. 2041—**Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman:**

With regard to the comments from Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) Vice-Admiral Angus Topshee that the Navy is in a critical state: (a) what specific elements of the RCN does the government admit are in a critical state; and (b) for each element in (a), (i) how long has it been in a critical state, (ii) what specific action, if any, has the government taken over the past five years to improve the state of the element, (iii) by what date will the situation improve so that that element is no longer in a critical state?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Royal Canadian Navy, or RCN, continues to meet needs at home and to support Canada's international commitments abroad. For example, the RCN is able to meet high-readiness requirements for deploying frigates annually, two per coast, while maintaining a minimum level of personnel on other ships and shore establishments to support force generation objectives.

However, as with any platform, as equipment ages, more maintenance is required to keep vessels operational and, with age, costs of maintenance and spare parts also increase. These increased costs, to sustain operational capacity, are putting significant pressure on existing maintenance budgets. Further, capability challenges are compounded by recruitment challenges across the Canadian Armed Forces, or CAF, including the RCN. In addition, and aside from challenges in the international security environment, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant effect on the CAF and the RCN, both from an equipment perspective, due to fragile supply challenges resulting in contract delays, and from a people perspective, in terms of the RCN's own personnel management and, more broadly, at shipyards for skilled labour.

As outlined in Canada's Defence Policy, "Strong, Secure, Engaged", National Defence is making significant investments to renew and modernize the Royal Canadian Navy by investing in six Arctic and offshore patrol ships, fifteen Canadian surface combatants, and two joint support ships. Together, these ships will play a

critical role in protecting Canada's maritime domain, including in Canada's Arctic waters, and in contributing to international missions with allies and partners.

National Defence has received four of six Arctic and offshore patrol ships, with the fifth planned for delivery in December 2024 and the sixth in December 2025. These vessels will significantly enhance the RCN's capabilities and presence in the Arctic, allowing the RCN to better uphold Canada's Arctic sovereignty.

The Canadian surface combatant, or CSC, project will replace the Iroquois-class destroyers and the Halifax-class frigates with a single class of vessels; delivery is expected to begin in the early 2030s, with full delivery by 2050.

As the RCN awaits the delivery of the CSC capability, the Halifax-class frigates are continuing to be deployed on operations, including under Operation NEON to conduct surveillance operations and identify maritime sanctions evasion activities in the Indo-Pacific. However, the frigate fleet is beyond the originally expected design life and given the age of the vessels, between 27 and 35 years, there has been a significant increase in the length of necessary maintenance periods and higher associated costs.

The Halifax-class is a major component of the national shipbuilding strategy's third pillar, which is Repair, Refit and Maintenance. Under this pillar, the Government of Canada has contracts in place with the three large shipyards to execute the extensive docking work periods required to sustain the class. Additionally, Defence is working with marine industry partners to implement a risk-based program for the Halifax-class to ensure that they continue to operate safely into the future.

Further, the procurement of two joint support ships, or JSSs, in 2025 and 2027 will contribute to the defence of Canada and international security by providing crucial at-sea replenishment capabilities. In the interim, and to address the retirement of the Protecteur-class auxiliary oiler replenishment vessels, the RCN has contracted the interim auxiliary oiler replenishment ship to provide support until the JSSs are delivered.

At the same time, the CAF is experiencing a shortfall in personnel. That is why National Defence and the CAF are undertaking a period of reconstitution; that is, to prioritize efforts to recruit and train personnel and to make the organization stronger and more effective.

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To address personnel shortages, the RCN continues to work with the chief of military personnel to develop policies and programs that improve recruitment and retention. One example is the Naval Experience Program, or NEP, which aims to increase the intake of recruits and attract a new generation of Canadians to serve in the RCN.

More specifically, the program offers Canadians the opportunity to experience life as a sailor for a one-year contract and provides them with exposure to a variety of naval trades before deciding if a career in the RCN is right for them. The program will also help the RCN to identify and address inefficiencies in its current human resources process.

To date, 98 candidates are enrolled with 400 prospects in the recruiting process, helping to address the RCN's requirement of 1,200 new enrollees each year. The NEP has other benefits: it has engaged the naval reserve divisions in recruiting for the regular force, it has tripled the number of potential applicants at recruiting centres who ask about the navy, and through the program, the navy is enrolling three times as many visible minorities and indigenous Canadians through the NEP than previously. It has forced the RCN to better manage all its personnel on the basic training list, which is beginning to deliver an improved experience for all trainees.

Question No. 2046—Mr. Gerald Soroka:

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency's (CRA) approach to carousel schemes and other GST/HST fraud, broken down by year since 2018: (a) what is the CRA's estimate on the amount of unwarranted payments it has paid out through GST/HST fraud; (b) of the amount in (a), how much does it estimate involved carousel schemes; (c) how much of the money paid out in (a) and (b) has been recovered to date; (d) how much of the money paid out in (a) and (b) does the CRA expect to recover; (e) what is the breakdown of where the fraudulent companies were located; and (f) what is the breakdown of the countries where the bank account into which the unwarranted payments were transferred to or cashed from?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the above noted question, what follows is the response from the Canada Revenue Agency, or CRA, for the time period of January 1, 2018, to December 1, 2023, namely the date of the question.

General information relating to the CRA's approach to carousel schemes is available at <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/campaigns/tax-schemes/combating-carousel-schemes.html>.

The CRA's programs play an important role in preventing the payment of unwarranted refunds, identifying suspicious behaviour, and referring high-risk returns for further review and examination. The CRA has dedicated programs that identify, deregister and safeguard goods and services tax/harmonized sales tax, or GST/HST, accounts that are registered as a result of identity theft, as well as programs that verify commercial activity before the initial GST/HST return is filed. This allows the CRA to close suspicious accounts before a return is filed and an unwarranted refund is paid. These programs are based on enhanced risk assessment tools designed to identify and prevent suspicious entities from infiltrating the filing population.

With regard to (a), the CRA is only able to identify an unwarranted payment through compliance actions. Therefore, there is no systematic way to estimate the amount of all unwarranted pay-

ments. As such, the CRA is unable to provide the information in the manner requested.

With regard to (b), for the reason outlined in (a), the CRA is unable to estimate the total amount of unwarranted payments that involves carousel schemes.

With regard to (c) and (d), while the CRA's collections program tracks payments in many ways, namely by date of payment, account number, revenue line, and program, it is not able to trace payments back to the source of the assessment or reassessment. Additionally, an amount owing can be comprised of debts from various years, various revenue lines and various assessment types. Due to this system limitation, the CRA is unable to provide an amount that has been recovered or provide an estimate of future recoveries in the manner requested.

With regard to (e) and (f), as the CRA does not systematically capture the location of fraudulent companies or bank accounts to which payments are issued, it is unable to provide a breakdown of where companies are located or to where payments have been transferred.

Question No. 2054—Mr. Ben Lobb:

With regard to the High Frequency Rail project and the final report expected in late 2023 to inform government decisions on opportunities to enhance rail service in Southwestern Ontario: (a) is the final report complete, and, if so, what is the website address where the report can be found; and (b) if the final report is not yet complete, when will it be, and what is the reason it was not ready in late 2023?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in November 2022, following a competitive procurement process, the government contracted the services of external advisors, namely CPCS and WSP, to explore options to improve intercity passenger rail frequencies, on-time performance, and shorten travel times in Southwestern Ontario. The external advisors have been making steady progress and are nearing completion of their analysis. They are on track to deliver a final report with options to the federal government in early 2024.

The delivery of the final report is a few months later than originally anticipated due to unforeseen delays in obtaining all the requisite information from external partners to complete the analysis.

The government has committed to releasing a summary of the report once it has been reviewed by Transport Canada. The summary will be written in a manner that is accessible to the public and that protects any proprietary information that has been provided by external parties.

Question No. 2057—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance's involvement in the World Economic Forum (WEF): (a) is the minister still a member of the WEF's board of trustees, and, if not, why is she no longer a board member and on what date did the minister cease to be a board member; and (b) if the minister resigned from the board, what was the reason for the resignation?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the response from the Department of Finance to (a) and (b) is as follows:

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Per the Conflict of Interest Act, activities of designated public office holders are disclosed on the Public Registry. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance's declaration Summary Profile can be viewed at <https://prciec-rpccie.parl.gc.ca/EN/PublicRegistries/Pages/Client.aspx#k=8c283ee4-555c-e311-8703-002655368060>.

Question No. 2058—Mr. Jamie Schmale:

With regard to Crown-Indigenous relations: (a) what (i) criteria, (ii) framework, (iii) legal test, was used by the government to determine that each of the communities represented by the Métis Nation of Ontario holds rights under Section 35 of the Constitution Act 1982; and (b) what specific evidence or information did the government use to arrive at the conclusion that each and all of the communities represented by the Métis Nation of Ontario are Section 35 rights-holders?

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, through the February 2023 Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation Agreement, or the 2023 agreement, Canada has recognized that the Métis Nation of Ontario, or MNO, is a Métis government and is authorized to act on behalf of its Métis collectivity.

The Métis collectivity is comprised of Métis individuals who are citizens, namely those who have chosen to register, have been found to meet the Powley criteria, and registered in the register for the MNO; and the Métis communities it represents. Further, through the 2023 agreement, Canada recognizes that this Métis collectivity has mandated the MNO as the indigenous government responsible for representing and advancing its section 35 rights. Canada has not recognized specific communities.

In the 2003 *R. v. Powley* decision, the Supreme Court of Canada, or SCC, confirmed the existence of Métis rights under section 35, and in paragraph 38 it confirmed that the Métis have “full status as distinctive rights-bearing peoples.” The SCC also recognized, in paragraph 53, that “[m]embers of the Métis community in and around Sault Ste. Marie [in Ontario] have an Aboriginal right to hunt for food under s. 35(1).” The Métis community in and around Sault Ste. Marie is one of the historic Métis communities represented by the MNO.

In 2013, the Senate Standing Committee on Aboriginal Peoples released a report on the Recognition of Métis Identity in Canada, “The People Who Own Themselves,” in which the Committee acknowledged that “the identity of Canada’s Aboriginal peoples is a matter for peoples themselves to determine.” The report notes the need for practical solutions to legal and policy challenges respecting Métis identity and “self-identification.”

This recommendation is consistent with the 2016 report, “A Matter of National and Constitutional Import: Report of the Minister’s Special Representative on Reconciliation with Métis: Section 35 Métis Rights and the Manitoba Métis Federation Decision”:

“[I]t is in the public interest to have Métis governments and institutions having objectively verifiable mechanisms and processes to determine Métis in accordance with Canadian law for the purposes of Section 35. ... While determining who is Métis for the purposes of Section 35 is not as straightforward as making an inquiry to the Indian Registrar, the SCC has set out the test for determining who is Métis for the purposes of Section 35.”

Following these SCC decisions and related reports, Canada established a Recognition of Indigenous Rights and Self-Determination, or “RIRSD”, table with the MNO in 2016 and began engaging in exploratory discussions toward self-government.

First, section 35 Métis rights were recognized by the courts: the Supreme Court of Canada decision in *Powley* recognized a Métis community near Sault Ste. Marie; Ontario courts upheld the ON-MNO Métis Harvesting Agreement in the 2007 *Laurin* decision.

The *Powley* decision continues to be the Supreme Court’s only consideration of Métis rights protected by section 35, and sets out what is required, namely the legal test, to prove the existence of a Métis community with rights under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

According to the judicial notice of organization, the MNO was granted intervener status in a number of section 35 rights-based cases.

Based on the analysis of historic communities, to help guide its response to the *Powley* decision, the Department of Justice launched 15 research projects on the development of historic mixed-ancestry communities in several parts of the country, including Ontario.

According to the provincial recognition of section 35 rights, while Ontario has recognized seven historic Métis regional communities to inform provincial policy approaches, Canada has not recognized specific communities.

Question No. 2059—Mr. Jamie Schmale:

With regard to the required compliance audit to be included in the government’s Indigenous Business Directory: (a) when was the last time that (i) Coradix Technology Consulting, (ii) DALIAN Enterprises Inc., were the subject of a compliance audit, broken down by the client department or agency which provided contracts to either of the companies since January 1, 2016; and (b) for each audit in (a), what were the results?

Ms. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Indigenous Business Directory, or IBD, assists indigenous businesses in pursuing business opportunities, including federal government contracts. A profile in the IBD confirms the indigenous business’ eligibility to be considered for award of federal government contracts that are limited to competition under the procurement Strategy for Indigenous business, or PSIB.

In order to ensure the integrity of the IBD, Indigenous Services Canada, or ISC, conducts audits to ensure that indigenous businesses meet the PSIB criteria and that set-aside requirements are effectively reserved for the PSIB-registered businesses. Pre-award and random audits are performed to verify that the indigenous business meets the ownership and control requirements and is mandatory for PSIB set-aside requirements valued at, or greater than, \$2 million. A post-award audit is optional at the request of a contracting authority to ensure that the contractor meets the PSIB criteria during the contract, including the business’ ability to meet the indigenous content requirement.

Routine Proceedings

As Coradix Technology Consulting is a non-indigenous company, and is not listed in the IBD, it would not be subject to a compliance audit under the IBD or PSIB. Since 2016, ISC holds records of Dalian Enterprises Inc. and Coradix Technology in joint venture undergoing two compliance audits to confirm 51% indigenous ownership and control.

First, a mandatory pre-award audit was concluded November 25, 2016, for contract T8080-150428 awarded by Transport Canada, with a result of “pass”.

Then, a mandatory pre-award audit was conducted August 9, 2022, for contract A0416-183262/001/ZM awarded by Public Services and Procurement Canada, with a result of “pass”.

To date, no post-award audits have been conducted. In December 2023, at the request of Public Services and Procurement Canada, ISC has initiated post-award audits on active contracts with Coradix Technology Consulting and Dalian Enterprises Inc.

Question No. 2060—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF): (a) how many CAF members have been forced to take a lower pension amount due to being sent to a lower paying transition unit, due to age, injury, or other factors, prior to retirement; (b) are the CAF members in (a) able to have a pension based on their highest earning years, including allowances, and, if not, why not; (c) what measures are in place to ensure that the CAF does not try to intentionally lower pension payments by placing higher earning CAF members into lower earning transition units prior to the CAF member's release; (d) how many CAF veterans are currently receiving a pension based on a rate based on a transition unit rather than based on their highest earning unit; (e) what is the CAF doing with the extra money resulting from lower pension payments; (f) how many Canadian Special Operations Regiment (CSOR) members have participated in missions or operations but still been denied full danger pay and risk allowances; (g) what is the rationale for providing regiments operating at the same time and place with full danger pay and risk allowances while denying it to special forces; (h) does the rational take into consideration that special forces tasking is often more dangerous, and living conditions are equally poor, and, if not, why not; (i) what mechanisms are in place for CSOR members who have been denied danger pay or risk allowances to appeal the denial; (j) how much money is the government saving by denying danger pay and risk allowances to CSOR members; (k) what is the government doing with the money it is saving by denying danger pay and risk allowances to CSOR members; and (l) how does the government justify denying full danger pay and risk allowances to CSOR members who participate in assignments abroad when their conditions are worse than other CAF regiments in the same place at the same time?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to parts (a) to (e) of the question, Canadian Armed Forces, or CAF, members are not forced to take a lower pension due to assignment to a transition unit. A member's pay in a transition unit is at the rate and increment they are entitled to and is not lower than the rate they had been receiving immediately prior to being sent to a transition unit. If a member is not changing occupations, their pay will not decrease as a result of being posted to another unit, including a transition unit.

A member's entitlement to a pension is prescribed in the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act, or CFSA, and subsection 15(1) of the Act sets out how pensions are calculated. All CAF members who are eligible for benefits, including those sent to a transition unit prior to retirement, have their pension calculated based on the average annual pay received during their five highest-earning years. Notably, allowances are not pensionable. In the case of a member who has to their credit less than five years of pensionable service, the average annual pay received during the total period of pension-

able service to their credit is used instead. Where a member has more than 35 years of pensionable service, if any of those years after 35 years are part of that member's highest paid five consecutive years, then that period of higher pay counts towards the calculation of their pension, as per subsection 15(5). There are no CAF veterans that are currently receiving a pension that is not based on their five highest-earning years.

Neither the government nor the CAF use members' assignments and their pensions as a cost-saving measure. The CAF administers and calculates pensions in accordance with the CFSA and its regulations. As such, there are no lower pension payments, nor any surplus funds.

With respect to parts (f) to (l), CAF personnel often face dangers and discomfort while deployed on operations around the globe. Their extraordinary dedication does not go unrecognized.

As per the Military Foreign Service Instructions, CAF personnel are entitled to a hardship allowance, or HA, and risk allowance, or RA. The intent of the HA is to compensate for the living conditions existing at a specific post. The allowance is based on an assessment of the living conditions in theatre versus the member's home base routine in Canada. The type of inconvenience, discomfort, or stress is considered and rated on a scale. Meanwhile, the RA is intended to compensate for the risks associated with a specific post and is based on the probability of a hazard occurring, as well as the severity of its impact.

Allowance levels are determined by a department hardship and risk committee, or DHRC, led by the strategic joint staff, and the rates for each level are determined by Treasury Board. The DHRC conducts a review of each operation and determines the appropriate level of HA and RA to be accorded to deployed members. A wide range of factors, including conditions faced by members while deployed, are considered during this review, along with supporting information provided by deployed task force commanders, as well as subject matter experts, operations, intelligence, and medical staff.

The government does not deny HA and RA to Canadian Special Operations Forces, or CANSOF, units operating alongside conventional forces who also receive these allowances. The criteria used to determine the level of the allowance is the same across all operations, regardless of the unit generating the force for that operation. There may be instances in which HA and RA levels are determined after a member has deployed, pending submission of operational details on the ground from the mission location or where the nuances of a CANSOF-specific mission may require a more detailed examination by the DHRC. Once the levels of HA and RA are determined, these allowances are paid to members retroactively. Notably, CANSOF operations have never been denied HA or RA.

Neither the government nor the CAF use members' allowances as a cost-saving measure. No members are denied an allowance that they are entitled to. As such, there are no denied allowances, nor any surplus funds resulting from these allowances. A human resource administrator is available to CAF members who may have questions or concerns regarding allowances. The administrator can also directly rectify issues.

Question No. 2062—Mrs. Anna Roberts:

With regard to the First Home Savings Account (FHSA): (a) how many accounts are currently active; (b) what is the total cumulative amount held in all accounts; (c) what is the average and median account balance; (d) how many accounts have over (i) \$1,000, (ii) \$5,000, (iii) \$10,000, (iv) \$20,000, in them; and (e) what is the breakdown of the number of FHSA accounts by the owner's income bracket?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the above noted question, what follows is the response from the Canada Revenue Agency, or CRA, as of December 6, 2023, that is, the date of the question.

With regard to (a) to (d), the CRA will be unable to provide the requested information until all First Home Savings Account, or FHSA, annual information returns have been processed. Financial institutions will only start filing these returns after December 31, 2023. The returns are due by the end of February 2024.

General information on the filing of T4FHSA annual information returns can be found on the CRA website at <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/registered-plans-administrators/first-home-savings-account/t4fhsa-annual-information-return.html>.

Question No. 2066—Mr. Scott Aitchison:

With regard to the Prime Minister: which senators did the Prime Minister personally call to discuss Bill C-234, An Act to amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Special Advisor for Water, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in December 2015 the Prime Minister implemented an independent advisory board that makes merit-based recommendations for Senate appointments. Every new Senator since that time has been appointed as an independent and operates that way, aside from the Conservative caucus, which as of today is the only partisan caucus in the Senate. An independent Senate where senators are appointed on merit following recommendations from the independent advisory board on Senate appointments ensures better diversity and has ensured, since 2015, a high standard of integrity, collaboration and non-partisanship in the Senate.

Routine Proceedings

The Prime Minister and members of the government regularly discuss a range of issues with parliamentarians. This communication and collaboration are a crucial part of our democratic system. Senators bring various points of view and experiences. Their perspectives on matters affecting Canadians are always welcome.

Question No. 2067—Mr. John Barlow:

With regard to the AgriRecovery announcement for 2023 to support farmers and ranchers in Western Canada: (a) on what date did the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food receive funding requests from each of the Western provinces under the AgriRecovery framework; (b) on what date did the minister come to an initial agreement with each of the Western provinces, and what were the agreed upon amounts; (c) what was the final amount offered to each province; (d) if the amount offered is lower than the amount agreed upon, what is the rationale for why the amount is lower; and (e) were any ministers, other than that of Agriculture and Agri-Food involved in the decision about what funding level to provide, and, if so, which ones?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a) of the question, I received the requests for AgriRecovery assessments from Alberta on July 5, British Columbia on July 14, and Saskatchewan on July 17, 2023.

With respect to part (b) of the question, I had secured all of the federal authorities required, including funding, by October 18, 2023.

The amounts of federal funding for each province for the 2023 drought/wildfires are up to \$42,624,161 to British Columbia, up to \$99,211,409 to Alberta and up to \$77,164,430 to Saskatchewan, for a total of up to \$219 million in federal funding.

As regards part (c) of the question, the amounts of federal funding for each province for the 2023 drought/wildfires are up to \$42,624,161 to British Columbia, up to \$99,211,409 to Alberta and up to \$77,164,430 to Saskatchewan, for a total of up to \$219 million in federal funding.

In response to part (e) of the question, for all funding requests, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Central Agencies collaborate to secure the required authorities, including funding, through the government decision-making process that includes some or all ministers who are members of cabinet and Treasury Board, and the Governor General.

Question No. 2073—Mr. Peter Julian:

With regard to the federal government's healthcare funding plan announced in December 2011 for the years 2014 to 2024: which (i) healthcare sectors, (ii) provinces and territories, received less federal funding as a direct result of this decision, broken down by dollar amount and by year?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in December 2011, the Government of Canada announced that the Canada health transfer, or CHT, would continue to grow at 6% annually from 2014-15 to 2016-17, and beginning in 2017-18, the CHT would grow in line with a three-year moving average of nominal gross domestic product, or GDP, growth with funding guaranteed to increase by at least 3% per year.

Routine Proceedings

The December 2011 announcement effectively extended the 6% CHT escalator for three additional years beyond the legislated time frame set out in the September 2004 10-year plan to strengthen health care, which was to end in 2013-14. This resulted in the CHT continuing to grow at 6% annually for 2014-15 to 2016-17, thereby providing provinces and territories with additional CHT growth in those years. Since then, the CHT has grown at an average annual rate of 4.9% under the current GDP-based escalator, which provided provinces and territories with ongoing and predictable funding for health care. In addition, budget 2017 included a targeted investment of \$11 billion in federal funding over 10 years to improve home and community care and mental health and addiction services.

Looking forward, the government's working together to improve health care for Canadians plan, first announced in February 2023, includes \$25 billion through new tailored bilateral agreements and billions more through top-ups to the CHT and other funding. In total, the Government of Canada is investing over \$200 billion over the next 10 years to support provinces and territories to strengthen Canada's universal public health care system.

Historical data for the Canada health transfer and other major federal transfers to provinces and territories can be found at the following link: <https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/4ee1558-45b7-4484-9336-e692897d393f>

Question No. 2079—**Mr. Pat Kelly:**

With regard to the condition of structures, facilities, and housing units on Canadian Armed Forces bases throughout Canada as of December 1, 2023, for each base: (a) how many buildings had warnings regarding health and safety hazards, including, but not limited to, asbestos or chipping lead paint, posted on the premises, in total and broken down by type of hazard; (b) how many buildings included broken features such as doors, windows, lighting, HVAC, or plumbing on the premises; (c) of the health and safety hazards in (a), how many existed for (i) a month, (ii) six months, (iii) a year, (iv) over a year; (d) of the broken features in (b), how many existed for (i) a month, (ii) six months, (iii) a year, (iv) over a year; (e) of the health and safety hazards in (a), what is the estimated cost of remediating all outstanding hazards; and (f) of the broken features in (b), what is the estimated cost of repairing or replacing all outstanding broken features?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Department of National Defence, or DND, administers the largest real property portfolio in the Government of Canada. The portfolio stretches from coast to coast to coast, occupying approximately 10 million square metres of floor space; 21,000 buildings, including nearly 6,200 buildings that provide over 11,600 residential housing units; 2.2 million hectares of land; and 13,500 works, including roads, water, storm and sewer pipes, airfields, jetties, ranges and training areas. The defence real property portfolio has an approximate annual operational budget of \$2 billion.

The number of buildings in National Defence's real property portfolio with warnings regarding health and safety hazards is not centrally tracked. Determining the number of buildings and the details of the hazards would require a manual search, which cannot be completed in the allotted time. Although National Defence does not centrally track specific broken features across bases, the department does centrally track open work orders across the DND real property portfolio.

As of December 1, 2023, there are 60,819 open work orders related to DND's real property portfolio, which includes 3,764 for

residential housing units. The work orders span Canadian Armed Forces, CAF, facilities across Canada, with locations ranging from Albert Head, British Columbia, to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. Of this total, 33,517 work orders pertain to corrective activities and work, which support the maintenance and preservation of the service potential of the defence real property assets, e.g., repair or replacement plumbing.

Of the open work orders as of December 1, 2023, the majority date from 2023. The oldest work orders date back to 2018.

The estimated costs associated with open work orders are tracked at the detachment and section level. A further manual search would be required, which cannot be completed in the allotted time.

In addition, National Defence maintains a public-facing inventory of all structures containing asbestos, which can be found at the following link: <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/national-asbestos-inventory.html#anc2>.

There are a number of occupational health and safety hazards that could be encountered in a National Defence workplace. These include, but are not limited to, chemical hazards; electrical hazards; mechanical hazards; physical hazards, e.g., noise, lighting, slips and falls; and psychosocial or psychological hazards, e.g., stress, burnout. Within National Defence, there are numerous regulations, orders, directives, guidelines and warnings that deal with the day-to-day occupational health and safety aspects to be followed in the performance of one's job.

National Defence's general safety program consists of occupational safety policies and guidelines aimed at preventing accidents in operations, training, and support activities. It is National Defence policy to have a formal, structured, and recorded hazard prevention component within the general safety program, which includes audits, inspections, surveys, and hazard analysis. Bases, wings, stations, units, and detachments all have their own general safety programs that are compliant with the National Defence general safety program.

Regarding residential housing units, or RHUs, the Canadian Forces housing agency, CFHA, takes the health and safety of CAF members and their families seriously and has a robust series of programs in place to identify, monitor and manage hazards in RHUs in accordance with federal, provincial and local codes, standards and regulations.

Routine Proceedings

When a hazard is identified in an RHU, local housing service centres respond to ensure the health and safety of occupants and engage qualified contractors to further investigate and remediate as required. CFHA coordinates with authorities having jurisdiction, which are organizations responsible for enforcing a code requirement or procedure such as utility providers, fire hall and police services, and maintains regular communication with the RHU occupants. Occupants also receive information about their role in maintaining a safe and healthy living environment, including proper use of systems, reporting of maintenance issues, and adherence to safety guidelines.

CFHA is continually improving the condition of its housing portfolio by conducting regular and planned maintenance and renovating or recapitalizing RHUs. In addition, new RHUs are being constructed to replace RHUs that have been demolished due to condition or to meet CAF requirements. Most housing components are completely replaced when they undergo extensive renovation. Components are also replaced during routine life-cycle replacement, repairs and regular maintenance. These activities are completed by qualified contractors following strict health and safety requirements, and materials are disposed of in accordance with provincial and local requirements.

Question No. 2080—Mr. Pat Kelly:

With regard to the application of the federal price on carbon to fuels used for military purposes between December 1, 2022 and December 1, 2023: (a) what classes of fuel used by military vehicles were exempt from the price on carbon; (b) what classes of fuel used by military vehicles were subject to the price on carbon; (c) of the classes of fuel in (b), what percentage of the cost of fuel consumed by Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) aircraft was attributable to the price on carbon; (d) of the classes of fuel in (b), what was the dollar value of the application of the price on carbon to fuel consumed by CAF aircraft; (e) of the classes of fuel in (b), what percentage of the cost of fuel consumed by CAF watercraft was attributable to the price on carbon; (f) of the classes of fuel in (b), what was the dollar value of the application of the price on carbon to fuel consumed by CAF watercraft; (g) of the classes of fuel in (b), what percentage of the cost of fuel consumed by CAF ground vehicles was attributable to the price on carbon; (h) of the classes of fuel in (b), what was the dollar value of the application of the price on carbon to fuel consumed by CAF ground vehicles; (i) what percentage of the cost of fuel consumed to heat military facilities was attributable to the price on carbon; (j) what was the dollar value of the application of the price on carbon on fuel consumed to heat military facilities; (k) what was the total dollar value of fuel purchased by the CAF which was exempt from the price on carbon; (l) what was the dollar value of fuel purchased by the CAF which was subject to the price on carbon; (m) what was the dollar value of revenue collected by the government further to the price on carbon applicable to fuels in (k); and (n) what was the dollar value of revenue which the government would have collected had the price on carbon been applicable to the fuels in (l)?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with a mandate to protect and defend Canadians and Canadian interests at home and abroad, the defence team must have a focused approach to sustainability, while ensuring continued operational readiness.

National Defence spent \$390,836,130.63 on fuel purchases between December 1, 2022, and December 1, 2023. This includes the following categories of fuel: light fuel oil, aviation fuel, diesel fuel, heavy fuel oil, lubricating fuel, and other mineral fuels, oils, and products. There are currently no exemptions for the fuel purchased by National Defence under the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act, or GGPPA, or other provincial carbon pricing.

National Defence does not centrally track the share of fuel costs attributable to carbon pricing, and a manual search could not be completed in the time allotted.

The defence climate and sustainability strategy, or DCSS, available at <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/dnd-mdn/documents/corporate/reports-publications/dcss/dcss-e-signed.pdf>, outlines National Defence's plan to achieve a sustainable vision for our assets and operations, in Canada and around the world. The DCSS charts a course to reduce military fleet emissions and support the Government of Canada, GC, commitment of net-zero emissions by 2050. Reaching net-zero national safety and security, or NSS, emissions by 2050 means reducing greenhouse gas, or GHG, emissions from our NSS fleet to as low as possible through cleaner fuels and operational efficiencies. The balance of emissions would be addressed through carbon removal. To achieve a GC goal of 20% low-carbon fuel, or LCF, by 2030, we will also be introducing LCF into some of our fleets in the coming years. Any solutions for military application must consider availability, affordability, operational feasibility and compatibility to maintain military force readiness and interoperability with our allies, inform future force design and ensure best value for Canadians.

Question No. 2090—Ms. Rachel Blaney:

With regard to the administration of the Veteran and Family Well-Being Fund: (a) how does Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) ensure that the goals of a program are met, including through the (i) inclusion of Veterans' consideration in the allocation of funds, (ii) use of exit surveys for Veterans benefiting from projects; (b) how does VAC capture lessons learned, both good and bad, from projects after their completion; (c) how does VAC ensure that funds are not disproportionately allocated, including to (i) particular racial or ethnic groups, (ii) a particular gender, (iii) a particular age cohort, (iv) particular provinces or territories, (v) urban rather than rural areas; (d) how does VAC coordinate between this fund and other funding streams to ensure that there is no unnecessary overlap; (e) how does VAC decide whether to renew funding for a given project; (f) how are organizations notified when they are not chosen to receive funding; (g) is there a maximum number of times that funding recipients can be awarded funding by VAC through this program; and (h) how does VAC ensure that Veterans are safe to participate in the programs offered by funding recipients?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Veterans Affairs Canada, or VAC, is committed to ensuring that its program decisions are informed by input from veterans and stakeholder organizations across Canada. VAC's primary interest is to ensure that projects funded through the veteran and family well-being fund, or VFWF, are directly benefiting veterans and their families.

Routine Proceedings

Prior to funding, VAC provides recipients with project support tools to ensure organizations have the resources necessary to achieve their program goals. VFWF grant recipients are expected to measure the success of their project by providing a progress activity report 30 days after the end of each quarter and a final report 60 days following the project completion date. Contribution recipients are required to provide a progress activity report and financial claim 30 days after the end of each quarter and a final report and final financial claim 60 days following the project completion date.

If a report lacks sufficient detail or clarity, VAC interventions include the following: discussing options to bring activities into alignment with the program's goals, requesting additional information about past and ongoing activities, providing coaching on eligible and approved activities, discussing expectations regarding reporting, and holding formal discussions with recipient concerning expectations at multiple milestones.

Exit interviews are not conducted as the VFWF is run in accordance with the Privacy Act. As such, the VFWF does not have the authority to collect participants' personal information, which could inadvertently be provided through exit interviews.

VAC captures all lessons learned through final reports, which are due within 60 days of the project end date. In these final reports, recipients are required to describe the results achieved and lessons learned, and explain any discrepancies between the results and the planned or expected results. Recipients may also be called upon to deliver a final report presentation to demonstrate best practices to VAC policy decision-makers, other government departments and other relevant external partners.

Before funding decisions are made, applications are reviewed by VAC officials to ensure the distribution of funding is equitable based on language, geography and indigenous representation, with special consideration to vulnerable populations. VAC has made a commitment to support equity-deserving subpopulations, which is taken into consideration when selecting applicants for funding. The VFWF supports diverse groups such as women; two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and additional people, or 2SLGBTQI+; indigenous veterans; and veterans who experience homelessness.

A project can receive assistance from all levels of government: federal, provincial, territorial and municipal. However, total assistance from government cannot exceed 100% of eligible expenditures. Recipients are required to disclose all other sources of funding before beginning their project to ensure stacking limits are respected.

The terms and conditions of the VFWF do not allow for the renewing of funding for a given project. Recipients are permitted, however, to submit applications for new projects in subsequent calls for applications.

VAC sends email notifications to unsuccessful applicants. Additional feedback on applications is available upon request.

The VFWF terms and conditions do not limit the number of times an organization can be awarded VFWF funding. During each call for applications, proposals are evaluated against the funding

criteria and ranked by criteria scores to prioritize a selection of projects for funding.

Recipients must demonstrate that they can meet regulatory standards and are working within accepted standards of practice, which includes the proper screening of volunteers and staff who are working directly with veteran participants. Since 2021-22, funding agreements have required recipients to ensure all staff and volunteers involved in delivering the program are adequately vetted and trained in order to ensure a safe and trauma-informed environment for veterans and their families.

Question No. 2091—Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:

With regard to the deployment of Canada's military personnel and the Department of National Defence in 2023: (a) how many Canadian active military personnel have been, or are currently, on exchange with the Israeli military, or deployed with the US military in the Mediterranean or the Persian Gulf, broken down by (i) location, (ii) occupation; (b) how many groups of Canadian troops, including the group size, unit, location, and duration, have been deployed on or since October 7, 2023, to Israel or other countries in the Middle East and North Africa; (c) for each country of deployment in (b), what are the current rules of engagement and have they changed on or since October 7, 2023; (d) what is the planned cost of increases in the number of personnel deployed to Israel and the surrounding region since October 7, 2023; (e) what Canadian naval vessels are within operational range of Israel and Palestine; (f) are there any Canadian naval vessels included in the USS Gerald Ford carrier group or with the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Group; and (g) what technical or logistical support is provided to the government of Israel or the Israeli Defence Forces by the Department of National Defence or Canadian Armed Forces personnel, broken down by year and by dollar amount?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), no Canadian Armed Forces, CAF, personnel were on exchange with the Israeli military during the period in question.

There are nine personnel deployed to Qatar under Operation Foundation, an operation through which the CAF works with the U.S. and other partners to counter terrorism. These personnel provide HQ support in the U.S. Combined Air Operations Center, as well as in other U.S. Air Forces Central aerospace control units. There are also six personnel deployed to Bahrain under Operation Artemis, Canada's mission to help stop terrorism and to make Middle Eastern waters more secure. These personnel provide support to the U.S.-led Combined Maritime Forces, CMF, a naval partnership of 34 nations. This information is current as of December 14, 2023.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to part (b), in the aftermath of the October 7 attacks, there have been multiple CAF deployments to the region under two key operations. Under Operation Ion, the CAF's operation to support the transportation of Canadian entitled persons and foreign nationals from Israel, approximately 236 personnel were deployed to the region to support assisted departure flights. These personnel were part of an air task force, including air and ground crews, as well as aeromedical staff, based out of Athens, Greece. Between October 12 and 23, 2023, these CAF personnel conducted 19 assisted departure flights, evacuating over 1,650 people to safety.

Under Operation Lumen, the CAF's operation in preparation for a potential non-combatant evacuation operation in Lebanon, approximately 415 personnel were deployed to Cyprus, Greece, Lebanon and Egypt between October 2023 and December 2023. This deployment included personnel from 1 Canadian Air Division.

This does not include the number of Canadian Special Operations Forces deployed to the region to assist the Canadian embassy in Israel with contingency planning due to operational security reasons. Maintaining operational security is paramount to the safety of our deployed CAF members. As such, National Defence assesses every mission individually and on a case-by-case basis to determine how much or how little can be said in order to protect our CAF members and the operation. Operational security refers to the principle of safeguarding the integrity of a military operation or activity and/or the safety of CAF members and other personnel involved in a military operation or activity.

In addition to deployments under operations Lumen and Ion, National Defence also has standing operations in the region, including Operation Impact, Operation Calumet and Operation Proteus. Of these operations, Operation Impact was the only operation that underwent a regularly planned rotation of personnel during the period in question.

With regard to part (c), the rules of engagement for the above-named operations cannot be publicly released due to operational security reasons. See part (b).

With regard to part (d), the incremental cost for National Defence's response to the crisis in the Middle East since October 7, 2023, is approximately \$29 million. This includes both personnel and non-personnel costs.

With regard to part (e), no Canadian naval vessels have been within operational range of Israel, the West Bank or Gaza since October 7, 2023. This response is current as of December 15, 2023.

With regard to part (f), no Canadian naval vessels are part of any of the U.S. carrier groups. This response is current as of December 15, 2023.

With regard to part (g), National Defence and the Israel Defence Forces, IDF, maintain a co-operative defence relationship, which includes a range of activities, some of which cannot be disclosed for operational security reasons. See part (b). As part of the Canada-Israel strategic partnership memorandum of understanding, MOU, the two countries are committed to strengthening defence and security co-operation and advancing regional security. Efforts to advance bilateral defence co-operation under the MOU include conducting regular senior-level strategic defence policy dialogues,

holding a military-to-military working group and maintaining military attaché offices in each respective country. National Defence has not provided direct funds to the IDF through this MOU.

Most recently, in the aftermath of the October 7 attacks, the CAF enabled the movement of Israeli nationals on Royal Canadian Air Force, RCAF, aircraft from Greece to Israel, following a request for support from the Government of Israel. More specifically, during the assisted departure of Canadian entitled persons from Israel to Greece in October 2023, the CAF utilized surplus capacity on return flights and flew 28 Israeli nationals from Athens to Tel Aviv.

Question No. 2092—Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:

With regard to the initiatives of the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence (NAP GBV) and the bilateral agreements subsequently signed with the provinces and territories: (a) what is the breakdown of the amounts to be allocated under the NAP GBV and through the bilateral agreements; (b) of the amounts in (a), how much is for francophone or Acadian women's organizations, including those serving official language minority communities; and (c) what investments, or what proportion of investments, are earmarked for francophone or Acadian women, including investments for official language minority communities?

Ms. Lisa Hefner (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to (a), the national action plan to end gender-based violence, or NAP to end GBV, is supported by a budget 2022 investment of \$525 million over four years to support provinces and territories in their implementation of the NAP to end GBV, through bilateral funding agreements. The breakdown for each province and territory can be found on the webpage titled "Bilateral agreements to end gender-based violence": <https://femmes-egalite-genes.canada.ca/en/gender-based-violence/intergovernmental-collaboration/bilateral-agreements.html>. For more information on Quebec, see below.

In response to (b) and (c), these bilateral agreements with provinces and territories were designed to allow jurisdictions the flexibility to implement opportunities for action within the framework of the five pillars and foundation of the NAP to end GBV in accordance with their regional realities and priorities, except Quebec. For more information on Quebec, see below. Each province or territory is responsible for directing investments according to its areas of need and priorities, including investments for official-language minority communities.

Gender-based violence is a priority for the Government of Quebec, which has invested significant funds to end violence against women. However, although it supports the overall objectives of the national action plan to end gender-based violence, the Government of Quebec cannot adhere to it because it intends to retain its full responsibility in this area on its territory. Through an agreement that respects its autonomy, the Government of Quebec receives federal funding to support the programs, initiatives, and services to end gender-based violence that it puts in place based on the needs of its territory.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2094—Mr. Colin Carrie:**

With regard to Health Canada's (HC) authorization of the COVID-19 vaccines: did any of the manufacturers provide biodistribution studies to Canada's regulatory agencies, departments, or other government entities, and, if so, (i) when were the studies provided, (ii) based on the biodistribution studies, where in the body was DNA or modified RNA, lipid nanoparticles and spike protein found, (iii) what percentage of the dose remained at the injection site at acute timepoints, (iv) for what period of time did this material remain in the organs or tissues of the body, including blood and bone marrow, (v) what was the period of time that biodistribution studies tracked this material in animal subjects, and was this time sufficient to confirm elimination of DNA, modified RNA, lipid nanoparticles and spike proteins, (vi) how many doses were evaluated in the biodistribution studies and did the researchers report any ill effects on the animals at any of the doses that were studied, (vii) were samples collected to evaluate the potential for shedding from the body, including in breast milk, (viii) if the answer to (vii) is affirmative, was shedding found in the breast milk, (ix) if the answer to (vii) is negative, why was it not required, (x) when did HC, the Public Health Agency of Canada, or the National Advisory Committee inform the Canadian public and the medical community where and for how long these products remain in the body?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (i), non-clinical biodistribution studies in animals were submitted to Health Canada for regulatory evaluation in the original COVID-19 vaccine submissions, with the following exceptions: Covishield vaccine, for which information was cross-referenced to AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine given that they are both based on the same viral vector technology; and Covifenz, which uses an adjuvant already approved for influenza vaccines and cross-referenced biodistribution studies that were conducted with the influenza vaccine.

Details of these studies are included in the Summary Basis of Decisions, SBDs. The SBDs can be accessed through this link: COVID-19 vaccines and treatments portal (canada.ca)

With regard to part (ii), non-clinical pharmacokinetic studies that were provided evaluated the biodistribution of the lipid nanoparticle, LNP, formulated with a model mRNA. These studies also evaluated the metabolism and excretion of the novel lipid excipients.

The biodistribution data identified no cause for concern as the spike protein is expressed transiently. For Comirnaty, for example, it peaks at six hours post-injection with signals at the injection site and the liver, then declines over time. Less than 1% of signal was detected in other tissues and it becomes undetectable within 24 hours.

The results of the non-clinical studies as well as the potential risks to humans have been included in the specific product monographs: Spikevax PM, Comirnaty PM and Vaxzevria PM. In addition, specific non-clinical information regarding biodistribution data can be found in the Summary Basis of Decision of Spikevax SBD, Comirnaty SBD and Vaxzevria SBD.

With regard to parts (iii) and (iv), please see the response to part (ii).

With regard to part (v), please see the response to part (ii). All toxicity and biodistribution studies were conducted in line with international standards of WHO Guideline: Non-clinical evaluation of vaccines.

With regard to part (vi), repeat-dose toxicity studies were conducted in accordance with international guidelines of WHO Guideline: Non-clinical evaluation of vaccines.

With regard to part (vii), metabolism studies demonstrated that components of the LNP are slowly metabolized and excreted via the fecal route, and evidence of urinary excretion for some of the lipids. Studies have shown that intravenous and intramuscular injection of mRNA-encoded spike protein is only expressed transiently and at the injection site and the liver, then declines over time. Vaccine produced spike protein is rapidly broken down and does not persist in the body. Many studies have demonstrated that the mRNA remains in the cytoplasm of cells and does not come in contact with human DNA, which resides in the nucleus.

The potential toxic effects of vaccine present in milk are evaluated in reproductive and developmental toxicity studies. No vaccine-related maternal toxicity or overt adverse effects on pre- and post-natal development were observed.

Evidence about the safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy has been growing from real-world use. The data show that mRNA COVID-19 vaccines are safe for people who are pregnant or breastfeeding. No safety concerns were identified in a study of more than 35,000 pregnant people who received an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine within 30 days of conception. More information about COVID-19 Vaccination and pregnancy is available here: <https://bit.ly/3E5bytJ>.

With regard to parts (viii) and (ix), please see the response to part (vii).

With regard to part (x), Health Canada is responsible for the regulatory authorization of vaccines, which encompasses the review and assessment of various studies, including biodistribution studies, to ensure the safety and efficacy of vaccines. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization, NACI, primarily focuses on analyzing data from human clinical trials to provide vaccine safety recommendations. NACI's role is not directly involved in the regulatory authorization process or in the initial review of biodistribution studies. The question regarding the timing and manner of informing the Canadian public and medical community about the biodistribution of COVID-19 vaccine components is outside the scope of NACI's mandate, as NACI focuses on analyzing clinical trial data for vaccine safety recommendations rather than regulatory communications.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2097—Mr. Sameer Zuberi:**

With regard to Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and the report entitled, "Evaluation of the Detector Dog Service Program": (a) how many items seized through the postal mode are (i) nonrestricted firearms, (ii) restricted firearms, (iii) prohibited firearms, (iv) replica firearms, (v) antique firearms, (vi) the frame of a firearm, (vii) the receiver of a firearm, (viii) the barrel of a firearm, (ix) the upper or slide of a firearm, (x) a cartridge magazine, (xi) ammunition for a firearm, (xii) other firearms parts not classified in the preceding items; (b) for parts (a)(ii) and (a)(iii), how many of the firearms are handguns; (c) for each part in (a)(i), (a)(ii), and (a)(iii), how many of the firearms are rifles; (d) for each part in (a)(i), (a)(ii) and (a)(iii), how many of the firearms are shotguns; (e) how many other items were captured in the report as firearms or parts but not included in (a)(i) through (xi); and (f) what are the descriptions, including quantities, of each item, in (d)?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Inter-governmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the information below is from April 1, 2017, to March 31, 2022.

With regard to part (a), the items seized through the postal mode are as follows: non-restricted firearms, 27; restricted firearms, 272; prohibited firearms, 189; replica firearms, 3,572; antique firearms, 10; the frame of a firearm, zero; the receiver of a firearm, zero; the barrel of a firearm, 11; the upper or slide of a firearm, zero; a cartridge magazine, 79; and ammunition for a firearm, six. Other firearms parts not classified in the preceding items are as follows: 3,060 prohibited devices, including 98 described as parts and accessories and 2,962 as silencers; seven parts exclusively for fully automatic firearms; and 51 firearm parts, accessories and ammunition, not prohibited.

With regard to part (b) as to how many of the firearms are handguns, 147 are restricted firearms and 124 are prohibited firearms.

With regard to part (c) as to how many of the firearms are rifles, eight are non-restricted firearms, three are restricted firearms and 11 are prohibited firearms.

With regard to part (d) as to how many of the firearms are shotguns, zero are non-restricted firearms, zero are restricted firearms and one is a prohibited firearm.

With regard to part (e), an additional 6,309 items were identified in the data pull as firearms or parts but not included in the response provided above, that is, seized outside of postal mode.

With regard to part (f), the descriptions, including quantities, of each item in part (e) are as follows: non-restricted firearms, 695; restricted firearms, 1,308; prohibited firearms, 1,946; replica firearms, 141; antique firearms, 41; the frame of a firearm is not applicable; the receiver of a firearm is not applicable; the barrel of a firearm, 15; the upper or slide of a firearm is not applicable; a cartridge magazine, 1,546; and ammunition for a firearm, 139. Other firearms parts not classified in the preceding items are as follows: 174 prohibited devices, including 96 described as parts and accessories and 78 as silencers; 17 parts exclusively for fully automatic firearms; and 328 parts, accessories and ammunition, not prohibited, with no further description available.

As a note, the number of quantities may be reflected in various categories. As to part (e), the items were seized outside of postal mode. Also, some data is not available for various reasons, that is, none seized or reported under that category.

Question No. 2098—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to the amounts listed on page 143 of the Public Accounts of Canada 2023, Volume 3, related to fraudulent claims under Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion: (a) of the 100 cases listed as a fraudulent claims for the Canada Student Loan, how many were, and what dollar amount represented, fraudulent cases involving payments made to (i) non-Canadians or payments being sent outside of Canada, (ii) deceased individuals; and (b) of the 44,902 cases listed as fraudulent claims for Employment Insurance Benefit, how many were, and what dollar amount, represented fraudulent cases involving payments made to (i) non-Canadians or payments being sent outside of Canada, (ii) deceased individuals?

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the fraudulent claims for Canada student loans were a result of fraudsters using stolen identities of Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada to apply for funding. The fraudsters have not yet been identified so the Canada student financial assistance program cannot confirm if the payments were received by non-Canadians. However, the program can confirm that no payments were sent outside Canada. All funds were disbursed to Canadian financial institutions. No payments were made to deceased individuals.

With regard to part (b), the dataset pertaining to our compliance reviews is not detailed enough to extract the information requested.

Question No. 2105—Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:

With regard to the Phoenix pay system, broken down by fiscal year since its implementation: (a) what is the total number of severe impact claims made, broken down by (i) compensation for individuals on maternity, parental or disability leave, (ii) discriminatory practice, (iii) lost occupational capacity, (iv) lost security clearance, (v) bankruptcy, (vi) significant credit rating impact, (vii) resignation from the public service, (viii) mental anguish, and (ix) other personal and financial hardship; (b) for each category in (a) what is the total number of claims that were accepted; (c) for each category in (a), what is the total number of claims that were rejected; and (d) of the claims in (b) that received compensation, what is the average value of compensation awarded?

Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a note, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, TBS, claims office runs its monthly statistical report on the first working day of the month. The most recent report was run on December 1, 2023.

The TBS claims office uses a specially designed client relationship management, CRM, system that is internal to TBS and has as its primary function the capability to manage and track the submission and processing of claims. As the CRM system has limited capability to gather and produce detailed statistical reports on a historical basis, the information provided is cumulative from the date of inception to the date of the report.

Routine Proceedings

With regard to part (a), as of December 1, 2023, the TBS claims office received a total number of claims broken down by the following categories: compensation for individuals on maternity, parental or disability leave, 68; discriminatory practice, 36; lost occupational capacity, 28; lost security clearance, five; bankruptcy, 18, 17 of which were not accepted and one of which is in progress and not closed; significant credit rating impact, 47; resignation from the public service, 21; mental anguish, 375; and other personal and financial hardship, 495. As a note, many claimants file under this general heading of damages. However, upon further examination by the TBS claims office in consultation with the claimant, the claims are resubmitted under the corresponding specific category of damages where they are best assessed. The CRM system does not have the capability to track the number of “Other personal and financial hardship” claims that have been reassigned and assessed under the more appropriate specific category of damages. In addition, claims erroneously submitted under this category are closed in CRM as “not accepted” claims.

With regard to part (b), for each category in part (a), the total number of claims that were accepted is as follows: compensation for individuals on maternity, parental or disability leave, seven; discriminatory practice, zero; lost occupational capacity, zero; lost security clearance, zero; bankruptcy, zero, with one in progress and not closed; significant credit rating impact, three; resignation from the public service, zero; mental anguish, 129; and other personal and financial hardship, two.

With regard to part (c), for each category in part (a), the total number of claims that were rejected is as follows: compensation for individuals on maternity, parental or disability leave, 61; discriminatory practice, 36; lost occupational capacity, 28; lost security clearance, five; bankruptcy, 17, with one in progress and not closed; significant credit rating impact, 44; resignation from the public service, 21; mental anguish, 246; and other personal and financial hardship, 493.

With regard to part (d), the CRM system assigns a unique claim number to an individual claimant. A claimant is eligible to submit multiple requests for damages based on their individual circumstances. As the CRM system was designed to track individual claimants, an average value of compensation awarded for categories listed in part (b) above cannot be provided.

The total cumulative amount recommended for payment for all severe impacts claims as of December 1, 2023, is \$1,077,010.92 and 6,536.73 hours of leave credits.

Question No. 2106—Mr. Dan Muys:

With regard to stolen motor vehicles being illegally exported from Canada via the Port of Montreal: (a) how many stolen motor vehicles has the CBSA retrieved at the Port of Montreal before being illegally exported from Canada for the calendar years of (i) 2021, (ii) 2022, (iii) 2023; (b) how many vehicles does the CBSA estimate have been illegally exported from Canada via the Port of Montreal in the calendar years of (i) 2021, (ii) 2022, (iii) 2023; and (c) what percentage of outgoing containers from the Port of Montreal have been scanned for goods being illegally exported from Canada for the calendar years of (i) 2021, (ii) 2022, (iii) 2023?

Ms. Jennifer O’Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Inter-governmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a) of the question, the number of stolen vehicles retrieved by the CBSA at the Port of Montreal before being illegally

exported from Canada was 1,020 vehicles in 2021, 1,050 vehicles in 2022, and 1,075 vehicles up to December 6, 2023.

In response to part (b) of the question, the CBSA does not have an estimate of how many vehicles have been illegally exported from Canada via the Port of Montreal. The CBSA acts on all referrals received from police of local jurisdiction.

With respect to part (c) of the question, the CBSA assesses the risk of all marine containers, in both the import and export stream, to identify potentially high-risk shipments and determine, on a case-by-case basis, if further examination is required. Risk assessment includes but is not limited to security intelligence, referrals from law enforcement indicator research, and detection tools. The agency also acts on all cases referred to the CBSA by police authorities. To maintain the integrity of its programs and ensure the safety and security of Canada, the agency does not disclose specific data related to examination rates or techniques.

Question No. 2112—Mr. Garnett Genuis:

With regard to the government awarding a contract to GC Strategies to develop the ArriveCan application: what was the name and title of the person who decided to award the contract to GC Strategies?

Ms. Jennifer O’Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Inter-governmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, contract 47419-212524/001/EL awarded to GC Strategies for COVID-19 pandemic IT PRO services was signed by Angela Durigan, Public Services and Procurement Canada, PSPC, Procurement. As per the contract, the contracting authority is Alain Huot, PSPC supply officer. The technical authorities for the contract are Antonio Utano, CBSA executive director, and Cameron MacDonald, CBSA director general, in Antonio Utano’s absence. The contract referenced above was provided to the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates on November 24, 2023.

Question No. 2115—Mr. Tim Uppal:

With regard to visas for international students in Canada: how many international students are (i) currently studying in Canada, (ii) studying at institutions accredited by Universities Canada, (iii) in post-graduate studies, (iv) studying at institutions accredited by the National Association of Career Colleges?

Mr. Paul Chiang (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, IRCC, does not possess information about the number of international students holding study permits who are currently residing in Canada. This is primarily because individuals can leave the country at any point in time after arrival. However, as a proxy, IRCC holds information on the total number of study permit holders. On November 30, 2023, 981,192 study permit holders held a valid permit, 336,636 of these study permit holders were studying at institutions recognized by Universities Canada and 129,792 of these study permit holders were in postgraduate studies. Data in part (iv) is not tracked by IRCC.

Routine Proceedings

Data is based on preliminary estimates and subject to change. Study Permits are valid as of November 30, 2023. Clients' most recent study permit is considered. Clients' designated learning institutions, DLI, were based on their recent permit and cross-referenced with those listed on the website for Universities Canada: <https://www.univcan.ca/universities/member-universities/>. Also note that Universities Canada is a membership organization and not an official accrediting organization. Study level of client is based on this recent permit. Postgraduate studies is defined as the identified level of study being for either a master or a doctorate.

Question No. 2118—Mr. Scot Davidson:

With regard to the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC): (a) what were the total expenditures by the CHRC related to the study and publication of the discussion paper on religious intolerance, published in October 2023; and (b) what is the breakdown of the expenditures in (a)?

Mr. James Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only expenditure engaged by the Canadian Human Rights Commission in relation to the study and publication of the discussion paper on religious intolerance, published in October 2023, was for the translation of the document from English to French. The total cost for the translation of "Discussion Paper on Religious Intolerance" was \$73.08.

Question No. 2119—Mr. Michael Barrett:

With regard to the Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED) Canada and the current probe into the actions of Sustainable Development Technology Canada (SDTC): (a) how many current and former employees of (i) ISED, (ii) SDTC are under non-disclosure agreements that prohibit them from discussing wrongdoing that they witnessed involving SDTC, or ISED, including the minister's office; (b) will the minister release any officials who witnessed or have knowledge of wrongdoing from their nondisclosure agreements; and (c) if the answer to (b) is negative, what is the reasoning behind this decision?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the current allegations against Sustainable Development Technology Canada, or SDTC, there are no current or former employees of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, or ISED, under a non-disclosure agreement, including the minister's office. Public servants are governed by Treasury Board's policy on people management and the directive on conflict of interest.

Given SDTC's status as a shared-governance corporation at arm's length from the department, the number of non-disclosure agreements with former and current employees is not known.

The Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act gives federal public sector employees a secure and confidential process for disclosing serious wrongdoing in the workplace, as well as protection from acts of reprisal.

The minister is not a party to any non-disclosure agreements between SDTC and its current or former employees.

ISED requested that the Department of Justice appoint a law firm to undertake a fact-finding exercise into recent allegations of labour and employment contraventions, including harassment or abuse, and report the findings to the minister. McCarthy Tétrault was appointed as the legal agent.

To ensure that these issues receive proper focus and that any other current or former employee may come forward without fear of

reprisal, SDTC has agreed to allow current and former employees to freely speak to the law firm without violating any applicable settlement agreements or non-disclosure agreements.

Question No. 2122—Ms. Leah Gazan:

With regard to the Minister for Innovation, Science and Industry's commitment to stabilize food prices: (a) has the Minister held any meetings with CEOs or executives of companies serving Northern, rural, and remote communities where there is little or no competition in the grocery sector; (b) does the Minister's commitment to stabilize grocery prices include efforts to stabilize prices in Northern, rural and remote communities where food insecurity is the highest; (c) does the Minister's efforts to create a grocery task force include a mandate to monitor the practices of grocers in Northern, rural and remote communities; and (d) what efforts is the Minister making to improve the availability and accessibility of data on food prices in Northern, rural and remote communities?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry has met with the leaders of Canada's five largest grocery chains, which make up over three-quarters of the grocery market share in Canada.

Affordability is an issue that affects all Canadians. The minister has engaged with his provincial and territorial counterparts to discuss efforts to stabilize food prices across the country.

The grocery task force's mandate and responsibilities include engaging governments and consumer advocacy stakeholders to help ensure coordination of activities; engaging external partners, experts, and industry representatives in undertaking analysis; working with consumer groups undertaking research and advocacy work to report back findings to Canadians; and promoting grocery-related information to Canadian consumers so they are aware of their rights and are empowered to make informed marketplace choices.

In November 2023, Statistics Canada launched the Food Price Data Hub, which provides Canadians with information on food prices and helps consumers make informed decisions about their food purchases.

Question No. 2129—Mr. Garnett Genuis:

With regard to the government's expedited assessment process for arms exports: why is Ukraine not considered eligible for the same expedited assessment processes for arms exports that is used for other allies?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is unwavering in its support for Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence, its people and their democratically elected government. Canada continues to arm Ukraine and provide it with the support it needs to defend itself. Together with our allies and partners, Canada is delivering military materials without delay and will continue to provide support to the Ukrainian people to defend their country. The export or transfer process related to military donations made to the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine is under the responsibility of the Department of National Defence and falls outside of Canada's export controls administered under the authority of the Export and Import Permits Act.

Under the authority of the Export and Import Permits Act and as per Canada's commitment to support Ukraine's self-defence, the Government of Canada is making every effort to expedite the export permit process for controlled items destined to appropriate consignees and end-users in Ukraine. Canada continues to ensure that the exports of controlled goods and technology are conducted lawfully, and all permit applications are reviewed on a case-by-case basis under Canada's risk assessment framework, including against the Arms Trade Treaty criteria, which are enshrined in Canada's Export and Import Permits Act. During the review process, particular attention is given to the nature of the item, the region of destination, the purpose and intended use of the item, the record and behaviour of the stated consignees and/or end-users of the item, and the possibility of unauthorized diversion.

From the date a complete permit application is received, every effort is made to process an application within a reasonable time frame or sooner, as per the department's service standards. These are within 10 business days when consultations outside the trade and export controls bureau are not required, and within forty 40 business days when consultations outside the trade and export controls bureau are required.

Canada remains resolute in supporting Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence. Together with the international community, and working with the Government of Ukraine, Canada will continue to call on Russia to end its war, withdraw its troops and equipment from Ukraine and turn to good-faith diplomacy.

Question No. 2130—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With regard to the government's efforts to support food price stabilization, since October 2023: (a) what indicators does the government use ensure that its efforts are making a meaningful difference to stabilize grocery prices; and (b) what accountability measures exist to ensure that grocery retailers are keeping their commitment to stabilize food prices based on the indicators in (a)?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the Government of Canada is closely monitoring the change in the "food purchased from stores" category in the monthly consumer price index published by Statistics Canada.

With regard to part (b), Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada maintains close and frequent communication with major grocery retailers in order to monitor commitments.

Question No. 2133—Mr. Frank Caputo:

With regard to the prison needle exchange program at facilities operated by Correctional Service Canada, since 2018 and broken down by year and by correctional

institution: (a) how many instances occurred where an inmate used a needle to assault (i) guards or other CSC employees, (ii) fellow inmates; (b) how many instances occurred where needles distributed, or meant for distribution, under the program have gone missing; and (c) how many instances occurred where needles were discovered as contraband items?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, With regard to part (a), there have been no reported assaults related to the prison needle exchange program, PNEP, in any Correctional Service of Canada, CSC, institution.

With regard to part (b), appropriate safeguards are established in every institution to ensure that PNEP kits are safely stored and accounted for on a daily basis. While we are unable to provide specific numbers in this time frame, so as to avoid providing inaccurate information, we can say that it is very rare. However, if a needle were to go missing, CSC would take immediate action to ensure that the safety and security of staff, the public and inmates are maintained.

With regard to part (c), CSC undertook an extensive preliminary search in order to determine the amount of information that would fall within the scope of the question and the amount of time that would be required to prepare a comprehensive response. The level of detail of the information requested is not systematically tracked in a centralized database. CSC concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question would require a manual collection of information that is not possible in the time allotted, and this could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

Question No. 2136—Ms. Leslyn Lewis:

With regard to the government's immigration levels plan for 2024-2026: (a) what analyses has the government undertaken to estimate the (i) infrastructure, (ii) housing, (iii) health, and (iv) social service capacity requirements to accommodate the immigration levels; (b) for each analysis in (a), what are the results; (c) has the government identified a risk of a lack of appropriate infrastructure, housing, or supports in meeting the needs of new immigrants; (d) if the answer to (c) is affirmative, what is that risk level and how is it being mitigated; (e) what external consultations has the government undertaken to assess the capacity requirements for the immigration levels plan; (f) what risks or concerns have stakeholders or experts raised; and (g) what are the government's plans to ensure the (i) infrastructure, (ii) housing, (iii) health, and (iv) social service needs of new immigrants are met?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, insofar as Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, or IRCC, is concerned, the 2024-26 immigration levels plan, tabled November 1, 2023, was developed in close consultation with a wide variety of partners and stakeholders and took into account a range of factors. The 2024-26 levels plan aims to balance Canada's need for population and economic growth with its capacity to welcome and integrate newcomers, while maintaining confidence in Canada's immigration system.

In developing the 2024-26 levels plan, IRCC extended the scope and breadth of its consultations. This approach built upon extensive efforts undertaken through the strategic immigration review, which outlined a road map to ensure that our immigration levels planning takes into account the need to address labour shortages in key industries, as well as social and infrastructure capacity.

As such, IRCC broadened its engagement at the federal level to begin instituting a broader, phased approach to levels planning. This includes whole-of-government efforts to align various mandates, plan and work together to manage the potential impacts of population growth, in order to ensure strong outcomes for newcomers and Canadians alike.

In 2024-26, this included, among others, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Infrastructure Canada on housing and capacity; Employment and Social Development Canada and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada on labour market trends; a multitude of departments on labour market needs, for example, Health Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Transport Canada; and Statistics Canada on underlying data to support policy decision-making.

As well, in the spirit of reconciliation, IRCC built on previous efforts to engage with indigenous communities to increase its understanding of indigenous perspectives on immigration and its impacts on indigenous peoples. IRCC also increased the number of indigenous organizations engaged through its survey.

In addition, every year IRCC conducts bilateral and multilateral engagement on levels planning with a number of partners and stakeholders, including federal delivery partners who perform security and immigration enforcement activities that are integral to the processing and execution of the multi-year levels plan, contributing to maintaining the integrity of the immigration system; and provinces and territories, or PTs, including with Quebec pursuant to the Canada-Québec Accord, to understand and respond to their needs and concerns, such as labour shortages as well as the capacity to welcome newcomers.

IRCC also takes into consideration public views gained through public opinion research and conducts an online survey of key partners and stakeholders, including employers, educational institutions, faith-based organizations, indigenous partners, industry councils, municipalities and service-providing organizations, among others, to inform the development of the plan.

Through its extensive consultations in the development of the 2024-26 levels plan, IRCC heard about the need for talented and skilled newcomers to help address labour market shortages and contribute to economic growth, while also ensuring sustainable

population growth to balance pressures on housing, health care and other infrastructure and services. As such, the 2024-26 levels plan aims to stabilize immigration levels in 2026.

Another factor that is taken into consideration in immigration levels planning is that key sectors such as health, transportation, agriculture, residential housing construction, teaching and early childhood education, and natural and applied sciences-related occupations are facing labour market shortages. While population growth through immigration increases demand for housing, infrastructure and services, it also contributes to the supply of labour in, for example, health care occupations and the construction sector to build new homes.

In addition to the input received through extensive engagement and consultations, the levels plan is also informed by humanitarian commitments as well as the overall downstream domestic capacity, such as housing, health care and settlement services. Other considerations include the need to manage existing inventories and to continue to improve processing time in a context of fiscal responsibility.

As such, the 2024-26 levels plan aims to balance traditional immigration objectives such as economic and demographic growth, family reunification and Canada's humanitarian commitments with the need to mitigate impacts on domestic capacity.

Immigration drives Canada's economy and fuels its future growth. As Canada continues to face an aging population and critical labour shortages in key sectors, newcomers are critical to help spur innovation, grow the economy and support local businesses and communities.

Moving forward, continued closer collaboration at the federal level will enable better alignment across departments in support of government economic and social priorities. IRCC, alongside other government departments, is committed to further engagement ahead of the next levels plan. Collaboration with PTs, partners, stakeholders, and indigenous peoples will be critical to help Canada adapt to the realities of immigration-driven population growth.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2139—Mr. Dan Muys:**

With regard to the tariff quota for the import of supply-managed goods for 2023-24 and the expiry of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland eligibility to import under the reserve for non-European Union World Trade Organization Members within Canada's World Trade Organization tariff rate quota on December 31, 2023, without a replacement agreement: (a) how much access quantity and available quantity of cream is allocated to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in 2023-24; (b) is the number specified for in (b) less, greater, or equal to the access quantity and available quantity of cream allocated to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in the 2022-23 period; (c) are there any programs known to Global Affairs Canada to help Canadian small businesses compensate for any financial loss resulting from the expiry of this agreement if no replacement deal is agreed upon by December 31, 2023; and (d) are there any plans known to Global Affairs Canada to subsidize the financial loss incurred by Canadian small businesses resulting from the expiry of this agreement if no replacement deal is agreed upon by December 31, 2023?

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following reflects a consolidated response approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers.

The World Trade Organization, or WTO, specialty creams tariff rate quota, or TRQ, allocated annually on a dairy year basis, from August 1 to July 31, is not being impacted by the expiry of the cheese side letters. Therefore, the response below will primarily focus on the WTO "Cheeses of All Types" TRQ, or WTO cheese TRQ, and the cheese side letters addressed in the question.

The WTO cheese TRQ is allocated annually on a calendar year basis, from January 1 to December 31, and split into two reserves: one for European Union origin cheeses and one for non-EU origin cheeses.

The 2020 cheese side letters to the Canada-United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (U.K.) Trade Continuity Agreement, or TCA, are the product of a negotiated outcome between Canada and the U.K.

As part of a balance of concessions, Canada agreed to grant the U.K., via the cheese side letters, continued access to the EU cheese reserve under the WTO cheese TRQ until December 31, 2023, in order to facilitate planning horizons and an orderly transition for Canadian allocation holders under the WTO cheese TRQ.

The terms of this transitional arrangement have been well known to stakeholders since the TCA was concluded in late 2020.

After December 31, 2023, cheese imports originating from the U.K. can be imported under the non EU reserve of the WTO cheese TRQ.

Regarding the WTO "Cheeses of All Types" TRQ, for the calendar years 2022, 2023 and 2024, the import access quantity for the WTO cheese TRQ is 20,411,866 kilograms. Of this, 69.9%, or 14,267,894.3 kilograms, is allocated to cheese imports from the EU, and 30.1%, or 6,143,971.67 kilograms, is allocated to cheese imports from non-EU sources. There is no specific quantity of TRQs allocated to individual countries and/or markets under each respective reserve.

For the calendar years 2022 and 2023, cheese from the U.K. could be imported under the EU reserve's overall access quantity of 14,267,894.3 kilograms. For the calendar year 2024 and going for-

ward in subsequent calendar years, cheese from the U.K. will be imported under the non-EU reserve's overall access quantity of 6,143,971.67 kilograms.

Regarding WTO specialty creams TRQ, for the dairy years 2022-23 and 2023-24, the import access quantity for the WTO specialty creams TRQ is 394,000 kilograms. There is also no specific quantity of TRQs allocated to individual countries and/or markets under the WTO specialty creams TRQ.

TRQ allocation holders' individual business decisions are made in line with their own commercial considerations. However, Canada's inclusive approach to trade seeks to ensure that the benefits of trade are more widely shared, including with traditionally under-represented groups in trade such as small and medium-sized enterprises, or SMEs.

The Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that SMEs have access to the right resources, information and tools required to participate in trade, access global opportunities and supply chains, benefit from international trade and investment opportunities, and succeed in global markets.

This is achieved through mainstreaming inclusive trade provisions across Canada's free trade agreements, or FTAs, and seeking dedicated inclusive trade chapters, including on trade and SMEs, with FTA partners.

The Government of Canada has a range of programs to provide financial support to SMEs in trade, including the CanExport SMEs, Canada small business financing program, the women entrepreneurship strategy, the Black entrepreneurship program, the 2SLGBTQI+ entrepreneurship program, and the indigenous growth fund.

Question No. 2141—Mr. Alistair MacGregor:

With regard to federal support for Canada's grocery sector, between February 1, 2006, and October 1, 2015: (a) how much federal funding was provided to Canada's major grocery companies (Loblaws, Metro, Walmart, Sobeys, and Costco) to support business development, by (i) year, (ii) dollar amount, (iii) company; (b) how many federal subsidies were provided to those major grocery companies (Loblaws, Metro, Walmart, Sobeys, and Costco) to support business development, by (i) year, (ii) dollar amount, (iii) company; and (c) what programs were responsible for managing federal funding and subsidies to Canada's grocery sector, by federal department or agency?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to federal support for Canada's grocery sector, between February 1, 2006, and October 1, 2015, no federal funding or subsidies were provided to Canada's major grocery companies, namely Loblaws, Metro, Walmart, Sobeys and Costco, to support business development.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2142—Mr. Alistair MacGregor:**

With regard to federal support to Canada's grocery sector, between November 1, 2015, to January 1, 2024: (a) how much federal funding was provided to Canada's major grocery companies (Loblaws, Metro, Walmart, Sobeys, and Costco) to support business development, by (i) year, (ii) dollar amount, (iii) company; (b) how much federal subsidies were provided to those major grocery companies (Loblaws, Metro, Walmart, Sobeys, and Costco) to support business development, by (i) year, (ii) dollar amount, (iii) company; and (c) what programs were responsible for managing federal funding and subsidies to Canada's grocery sector, by federal department or agency?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to federal support to Canada's grocery sector, between November 1, 2015, and January 1, 2024, no federal funding or subsidies were provided to Canada's major grocery companies, which are Loblaws, Metro, Walmart, Sobeys and Costco, to support business development.

Question No. 2143—Mr. Alistair MacGregor:

With regard to lobbying conducted by Canada's grocery sector, between February 1, 2006, and October 1, 2015: (a) how many meetings did the federal government have with Canada's major grocery companies (Loblaws, Metro, Walmart, Sobeys, and Costco) to request federal funding, by (i) year, (ii) company; and (b) how many meetings did the federal government have with those major grocery companies (Loblaws, Metro, Walmart, Sobeys, and Costco) to request federal subsidies, by (i) year, (ii) company?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, between February 1, 2006, and October 1, 2015, no meetings were held with Canada's major grocery companies, Loblaws, Metro, Walmart, Sobeys and Costco, to request federal funding.

Question No. 2144—Mr. Ryan Williams:

With regard to intellectual property created by grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, since April 1, 2016: (a) what are the details of all grants and contributions, broken down by fiscal year, including, for each, the (i) recipient, (ii) organization (if applicable), (iii) date, (iv) description and title of project funded, (v) amount requested, (vi) amount provided, (vii) intellectual property created by the funding; and (b) for each intellectual property created, who has the property rights?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, SSHRC, does not systematically track intellectual property resulting from the grants it awards and does not maintain records on intellectual property ownership resulting from funded research. With regard to part (b), SSHRC claims no rights of ownership to intellectual property associated with an award, and any intellectual property agreements are between the researcher or institution and their partners. SSHRC's intellectual property policy can be found at https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/policies-politiques/g_copyright-s_droits_auteur-eng.aspx.

All grants awarded by SSHRC are publicly disclosed and published in the Open Government portal at <https://search.open.canada.ca/grants/>.

Question No. 2145—Mr. Ryan Williams:

With regard to intellectual property created by grants from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, since April 1, 2016: (a) what are the details of all grants and contributions, broken down by fiscal year, including, for each, the (i) recipient, (ii) organization (if applicable), (iii) date, (iv) description and title of the project funded, (v) amount requested, (vi) amount provided, (vii) intellectual property created by the funding; and (b) for each intellectual property created, who has the property rights?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, or NSERC, does not systematically track intellectual property resulting from the grants it awards and does not maintain records on intellectual property ownership resulting from funded research. With regard to part (b), NSERC claims no rights of ownership to intellectual property associated with an award and any intellectual property agreements are between the researcher and/or institution and their partners. NSERC's intellectual property policy can be found at https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/nserc-crsng/policies-politiques/ip-pi_eng.asp.

All grants awarded by NSERC are publicly disclosed and published in the Open Government portal at <https://search.open.canada.ca/grants/>.

Question No. 2146—Mr. Ryan Williams:

With regard to intellectual property created by grants from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, since April 1, 2016: (a) what are the details of all grants and contributions, broken down by fiscal year, including, for each, the (i) recipient, (ii) organization (if applicable), (iii) date, (iv) description and title of the project funded, (v) amount requested, (vi) amount provided, (vii) intellectual property created by the funding; and (b) for each intellectual property created, who has the property rights?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, CIHR, does not systematically track intellectual property created by grants awarded by CIHR. As such, producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question would not be possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

With regard to part (b), as per the Tri-agency Guide on Financial Administration, CIHR does not pass judgment on the eventual commercial success of research, nor does it retain or claim any ownership of, or exploitation or proprietary rights to intellectual property, copyright or inventions developed/resulting from research supported with agency grant funds. Administering institutions are required to disclose to grant recipients their policy on intellectual property rights and ownership arising from supported research. Grant recipients that decide to pursue commercialization of any results of the research are required to adhere to applicable institutional policies governing the assignment of intellectual property.

As per the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Application Administration Guide, the onus is on the nominated principal investigator, or the institution or both, depending on the institution's policy on ownership of intellectual property, to seek patent protection, in collaboration with the partner where applicable, for inventions or developments arising from CIHR-supported research. Grant recipients that pursue commercialization of any results of the research are required to adhere to institutional and agency policies governing the assignment of intellectual property.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2149—Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen:**

With regard to the Government's commitment to create a Grocery Task force to monitor actions taken by food retailers and producers: (a) by what date will the Grocery Task force be established; (b) what is the mandate for the Grocery Task force; (c) what entities, taskforces, or groups exist currently to monitor the prices of groceries and other goods; and (d) what government entities, taskforces, or groups exist currently to monitor and investigate the actions of grocery retailers?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the grocery task force is currently operational.

The grocery task force's mandate and responsibilities include engaging governments and consumer advocacy stakeholders to help ensure coordination of activities; engaging external partners, experts and industry representatives in undertaking analysis; working with consumer groups undertaking research and advocacy work to report back findings to Canadians; and promoting grocery-related information to Canadian consumers so they are aware of their rights and are empowered to make informed marketplace choices.

Innovation, Science and Economic Development, along with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Statistics Canada, have partnered to make timely data on food prices available to consumers in one central and easy-to-access location. The new Food Price Data Hub provides Canadians with more detailed information on food prices and helps consumers make informed decisions about their food purchases.

The Competition Bureau is an independent law enforcement agency that protects and promotes competition for the benefit of Canadian consumers and businesses. The bureau administers and enforces the Competition Act and three labeling statutes that govern business conduct in all sectors of the economy, including the grocery sector. The Competition Act contains civil and criminal provisions addressing various forms of potentially anti-competitive conduct, such as competitor collaborations and cartels, abuse of a dominant position and merger review, as well as deceptive marketing. The bureau brings civil cases before the specialist Competition Tribunal or courts to seek remedial orders, while criminal matters are prosecuted by the Public Prosecution Service of Canada.

Question No. 2150—Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen:

With regard to the Minister for Innovation Science and Industry's commitment on October 5, 2023, to take additional action to restore the food price stability that Canadians expect: (a) what actions was the minister or department told that grocers would take so that Canadians would see aggressive discounts across a basket of food products that represent the most important purchases for most households; (b) since October 5, what measures have been put in place to ensure grocers are delivering results for Canadians; (c) by what date does the minister expect to see results; (d) by what date will the minister take additional action if grocers don't implement the changes that they were asked to implement; and (e) what actions will the minister take if grocers don't deliver results?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's top five major grocery chains committed to support efforts aimed at stabilizing food prices through actions such as aggressive discounts, price freezes and price-matching campaigns.

The Government of Canada continues to explore all measures and tools to address affordability. The Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry and the Minister of Agriculture and Agri Food engaged with provincial and territorial consumer counterparts to discuss efforts to stabilize food prices across the country.

The government reiterated its commitment to stabilizing food prices within its 2023 fall economic statement, in which it was emphasized that the government has and will continue to advance initiatives to achieve this objective.

Price stabilization requires the full engagement of the entire supply chain, and the Government of Canada is working with a range of stakeholders, including grocers, manufacturers, provinces and territories, to find solutions that are in the best interest of Canadians.

The Government of Canada is considering all measures and tools to address affordability issues.

Question No. 2153—Mr. Ted Falk:

With regard to Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), the Ad-hoc COVID-19 Clinical Pharmacology Task Group and Health Canada (HC) research or communication about Ivermectin: (a) did they find any harm to Canadians from taking oral Ivermectin to prevent or treat COVID-19; (b) did HC, PHAC, or a committee review the Ivermectin meta-analysis conducted by Andrew Bryant, Ivermectin for Prevention and Treatment of COVID-19 Infection: A Systematic Review, Meta-analysis, and Trial Sequential Analysis to Inform Clinical Guidelines, *American Journal of Therapeutics*, 28, e434-e460, July 2021, (i) did their analysis show any benefit from using Ivermectin to prevent or treat COVID-19; (c) did HC or PHAC perform a risk-harm analysis for the use of Ivermectin to prevent or treat COVID-19, (i) if the answer to (c) is negative, why not, (ii) if the answer to (c) is affirmative, was this information provided to Dr. Theresa Tam, Dr. Supryia Sharma, or the Minister of Health, (iii) what dates was the information from (ii) communicated, (iv) if the answer to (ii) is negative, why not?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Ivermectin for use in humans is an oral drug approved in Canada for the treatment of certain parasitic worm infections, such as strongyloidiasis and onchocerciasis. This is based on evidence from clinical studies that were included by the manufacturer as part of its submission for review by Health Canada: <https://dhpp.hpfb-dgpps.ca/review-documents/resource/RDS00498>. However, Ivermectin is not approved for the prevention or treatment of coronavirus disease 2019, or COVID-19.

Health Canada was made aware of reports in media related to issues with the use of Ivermectin for COVID-19. Subsequently, the department communicated on this issue in a public advisory in August 2021 and October 2021: <https://recalls-rappels.canada.ca/en/alert-recall/ivermectin-not-authorized-prevent-or-treat-covid-19-may-cause-serious-health-problems>.

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With regard to part (b), emerging information from sources such as literature publications and poison control centres was screened for signal detection purposes as part of our surveillance activities for products authorized to prevent or treat COVID-19. This specific publication was not reviewed by Health Canada as part of these activities given that it did not provide new risk or safety information with the use of Ivermectin as authorized and reflected in the product monograph for the drug.

With regard to part (c), Health Canada did not perform a risk-harm analysis for the use of Ivermectin to prevent or treat COVID-19. Health Canada only performs this type of analysis if a marketing application for a drug has been submitted by a manufacturer. Health Canada has not received an application seeking the authorization of Ivermectin for the treatment of COVID-19. Therefore, the department has not received nor reviewed any scientific evidence for the purpose of determining a benefits, harms and uncertainties profile on such use.

Question No. 2154—Mr. Ted Falk:

With regard to Health Canada monitoring Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine: (a) did Health Canada (HC), the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) or Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) receive the report entitled *Pregnancy and Lactation, Cumulative Review from Pharmacovigilance Database*, dated April 20, 2021, or an equivalent document; (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, what are the details, including the (i) date HC, PHAC, NACI or CIHI received a report outlining clinical data any period from the time of drug product development to the end of the first six months of the roll out, (ii) report name, (iii) percentage of pregnant women who reported adverse events, (iv) percentage of lactating women who reported adverse events in themselves and their newborns; (c) what is HC's analysis of the document in (a) relative to, (i) premature deliveries, (ii) miscarriages, (iii) spontaneous abortions, (iv) stillbirths, (v) maternal deaths, (vi) the percentage of pregnant women who reported adverse events, (vii) the percentage of lactating women who reported adverse events in themselves or their newborns; (d) if the answer to (a) is negative does HC, PHAC, NACI or CIHI plan to request this report or equivalent report from Pfizer; (e) with respect to passive surveillance, what is the established threshold for conditions listed in (c) (i) to (v) for withdrawing approval for this population; (f) for institutions who met the continuous review of global vaccine safety surveillance rule which showed no evidence of any adverse pregnancy or neonatal outcomes associated with COVID-19 vaccination, what are the (i) institution names, (ii) links, (iii) supporting document names?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), Health Canada did not receive the above-mentioned report. With regard to part (b), the answer is nil, as per (a). With regard to part (c), the answer is nil, as per (a).

With regard to part (d), Health Canada has a robust vaccine safety surveillance system in place that engages health care professionals, vaccine manufacturers, the Public Health Agency of Canada, PHAC, and the provincial and territorial health authorities. Through these measures, manufacturers are required to submit safety data from real-world use and results related to safety and effectiveness from ongoing and planned studies as they become available.

In addition, Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada have been actively monitoring and reviewing reports of adverse events following immunization, AEFI, reported to the Canada vigilance program, at <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/medeffect-canada/canada-vigilance-program.html>, and the Canadian adverse events following immunization surveillance system, at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/canadian-adverse-events-following-immunization-surveillance-system-caefiss.html>. This information is

published on the Government of Canada's website at <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/covid-19/vaccine-safety/>. As noted on this website, there were 95 reports of spontaneous abortion up to and including September 15, 2023. It is important to note that these reports do not necessarily imply that a relationship between the adverse event and the vaccine has been established. However, they are an important source of information supporting ongoing safety monitoring. Health Canada also monitors and considers information from the scientific literature and international regulators.

Health Canada will not request the above-mentioned report separately since the report is now outdated. However, on October 22, 2022, Health Canada published a summary of the review on the use of the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines Comirnaty and Spikevax during pregnancy and breastfeeding, which included adverse events reported to Health Canada. Information about the summary of the review is available by clicking on this website: <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/hc-sc/documents/services/drugs-health-products/medeffect-canada/health-product-infowatch/october-2022/health-product-infowatch-october-2022.pdf>.

Health Canada continues to monitor the safety of COVID-19 vaccines approved in Canada to help ensure that the benefits continue to outweigh the risks for all groups of individuals, including pregnant and lactating women. Should there be new safety issues identified, Health Canada will take action, as appropriate.

From the National Advisory Committee on Immunization, NACI, the summary of evidence and rationale for NACI's pregnancy and breastfeeding recommendations was updated to reference developmental and reproductive toxicity, DART, animal studies for COVID-19 vaccines as those became available throughout 2020 and 2021. The relevant evidence was summarized in each update to NACI COVID 19 recommendations. In September 2022, as more evidence accumulated, NACI revised public health advice to strongly recommend that COVID-19 vaccines should be offered to those who are pregnant or breastfeeding, based on a review of global vaccine safety surveillance, vaccine effectiveness, vaccine safety studies and Canadian epidemiology. This included information from the Canadian National Vaccine Safety Network study, which started in December 2020, and the COVID-19 vaccine registry for pregnant and lactating individuals, which was launched in July 2021.

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With regard to part (e), none of the COVID-19 vaccine manufacturers sought indications for use in pregnant or lactating women or submitted randomized clinical trial data in pregnant or lactating women for regulatory evaluation. The product monographs included statements about the uncertainties related to pregnancy and lactation. A change to the approved conditions of use for a drug, including vaccines, or removal of a drug from the market is based upon the available evidence regarding the risks and benefits of the drug. There is no specific threshold but rather a scientific evaluation of the balance of risks and benefits. If the available evidence, including data obtained through passive surveillance, indicates that the risks outweigh the benefits, Health Canada will take appropriate action. This action may include changes to the conditions of use of a drug, such as contraindicating use for some groups, or complete removal of the drug from the market. Should such action be taken, Health Canada would also communicate the risk to Canadians and health care providers.

With regard to part (f), while Health Canada has no information on institutions that met continuous review of the global vaccine safety surveillance rule, we understand that vaccine safety is monitored worldwide by health authorities. This information can be found on the official websites of international health authorities.

Question No. 2158—Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:

With regard to the conditions of licence for marine finfish aquaculture in British Columbia and the licence issued to Cermaq for its aquaculture farm at Bawden Point: (a) what were the dates of all licenses issued to Cermaq to operate its farm at Bawden Point since January 2015; (b) was Cermaq ever found in violation of the licenses it was issued and, if so, what are the reasons for breach of license; (c) were the licenses issued to Cermaq in (a) amended to allow for higher sea lice thresholds; (d) what are the details of all amendments in (c); and (e) was Cermaq fined or otherwise reprimanded for violations of the licenses it was issued?

Hon. Diane LeBouthillier (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the conditions of licence for marine finfish aquaculture in British Columbia and the licence issued to Cermaq for its aquaculture farm at Bawden Point, the dates of all licences since January 2015 are September 12, 2023; March 9, 2023; August 16, 2022; July 1, 2022; March 1, 2020; November 17, 2016; November 10, 2016; July 1, 2016; December 19, 2015; and September 8, 2015.

The following violations are documented at the Bawden Point facility: 17 late reports from 2016-23; and one instance of failing to conduct sea lice abundance assessments in 2018.

Licences issued to Cermaq were not amended. There is no record of Cermaq being fined or otherwise reprimanded for the documented violations.

Question No. 2162—Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:

With regard to Health Canada's use of preclinical manufacturer's data for authorizing COVID-19 vaccines: (a) did Health Canada (HC), the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) follow The International Council for Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Pharmaceuticals for Human Use (ICH) standards; (b) were Developmental and Reproductive Toxicity (DART) guidelines required to be met for the determination of safety for either the Pfizer or the Moderna products for pregnant and lactating mothers; (c) if the answer to (b) is affirmative, (i) did the animal studies assess any effects within a complete reproductive cycle from conception to the reproductive capacity of the next generation, (ii) did the animal studies evaluate long term outcomes in offspring, (iii) were any fetal or offspring abnormalities detected, (iv) what fetal or offspring abnormalities were detected, (v) what is the significance of the fetal or offspring abnormalities in defining safety, (vi) were any adverse events observed in the mothers, (vii) what is the significance of adverse events observed in

the mothers for human safety, (viii) was decreased fertility detected in the first or second generation, (ix) were biodistribution studies conducted in the pregnant animals and their fetuses, (x) were alternate routes of exposure studied in the animals including through mating with a vaccinated male or transmammary routes; (d) if the answer to (b) is negative, what requirements needed to be met with respect to DART prior to the interim order approval and after the interim approval?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), yes, the non-clinical studies submitted to Health Canada to support the approval of the COVID-19 vaccines were conducted in accordance with the ICH standards. In particular, the ICH safety guideline S5(R3), detection of reproductive and developmental toxicity for human pharmaceuticals, has specific requirements for the design and conduct of developmental and reproductive toxicity studies for vaccines. This guideline provides information on animal species selection as well as dose selection and study design for vaccines against infectious diseases.

Health Canada is responsible for the regulatory authorization of vaccines, which encompasses the review and assessment of various studies to ensure the safety and efficacy of vaccines. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization, NACI, primarily focuses on analyzing data from human clinical trials to provide vaccine safety recommendations. NACI's role is not directly involved in the regulatory authorization process or in the initial review of safety and efficacy studies.

With regard to part (b), yes, DART studies were required as part of the regulatory evaluation of COVID-19 vaccines. These studies were conducted in accordance with ICH guidelines in S5(R3). These studies were submitted for regulatory review and supported the approval of the COVID-19 vaccines. The outcomes of these studies were included in the relevant documents prepared and published by Health Canada to inform the public, health care professionals and researchers. This information can be found under each specific product. For Comirnaty, from Pfizer-BioNTech, the product monograph is at <https://covid-vaccine.canada.ca/info/pdf/pfizer-biontech-covid-19-vaccine-pml-en.pdf> and the summary basis of decision is at <https://covid-vaccine.canada.ca/info/SBD00510-comirnaty-en.html>. For Spikevax, from Moderna, the product monograph is at <https://covid-vaccine.canada.ca/info/pdf/covid-19-vaccine-moderna-pm-en.pdf> and the summary basis of decision is at <https://covid-vaccine.canada.ca/info/SBD00511-spikevax-en.html>.

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It should be noted that the vaccine manufacturers did not seek an indication for use in pregnant and lactating women and that the product monographs included statements about the uncertainty regarding safety and efficacy in pregnancy and lactation. At the time of approval, there was limited experience with the use of COVID-19 vaccines in pregnant women. Animal studies do not indicate direct or indirect harmful effects with respect to pregnancy, embryo or fetal development, parturition or postnatal development, and human randomized clinical trials were not submitted for regulatory evaluation.

With regard to part (c), as indicated above, DART studies were required as part of the regulatory evaluation of COVID-19 vaccines. DART studies are required to detect any effects of the vaccine within a complete reproductive cycle as relevant to humans, from initial conception to reproductive capacity. No vaccine-related adverse effects on female fertility, fetal development or postnatal development were reported in the studies for the vaccines. Excerpts from the product monographs are included below.

As to Comirnaty's reproductive and developmental toxicology, in a reproductive and developmental toxicity study, 30 micrograms per animal, or 0.06 millilitres of a vaccine formulation containing the same quantity of nucleoside-modified messenger ribonucleic acid, mRNA, and other ingredients included in a single human dose, of Comirnaty was administered to female rats by the intramuscular route on four occasions: 21 and 14 days prior to mating and on gestation days nine and 20. No vaccine-related adverse effects on female fertility, fetal development or postnatal development were reported in the study.

As to Spikevax's reproductive and developmental toxicology, in a pre- and postnatal developmental toxicity study, 0.2 millilitres of a vaccine formulation containing the same quantity of mRNA, 100 micrograms, and other ingredients included in a single human dose of Spikevax was administered to female rats by the intramuscular route on four occasions: 28 and 14 days prior to mating and on gestation days one and 13. No vaccine-related adverse effects on female fertility, fetal development or postnatal development were reported in the study.

Part (d) is not applicable. Please see response to part (b).

Question No. 2163—Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:

With regard to Health Canada's COVID-19 vaccine safety monitoring and assessment for pregnant and lactating (P&L) women: (a) are observational trials and surveillance systems adequate to establish safety or must this be accomplished through randomized trials; (b) were randomized control trials (RCTs) used to obtain approval and support safety claims in P&L women, and, if so, what are the details, including, the (i) name of the trial, (ii) date of the trial; (c) did the trials in (b) (i) include all trimesters, (ii) include high risk pregnancies, (iii) include clinical and sub-clinical testing, (iv) include a trial group measured against a placebo control group, (v) include a control group which remained intact for multiple years to establish long term safety data, (vi) be sufficiently powered to detect common and rare side-effects; (d) if the answer to (b) is negative, what trials were used to evaluate the safety in the P&L population prior to approval in this cohort, including the (i) trial name, (ii) trial date, (iii) analysis of the trial; (e) did Health Canada (HC), the Public Health Agency of Canada, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization or Canadian Institute for Health Information inform pregnant and lactating women of the Pfizer monograph "No data are available yet regarding the use of COMIRNATY Omicron XBB.1.5 during pregnancy" or "No data are available yet regarding the use of COMIRNATY Omicron XBB.1.5 during breast-feeding. It is unknown whether COMIRNATY Omicron XBB.1.5 is excreted in human milk. A risk to the newborns/infants cannot be excluded"; (f) if the answer to (e) is affirmative, how were pregnant and lactating women advised of the Pfizer safety data; (g)

what is HC's scientific basis for claiming safety of the XBB.1.5 mRNA product in P&L women; (h) what rigorous prospective studies, with active patient reporting and monitoring, is HC relying upon to support their safety claims in the P&L population for the use of Omicron XBB.1.5 product?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), Health Canada's regulatory evaluation of vaccines includes the review of randomized control studies if there are indications for pregnant and lactating women. Observational studies may be required as part of the risk management plan that is reviewed by Health Canada prior to authorization. In addition, after authorization, Canada has a robust and well-established vaccine safety surveillance system involving Health Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, PHAC, provinces and territories, and vaccine manufacturers. Health Canada monitors the safety of COVID-19 vaccines through monitoring and risk minimization measures, including requiring manufacturers to regularly submit safety reports and reports of adverse events following immunization, AEFIs, and regularly assessing whether there is any new safety information that may affect the benefit-risk profile of the product. Health Canada has been actively monitoring and reviewing safety data submitted by the manufacturers of the COVID-19 vaccines. Health Canada also monitors and considers information from the scientific literature and international regulators.

With regard to part (b), none of the COVID-19 vaccine manufacturers sought indications for use in pregnant or lactating women or submitted RCTs in pregnant/lactating women for regulatory evaluation. The product monographs included statements about the uncertainties related to pregnancy and lactation. The product monographs can be accessed using the following link: COVID-19 vaccines and treatments portal (canada.ca).

With regard to part (c), as indicated above, there were no RCTs in pregnant/lactating women submitted for regulatory evaluation as the vaccine sponsors did not seek an indication for use in pregnant and lactating women.

With regard to parts (d) and (g), the regulatory basis for the decision taken by Health Canada is publicly available at <https://covid-vaccine.canada.ca/> for each specific vaccine. Please see Regulatory Decision Summary and Summary Basis of Decision documents.

As indicated in the specific product monographs, it is noted that the safety and efficacy of these vaccines in pregnant women have not yet been established. No indication for use in pregnant or lactating women was sought by the vaccine sponsors or authorized by Health Canada.

Routine Proceedings

It is important to note that evidence about the safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy has been growing from real-world use. No safety concerns were identified in a study of more than 35,000 pregnant persons who received an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy or in the immediate period prior to conception. More information about COVID-19 vaccination and pregnancy is available here <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization-vaccines/vaccination-pregnancy-covid-19.html>

Health Canada has been actively monitoring and reviewing safety data submitted by the manufacturers as well as adverse events following immunization, AEFI, reported to the Canada vigilance program, CVP, of Health Canada while also considering information from Canadian Adverse Events Following Immunization Surveillance System, CAEFISS, of the Public Health Agency of Canada, PHAC, and foreign data from international partners. Should there be new safety issues identified, Health Canada takes actions, as appropriate.

With regard part (e), Health Canada publishes the product monographs on its website <https://covid-vaccine.canada.ca/> in order to inform the public, health care professionals and the research community. As noted in the product monograph, the safety and efficacy of Comirnaty in pregnant women have not yet been established. In addition, Health Canada also publishes the summary basis of decision that provides information about the authorization of the Comirnaty Omicron XBB.1.5. Please see <https://covid-vaccine.canada.ca/info/SBD1700495075939-comirnaty-omicron-xbb-1-5-en.html>

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization, NACI, is an external advisory body that provides independent, expert advice to PHAC on the optimal use of authorized vaccines in Canada. When making recommendations, NACI considers the benefits and potential risks of a vaccine and any unknowns at the time. NACI has made recommendations for the use of COVID-19 vaccine in pregnant and lactating women based on the totality of evidence available across all authorized COVID-19 vaccines. Considerations specific for pregnant and/or lactating women are included in the Canadian Immunization Guide COVID-19 chapter, which is based on the NACI recommendations. Links to the product monographs for authorized XBB.1.5 vaccines are included in the latest advice from NACI.

With regard to part (f), Health Canada publishes the product monographs on its website <https://covid-vaccine.canada.ca/> in order to inform the public, health care professionals and the research community.

With regard to part (h), Health Canada has not approved any safety claims with regard to pregnant and lactating women.

Question No. 2167—Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:

With regard to the Disability Tax Credit, from 2020 to present, broken down by province and territory: (a) what is the average income for persons who receive the Disability Tax Credit (i) before tax, (ii) after tax; (b) what is the median income for persons who receive the Disability Tax Credit (i) before tax, (ii) after tax?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the above-noted question, what follows is the response from the Canada Revenue Agency, CRA,

for the period of January 1, 2020, to December 13, 2023, the date of the question.

With regard to parts (a) and (b), while the question requests data based on those in receipt of the disability tax credit, DTC, namely certificate holders, the CRA's DTC income data is structured based on claimants.

The one-to-one relationship between claimants and certificate holders is difficult to ascertain, with the possibility of more than one individual being a claimant on the same certificate. For this reason, CRA is unable to provide the income breakdowns of certificate holders, the beneficiaries, and is not in a position to respond in the manner requested.

The CRA has publicly released detailed statistics on the DTC featuring data on the number of people claiming the DTC, amounts claimed and applications accepted and rejected. This information is available at the following website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/programs/about-canada-revenue-agency-cra/income-statistics-gst-hst-statistics/disability-tax-credit-statistics.html>.

This includes data on the number of DTC claimants benefiting through a tax reduction, broken down by net income range. For the most recent such data, please see <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/cra-arc/prog-policy/stats/dtc-stats/dtc-tbl14-2021-e.pdf>

Question No. 2168—Mr. Dave Epp:

With regard to the Interim Order Respecting the Importation, Sale and Advertising of Drugs for Use in Relation to COVID-19 (the Interim Order) on September 16, 2020: (a) does the Minister of Health require an application by the manufacturer to approve a drug that is already approved for another indication; (b) what is the total number of inquiries received by Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada about Ivermectin for the prophylaxis and treatment of COVID-19; (c) how many inquiries have been made to Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada about Ivermectin for the prophylaxis and treatment of COVID-19, broken down by (i) the general public (ii) healthcare clinicians, (iii) researchers, (iv) provincial and territorial health authorities, (v) hospitals, (vi) long-term care facilities, (vii) healthcare practitioners' regulatory governing bodies, (viii) Members of provincial, territorial and federal Parliament (ix) organizations; and (d) what is the number of signatures on any petitions related to Ivermectin?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, yes, the Minister of Health requires a manufacturer to submit an application for approval of a new indication for a drug that is already approved for a different indication. However, health care practitioners may choose to prescribe a drug outside of its approved indication, also called off-label use. Off-label use falls under the "practice of medicine" and is regulated at the provincial and territorial level.

Regarding parts (b) and (c), Health Canada's bureau of gastroenterology, infection and viral diseases, which is part of the pharmaceutical drugs directorate, received 17 inquiries in its inquiries mailbox related to the use of ivermectin for the prophylaxis and treatment of COVID-19. All inquiries received were from the general public.

In general, inquiries made to Health Canada, or HC, and the Public Health Agency of Canada, or PHAC, about ivermectin for the prophylaxis and treatment of COVID-19 are not systematically tracked in a centralized database. HC and PHAC concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question would require a manual collection of information that is not possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

However, ministerial correspondence is tracked centrally. Based on the question, 123 pieces of ministerial correspondence were identified and are broken down as follows: 115 pieces from the general public; four from health care professionals; one from a member of provincial, territorial or federal Parliament; and three from organizations.

Regarding part (d), Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada do not track this information.

Question No. 2170—Ms. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay:

With regard to the government's supply and confidence agreement with the NDP and the associated universal, single payer pharmacare program: what are the government's projected costs to implement this program for 2024 and each of the following five years, broken down by year?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in budget 2022, the Government of Canada committed to continue its ongoing work towards a universal national pharmacare program. This will include tabling a Canada pharmacare bill, and then tasking the Canadian drug agency to develop a national formulary of essential medicines and bulk purchasing plan.

The nature of the bill is still under discussion, and we are not able to confirm either any specific approach to national pharmacare or any potential future investments at this time.

That said, the Government of Canada has made important investments to date to support the implementation of national pharmacare. The government announced its intention to move forward, in partnership with provinces, territories, and other partners and stakeholders, on foundational elements of national pharmacare, including the following.

First is the creation of the Canadian drug agency, or CDA, supported by \$89.5 million over five years, in addition to the existing federal funding of \$34.2 million annually to support the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health. The CDA will provide the dedicated leadership and coordination needed to make Canada's drug system more sustainable and better prepared for the future, helping Canadians achieve better health outcomes.

Second is the launch of the first-ever national strategy for drugs for rare diseases, supported by investments of up to \$1.5 billion over three years. This first phase aims to increase access to and affordability of effective drugs for rare diseases, which will contribute to improving the health of patients across Canada.

Third are enhancements to Prince Edward Island's public drug programs, supported by \$35 million to provide its residents with more affordable access to prescription drugs and to inform next steps on national universal pharmacare.

Question No. 2172—Mr. Richard Cannings:

Routine Proceedings

With regard to any polling data obtained by the Privy Council Office concerning policies affecting small and medium-sized businesses, since January 1, 2023: what are the details of all polling conducted, including (i) who conducted the poll, (ii) the start and end dates of when the poll was conducted, (iii) the number of participants, (iv) the questions asked, (v) the results of the poll, (vi) the value of the contract related to the poll?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Special Advisor for Water, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since January 1, 2023, the Privy Council Office has obtained no polling data concerning policies affecting small and medium-sized businesses.

Question No. 2174—Mr. Don Davies:

With regard to diabetes and analysis done by Health Canada or relevant government departments: (a) does the government have an estimate of the total out-of-pocket costs that people in Canada have to pay on an annual basis if they do not have coverage for (i) prescription diabetes medication, (ii) insulin pumps, continuous glucose monitors and other diabetes control supplies, through public or private insurance?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, diabetes is a complex disease with many different treatments, including insulin, metformin and dozens of other medications, which are sometimes used together, to manage blood sugar levels. In addition, diabetics use a range of medical devices, such as syringes and insulin pumps, as well as test strips, continuous glucose monitors and other related supplies to manage their condition.

In general, there are limitations for estimating out-of-pocket costs for people with no public or private insurance. It can be difficult to make generalizations about individual costs as there are considerable variances in dose, frequency, type of medication or supplies and prices, such as in the case of generic or brand name drugs. Some diabetes medications may be used to treat other conditions, and data on the condition for which medication was prescribed is generally not available. Determining the costs for diabetes supplies is especially challenging, as this data is not routinely collected.

Routine Proceedings

While publicly available data on the cost of prescription medications and supplies is limited, Health Canada has licensed access to some data on drug spending in Canada through IQVIA Solutions Canada Inc., which collects data on dispensed prescriptions at retail pharmacies. In 2022, IQVIA data suggests that the combined public, private and out-of-pocket spending on prescription diabetes medications was approximately \$4.1 billion. As a disclaimer, the statements, findings, conclusions, views and opinions expressed in this report are based in part on data obtained under licence from IQVIA Solutions Canada Inc. concerning the information services of Compuscript, from January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022. All rights are reserved. The statements, findings, conclusions, views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of IQVIA Solutions Canada Inc. or any of its affiliated or subsidiary entities.

Diabetes Canada has done work to determine the potential annual out-of-pocket costs for people living with type 1 and type 2 diabetes under different scenarios. Its report suggests that out-of-pocket costs for Canadians living with type 1 diabetes can vary from a low of \$78 to a high of \$18,306 across the provinces. For type 2 diabetes, out-of-pocket costs can vary from a low of \$76 to a high of \$10,014. These cost estimates are not broken down with respect to which proportion is for prescription diabetes medication versus diabetes control supplies.

Question No. 2178—Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:

With regard to any polling data obtained by the Privy Council office concerning anti-scab legislation or replacement workers, since January 1, 2023: (a) what are the details of all polling conducted, including (i) who conducted the poll, (ii) the start and end dates of when the poll was conducted, (iii) the number of participants, (iv) the questions asked, (v) the results of the poll, (vi) the value of the contract related to the poll?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Special Advisor for Water, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since January 1, 2023, the Privy Council Office has obtained no polling data concerning anti-scab legislation or replacement workers.

Question No. 2179—Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:

With regard to any polling data obtained by the Privy Council Office concerning electoral reform, since January 1, 2023: (a) what are the details of all polling conducted, including (i) who conducted the poll, (ii) the start and end dates of when the poll was conducted, (iii) the number of participants, (iv) the questions asked, (v) the results of the poll, (vi) the value of the contract related to the poll?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Special Advisor for Water, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since January 1, 2023, the Privy Council Office has obtained no polling data concerning electoral reform.

Question No. 2183—Mrs. Carol Hughes:

With regard to the Wahpeton New School Project proposal, since January 2023: (a) what meetings and consultations have the Minister for Crown-Indigenous Relations and the Minister for Indigenous Services had regarding the need for a new community school; (b) what services has the department offered to help Wahpeton with funding, planning, and completion of a new community school; (c) what interim measures has the government provided to Wahpeton Dakota Nation to ensure students can continue in-class learning; (d) does the government intend to fund and complete a new community school in Wahpeton; (e) for what reasons has the government not proceeded with this project; and (f) by what date does the government expect construction to begin on a new community school?

Ms. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of

Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs has nothing to report on this issue.

With regard to part (a), Indigenous Services Canada, ISC, officials have been directly involved with Wahpeton Dakota Nation's project management team to support and assist the community in the preplanning, design and construction of a new school facility.

With regard to part (b), a new school for Wahpeton Dakota Nation is in the design stages. ISC is working with the community to ensure that the new school will meet the most current, recently updated standards in space allocation, building construction, education delivery, cultural and outdoor learning and proper learning environments to accommodate all students, including those with high needs.

With regard to part (c), portable classrooms were provided in an effort to remove students from the conditions that existed in the original building. Subsequent replacement of two of the original portable classrooms that were beyond repair is currently ongoing.

With regard to part (d), ISC is committed to successfully moving this project to tender and construction.

With regard to part (e), budgetary constraints, volatility in the construction market and a redesign due to changes in the school space accommodation standards have contributed to the delay in construction. Most recently, changes in the school space accommodation standards resulted in beneficial eligibility for the community to increase space allocations beyond the original design. The positive impact of the redesign provides long-term improvements to the educational spaces.

With regard to part (f), the new school may proceed to tendering and construction upon completion of planning and preconstruction project phases. The project management team estimates the redesign, with refined enrollment projections and additional space allocation through the updated school space accommodation standards, will be complete and ready for tender in November 2024.

Question No. 2184—Ms. Michelle Rempel Garner:

With regard to the government's agreement with Stellantis-LG Energy Solutions (LGES) related to electric vehicle battery production: (a) were any consultants or external advisors used by the government related to the deal or the negotiations, and, if so, what are the details of each, including (i) who, (ii) the amount of the contract, if applicable, (iii) the description of goods or services provided, (iv) the reason that the consultant or advisor was chosen; and (b) were any bonuses or performance awards awarded to any individuals for their work on the agreement, and, if so, (i) how many people received such bonuses or performance awards, (ii) what was the total amount paid out in such bonuses or performance awards?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to part (a) of the question, the government did not use any consultants or external advisors to assist with negotiations or the drafting of the contribution agreements with the Stellantis-LG Energy Solutions joint venture, NextStar.

Routine Proceedings

With respect to part (b) of the question, no bonuses or performance awards were provided to any individuals exclusively for their work on the contribution agreements with NextStar. All executives at Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, including those who would have worked on the NextStar project, are evaluated annually for performance pay in accordance with the Treasury Board's "Directive on Terms and Conditions of Employment for Executives". The amount of performance pay, including at-risk and bonus pay, depends on the extent to which results were achieved, further to the Treasury Board's "Directive on Performance and Talent Management for Executives", as well as how the key leadership competencies and values and ethics were demonstrated.

Question No. 2192—Mr. Matthew Green:

With regard to audits done by the Canada Revenue Agency, since 2015 and broken down by year, number of audits and size of audit: how many audits were either paused or cancelled following contact from an individual representing a company worth over \$1 million annually?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the above-noted question, what follows is the response from the Canada Revenue Agency, CRA, for the time period of January 1, 2015, to December 13, 2023, the date of the question.

The CRA takes its responsibility seriously when administering the Income Tax Act and the Excise Tax Act and does so by acting with integrity, in accordance with legislation, policy and audit guidelines.

Canadian taxpayers and registrants have the right to have an authorized representative interact with the CRA on their behalf. Communicating with the CRA does not influence the CRA's processes. Regardless of the size or value of a company, the outcome of an audit is based on the application of legislation to the facts of each case.

The CRA does not systematically track taxpayer or representative contact and as a result is unable to provide the requested information.

Question No. 2193—Mr. Matthew Green:

With regard to any polling data obtained by the Privy Council Office concerning artificial intelligence, since January 1, 2023: (a) what are the details of all polling conducted, including (i) who conducted the poll, (ii) the start and end dates of when the poll was conducted, (iii) the number of participants, (iv) the questions asked, (v) the results of the poll, (vi) the value of the contract related to the poll?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Special Advisor for Water, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since January 1, 2023, the Privy Council Office has not obtained any polling data concerning artificial intelligence.

Question No. 2194—Ms. Laurel Collins:

With regard to any polling data obtained by the Privy Council Office concerning grocery affordability, since January 1, 2023: (a) what are the details of all polling conducted, including (i) who conducted the poll, (ii) the start and end dates of when the poll was conducted, (iii) the number of participants, (iv) the questions asked, (v) the results of the poll, (vi) the value of the contract related to the poll?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and Special Advisor for Water, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the information requested is publicly available via Library and Archives Canada and can be found at the following link: <https://>

epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/pwgsc-tpsgc/por-ef/privy_council/index.html.

Question No. 2201—Ms. Jenny Kwan:

With regard to the opening of a First Home Savings Account (FHSA): (a) how many licensed FHSA issuers have been approved by the government to date; (b) how many FHSAs have been opened to date; (c) are individuals who own residential property or properties that are not their principal residence considered a first-time home buyer for the purpose of opening an FHSA; and (d) do the individuals in (c) qualify to open an FHSA, and, if so, how many have opened an FHSA?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the above-noted question, what follows is the response from the Canada Revenue Agency, CRA, as of December 13, 2023, the date of the question.

With regard to part (a), the first home savings account, FHSA, legislation does not require the CRA to license or approve financial institutions that wish to become FHSA issuers. They must meet the eligibility requirements found in the definition of qualifying arrangement under subsection 146.6(1) of the Income Tax Act. Part of those requirements involves submitting a specimen plan containing required documentation that conforms to the requirement of the act for review and approval by the CRA. To date, 29 unique FHSA issuers submitted one or more specimen plans that have been approved by the CRA.

With regard to part (b), the CRA will be unable to provide information about the number of FHSAs that have been opened to date until all FHSA annual information returns have been processed. Financial institutions will only start filing these returns after December 31, 2023. The returns are due by the end of February 2024.

With regard to part (c), for the purposes of opening an FHSA, a first-time homebuyer is an individual who did not, at any time in the current calendar year before the account is opened or at any time in the preceding four calendar years, live in a qualifying home or what would be a qualifying home if located in Canada as their principal place of residence that either they owned or jointly owned, or that their spouse or common-law partner at the time the account is opened owned or jointly owned.

An individual who owns residential property or properties that are not their principal residence at any time in the current calendar year before the account is opened or at any time in the preceding four calendar years would be considered a first-time homebuyer for the purposes of opening an FHSA.

With regard to part (d), to open an FHSA, an individual must meet all of the eligibility criteria as outlined on the CRA website entitled "Opening your FHSAs": <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/topics/first-home-savings-account/opening-your-fhsas.html#h-1>. An individual needs to meet all of the above conditions to open an FHSA. If individuals do not meet all of the conditions above, they are not a qualifying individual and cannot open an FHSA.

Routine Proceedings

In the context of the administration of the FHSA program specifically, information about individuals who own residential property or properties that are not their principal residence will not be collected by the CRA.

* * *

● (1635)

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, furthermore, if a revised response to Question No. 1888, originally tabled on December 11 and 12, 2023, and the government's responses to Questions Nos. 1943, 1944, 1946 to 1949, 1951, 1952, 1956, 1961 to 1970, 1973, 1975, 1977 to 1982, 1985 to 1987, 1990, 1991, 1996, 1997, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2010, 2012 to 2015, 2019, 2022 to 2026, 2029, 2030, 2032 to 2035, 2039, 2042 to 2045, 2047 to 2053, 2055, 2056, 2061, 2063 to 2065, 2068 to 2072, 2074 to 2078, 2081 to 2089, 2093, 2095, 2096, 2099 to 2104, 2107 to 2111, 2113, 2114, 2116, 2117, 2120, 2121, 2123 to 2128, 2131, 2132, 2134, 2135, 2137, 2138, 2140, 2147, 2148, 2151, 2152, 2155 to 2157, 2159 to 2161, 2164 to 2166, 2169, 2171, 2173, 2175 to 2177, 2180 to 2182, 2185 to 2191 and 2195 to 2200 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled in an electronic format immediately.

[Text]

Question No. 1888—**Ms. Rachel Blaney:**

With regard to sexual misconduct complaints within the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) for calendar years 2022 and 2023: (a) what is the current total number of complaints received by the (i) chain of command, (ii) Military Police, (iii) Military Police Complaints Commission; (b) of the complaints received in (a), what specific administrative actions were taken, including the (i) initial counselling, (ii) recorded warning, (iii) counselling and probation, (iv) release from the CAF; (c) how many complaints are before a military tribunal; (d) broken down by province or territory, what is the total number of cases that have been transferred to (i) the RCMP, (ii) provincial police forces, (iii) municipal police forces; (e) what is the total number of cases that have been declined or sent back to the military; and (f) of the cases in (d) and (e), what is the average number of days for the relevant jurisdiction to accept or reject the case?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1961—**Mr. Chris Warkentin:**

With regard to the replacement of the structure at Rideau Hall known as "the Barn": (a) what were the total expenditures related to the completion of the Barn; (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by the amount spent on (i) labour, (ii) materials, (iii) design, (iv) consultants, (v) other expenses, broken down by type; (c) what are the details of all contracts signed in relation to the project, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) vendor, (iii) amount, (iv) detailed description of what goods or services the vendor provided, including to which part of the construction or design they contributed, (v) manner in which the contract was awarded (sole-sourced, competitive bid); (d) what is the square footage of the new Barn, in total and broken down by each floor and section of the Barn; (e) what are the intended, as well as potential, uses of the Barn; (f) what are the Barn's amenities; (g) how much do each of the Barn's features and amenities cost, broken down by feature or amenity; (h) for each expenditure related to the Barn, who approved each expenditure; (i) what was the Barn's budget or projected cost when the design was approved in 2019; and (j) how much over budget was the Barn's final cost and what is the explanation for the overage?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1962—**Mr. Tom Kmiec:**

With regard to the processing times for applications submitted to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, as of October 30, 2023: (a) what are the process-

ing times for the temporary programs, broken down by month in 2023 for (i) study permits, (ii) work permits, (iii) temporary residents; and (b) what are the processing times for permanent residency programs, broken down by month in 2023 for (i) privately sponsored refugees, (ii) federal government assisted refugees, (iii) the live-in caregiver program, (iv) the caring for children program, (v) spouses and partners, (vi) children and other family class applicants, (vii) parents and grandparents?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1963—**Mr. Tom Kmiec:**

With regard to the First-Time Home Buyer Incentive (FTHBI) announced by the government in 2019, from September 1, 2019, to date: (a) how many applicants have applied for mortgages through the FTHBI program, broken down by province and municipality; (b) of those applicants, how many have been approved and accepted mortgages through the FTHBI program, broken down by province and municipality; (c) of those applicants in (b), how many approved applicants have been issued the incentive in the form of a shared equity mortgage; (d) what is the total value of incentives (shared equity mortgages) under the program that have been issued, in dollars; (e) for those applicants who have been issued mortgages through the FTHBI, what is the value of each of the mortgage loans; (f) for those applicants who have been issued mortgages through the FTHBI, what is the mean value of the mortgage loan; and (g) what is the total aggregate amount of money lent to home buyers through the FTHBI to date?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1964—**Mr. Arnold Viersen:**

With regard to meetings between the government and Trane Technologies or Brookfield Renewable Partners: (a) has the Prime Minister, any cabinet minister, or any ministerial staff had meetings with Trane Technologies or Brookfield Renewable Partners executives or employees, since November 4, 2015, and, if so, how many times; and (b) what are the details of all such meetings including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) names and titles of the attendees, (iii) purpose of the meeting, (iv) location, (v) type of meeting (in person, hybrid, virtual), (vi) agenda items, (vii) costs associated with the meeting, if known?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1965—**Mr. Arnold Viersen:**

With regard to the government's decision to deploy Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) equipment and personnel to the Indo-Pacific from March to October 2023: (a) how many CAF personnel were deployed; (b) what other CAF assets were deployed; (c) what is the estimated cost of the deployment; and (d) what is the percentage of time since October 21, 2019, that His Majesty's Canadian Ships spend patrolling Canadian waters compared to international waters, broken down by ship?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1966—**Mr. Scot Davidson:**

With regard to contracts provided by the government to Trane Technologies or Brookfield Renewable Partners since January 1, 2021, broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation, or other government entity: (a) what is the total amount spent on contracts; and (b) what are the details of all such contracts, including (i) the amount, (ii) the vendor, (iii) the date and duration, (iv) the description of goods or services provided, (v) the specific goals or objectives related to the contract, (vi) whether or not the goals or objectives were met, (vii) whether the contract was sole-sourced or awarded through a competitive bidding process?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1967—**Mr. Tom Kmiec:**

With regard to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's Express Entry program: how many construction or trades workers have been admitted through the program, broken down by stream, year, and each of the major and minor groups within category 7 of the National Occupational Classification codes (trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations), since 2016?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1968—Mr. Mike Morrice:**

With regard to formal consultations and engagements between the federal government and the provincial and territorial governments or long-term care industry organizations on the Safe Long Term Care Act: (a) what are the details of the discussions or meetings, including, for each, the (i) date and location, (ii) participants, (iii) subject matter discussed, (iv) outcome; (b) do any supporting documents related to these discussions or meetings exist, including, but not limited to, e-mails, briefing notes, memos and reports, and, if so, what are the details of such documents; (c) were any reports or briefs submitted to the federal government by the provincial or territorial governments or long-term care industry organizations, and, if so, what are the details of such documents; and (d) what is the government's projected timeline for tabling the legislation in Parliament?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1969—Mr. Yves Perron:

With regard to the Local Food Infrastructure Fund (LFIF): (a) how are organizations that have submitted an application that complies with the program told that their application will not be considered due to a lack of funds and that the evaluation criteria were changed during the program; (b) how is it that on the government website the LFIF program still shows the original criteria, causing other organizations to prepare applications that will not be considered; (c) how and on what criteria was the decision made to allocate resources to certain communities rather than to others; (d) how are funds allocated to the LFIF program distributed, broken down by municipality and by province or territory; (e) why does the government website still show the original criteria, even though organizations are being told by letter that their application will not even be assessed because the criteria have changed; (f) what is the total amount allocated to the program; and (g) are there any plans to replenish these funds so that applications submitted in good faith by organizations can be properly assessed, and, if so, when?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1970—Mr. Mario Simard:

With regard to the Canada Greener Homes Initiative administered by Natural Resources Canada: (a) for each of the two programs, the Canada Greener Homes Grant and the Canada Greener Homes Loan, what are the (i) eligibility criteria, (ii) total budget allocated for Canadians, broken down by province and territory, (iii) various amounts that can be allocated as grants or loans to install equipment or appliances based on the eligibility criteria; (b) for the Canada Greener Homes Loan program administered by the private Vancouver-based company Intellifi Corporation, what are the actual terms of the service contract entered into with this company, including (i) the tendering process that led to the selection of the company, (ii) the value of the contract and the amounts committed by Natural Resources Canada to the company, (iii) the duration of the contract and the date on which it ends, (iv) an exhaustive description of the company's responsibilities; and (c) given that Quebec residents submit their applications through the provincial program Rénoclimat, which then forwards them to Natural Resources Canada, and that since spring 2021, only 23% of the 48,000 applications forwarded by Quebec to Natural Resources Canada have been processed, and that Quebec applicants have complained about service efficiency and quality, including follow-up e-mails sent in English only, what resources are dedicated to processing these applications, such as the (i) entities involved in managing the applications, (ii) total number of employees able to process applications in English only, (iii) total number of employees able to process applications in French only, (iv) total number of employees able to process applications in both official languages, (v) total number of applications submitted in each of the two official languages, broken down by year since the program was implemented, (vi) minimum language skills required of employees responsible for processing applications in French, (vii) name and year of the computer operating system used to administer and manage applications eligible for the program, (viii) number of applications processed per quarter and the number of applications, (ix) average number of days it takes to obtain a response for applications in French and applications in English?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1973—Ms. Laurel Collins:

With regard to the commitment in the December 16, 2021, mandate letter for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to ban thermal coal exports from and through Canada as swiftly as possible, and no later than 2030: (a) what steps has the government taken to advance this commitment, including details and dates of consultations with (i) provinces and territories, (ii) stakeholders and the public; (b) for the years 2015 to 2022, broken down by year, how many tonnes of thermal coal have been exported (i) from, (ii) through, Canada; (c) for the years 2023 to 2030,

broken down by year, how many tonnes of thermal coal are projected to be exported (i) from, (ii) through, Canada; and (d) what are the associated greenhouse gas emissions for the thermal coal exports identified in (b) and (c)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1975—Mr. Bob Zimmer:

With regard to government support for the Inuvik Wind Project: (a) how much funding has been (i) allocated, (ii) delivered to date, to the project, by the government; (b) how much funding has been (i) allocated, (ii) delivered to date, by other sources, broken down by source (private sector, territorial government, etc.); (c) what is the government estimate on the total costs required to complete the project; and (d) what is the projected timeline for when the project will be completed and producing power?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1977—Mr. Ted Falk:

With regard to the government's requirement during the COVID-19 pandemic that civil servants provide proof of vaccination, broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation or other government entity: what were the total costs associated with implementing the vaccine requirement, broken down by type of cost, including any legal costs or expenses incurred as a result of legal activity (settlements, mediation agreements, etc.)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1978—Ms. Lianne Rood:

With regard to Farm Credit Canada's (FCC) Indigenous Agriculture and Food section: (a) how many employees or full-time equivalents (FTE) are currently assigned to the section; (b) is the section currently fully-staffed, and, if not, (i) when will it be fully-staffed, (ii) how many employees or FTEs will be assigned to the section once it is fully staffed; (c) what is the projected annual budget for the administration of the section for each of the next three years, in total, and broken down by type of projected expense; (d) broken down by each of the last five years, how many different Indigenous or First Nations (i) farmers, (ii) entrepreneurs (excluding farmers), (iii) economic development corporations, (iv) communities, have received financing from FCC; (e) what was the total amount of financing received in (d); and (f) what is the breakdown of (d) and (e) by province or territory and type of farm or business?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1979—Mr. Brad Vis:

With regard to the \$5 billion in funding through the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements to British Columbia, committed in the 2021 Fall Economic Statement, in response to extreme weather events: (a) how much of this commitment has been delivered to British Columbia to date, in total, and broken down by specific project funded; (b) when will the outstanding amount be delivered; and (c) what is required before the outstanding amount is provided to British Columbia?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1980—Mr. Brad Vis:

With regard to the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot Program: (a) how are communities chosen for the program; (b) which communities are participating in the program, broken down by province or territory; (c) for each community in (b), how many workers have participated in the program; (d) how does the government quantify the program's level of success; and (e) does the government have any evidence or statistics which demonstrate that the program has measurably reduced labour shortages, and, if so, what is it?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1981—Mrs. Shannon Stubbs:**

With regard to the government's promotion of heat pumps: (a) how many applications for funding through the Oil to Heat Pump Affordability Program have been received; (b) of the applications in (a), how many (i) were denied, (ii) were granted, (iii) are still awaiting a decision; (c) how many heat pumps have been installed through the granted applications in (b); (d) what is the breakdown of (a) through (c), by province or territory; (e) how many applications for funding for heat pumps have been received through the Canada Greener Homes Grant; (f) of the applications in (e), how many (i) were denied, (ii) were granted, (iii) are still awaiting a decision; (g) how many heat pumps have been installed through the granted applications in (f); and (h) what is the breakdown of (e) through (g), by province or territory?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1982—Mr. Adam Chambers:

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency and net worth assessments of individuals, broken down by year since 2015: (a) how many net worth assessments have been done; (b) of the net worth assessments in (a), how much additional taxes have been (i) assessed, (ii) recovered; (c) of the net worth assessments conducted, how many were based on leads from the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada or other government entities which focus on money laundering; and (d) of the net worth assessments in (c), how much additional taxes have been (i) assessed, (ii) recovered?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1985—Mr. Dan Mazier:

With regard to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission's Broadband Fund: (a) what are the details of all projects approved for mobile connectivity through the fund, including, for each, the (i) recipient, (ii) location, (iii) project description, (iv) number of households that will receive new broadband service, (v) number of households that will receive upgraded broadband service, (vi) amount of funding, (vii) project start and completion dates, (viii) date the project application was received, (ix) date the project was approved; and (b) what is the total amount of funding provided to projects, to date, under the program?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1986—Mr. Dan Mazier:

With regard to government funding to, and agreements, with Ducks Unlimited and Ducks Unlimited Canada since November 4, 2015, broken down by department or agency: (a) what are the details of all funding including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) recipient, (iv) project description or reason for funding, (v) program under which funding was provided; (b) was any of the funding in (a) for the purpose of acquiring land, and, if so, what are the details of those funding agreements and of the related lands, including, for each, the (i) location, (ii) size, (iii) land description; and (c) what are the details of all federal land acquired by Ducks Unlimited or Ducks Unlimited Canada, including, for each, the (i) date of acquisition, (ii) location, (iii) size of land, (iv) land description, (v) amount paid, (vi) summary of terms, (vii) government entity which previously owned the land?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1987—Mr. Colin Carrie:

With regard to direction or advice provided by the government to pathologists or provincial coroners' offices, since January 1, 2020: (a) has any direction or advice been given regarding the need to perform autopsies related to (i) post-vaccination deaths, (ii) vaccinated persons or children of a vaccinated mother who die of Sudden Adult Death Syndrome (SADS) and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, respectively, (iii) those vaccinated persons whose cause of death is considered "uncertain", "unknown" or "undetermined", (iv) those vaccinated healthy individuals who died suddenly and unexpectedly; (b) for each positive response in (a), what was the date and direction or advice provided; (c) for each negative response in (a), why was no direction or advice provided; (d) has the government provided specific immunohistochemistry (IHC) recommendations or other guidance to provincial coroners' offices to enable identification (via immunostaining) of the spike protein or the SARSCoV-2 nucleocapsid protein in organ tissues, and, if so, (i) how was this protocol developed, and by whom, (ii) what was the recommendation or guidance; (e) if the answer to (d) is negative, has Health Canada or any federal health agency or organization offered funding to develop said assays; (f) how has the government been differentiating between vaccine-related and vaccine-unrelated deaths; (g) has the government tracked autopsies of persons whose deaths have subsequently been considered as correlated with, or caused by the mRNA vaccines, and, if so, what

does the data from the autopsies show; (h) if the answer to (g) is negative, why has this data not been collected; (i) has the government recommended, advised, directed or guided pathologists with respect to staining for spike protein when performing histopathologic examinations of surgical and biopsy specimens from individuals who are alive, and, if so, what advice, direction or guidance was provided; and (j) if the answer to (i) is negative, why was this not done?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1990—Mr. Dan Muys:

With regard to government contracts signed with DALIAN Enterprises since November 4, 2015, broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation, or other government entity: (a) what are the details of all such contracts, including, for each, the (i) date signed, (ii) value, (iii) start and end date of the work, (iv) detailed description of the goods or services, (v) details on how the contract was awarded (sole-sourced, competitive bid), (vi) titles of officials who approved or signed off on the contract; and (b) for each contract in (a), what is the current status, including if any aspects of the contract remain open, or if the contract has been completed and settled?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1991—Mr. Terry Dowdall:

With regard to the \$150,000,000 write-off by the Public Health Agency of Canada listed in Volume III of the 2023 Public Accounts of Canada for an "unfulfilled contract by a vendor": (a) who was the vendor; (b) what part of the contract was unfulfilled; (c) what is the reason the vendor gave for not fulfilling the contract; (d) was the contract awarded through a sole-source or competitive bid process; and (e) does the vendor have any connections, or have its executives made any donations, known by the government, to the Liberal Party of Canada, or to any Liberal members of Parliament, and, if so, what are the details?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1996—Mr. Blake Desjarlais:

With regard to the Canada Student Financial Assistance Program, broken down by month since November 2015: (a) how many borrowers have defaulted on their student loans; (b) of the borrowers in (a), what was the number of borrowers holding debt (i) under \$10,000, (ii) between \$10,000 and \$20,000, (iii) between \$20,000 and \$30,000, (iv) between \$30,000 and \$40,000, (v) between \$40,000 and \$50,000, (vi) between \$50,000 and \$75,000, (vii) between \$75,000 and \$100,000, (viii) more than \$100,000; and (c) of the borrowers in (a), how many identified as (i) a person living with a disability, (ii) First Nations, Inuit, or Métis, (iii) living with dependents, (iv) women?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1997—Mr. Blake Desjarlais:

With regard to the repayment of Canada Student loans, broken down by month since November 2015: (a) how many borrowers applied for financial hardship provisions; (b) of the applications in (a), how many were (i) approved, (ii) not approved; (c) how many defaulted loans were transferred to the Canada Revenue Agency for the purpose recovery actions; and (d) of the recovery actions in (c), how many borrowers saw reductions to their (i) GST rebate, (ii) Canada Child Benefit, (iii) Canada Disability Benefit, (iv) climate action incentive payment, (v) COVID-19 benefits, or (vi) individual tax returns?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2000—Mr. Randy Hoback:

With regard to the government's projections related to hydrogen production in Canada: (a) what are the government's current projections for production for the year (i) 2025, (ii) 2030, (iii) 2035, (iv) 2050; and (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by (i) grey, (ii) blue, (iii) green, hydrogen?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2002—Mr. Michael Barrett:**

With regard to government contracts signed with GCstrategies since November 4, 2015, and broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation, or other government entity: (a) what are the details of all such contracts, including, for each, the (i) date signed, (ii) value, (iii) start and end date of the work, (iv) detailed description of the goods or services, (v) details on how the contract was awarded (sole-sourced, competitive bid), (vi) titles of officials who approved or signed off on the contract; and (b) for each contract in (a), what is the current status, including if any aspects of the contract remain open, or if the contract has been completed and settled?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2003—Mr. Eric Melillo:

With regard to bonuses paid out to government officials in the 2022-23 fiscal year, broken down by department or agency: (a) what was the total amount paid out in bonuses; and (b) how many and what percentage of officials (i) at or above, (ii) below, the executive (EX) level (or equivalent), received bonuses?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2006—Mr. Gerald Soroka:

With regard to the events attended in Toronto on September 22, 2023, by the Prime Minister with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, broken down by event: (a) how were the attendees chosen; (b) who vetted the attendees; (c) what process was used to vet the attendees; (d) how many people were in attendance; and (e) what were the costs associated for each event, broken down by item?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2009—Ms. Niki Ashton:

With regard to Indigenous Services Canada's monitoring of access to clean drinking water on reserve, broken down by province: (a) how many First Nations reserves do not have a community-based drinking water quality monitor; and (b) what percentage do not have a back-up or alternate?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2010—Ms. Niki Ashton:

With regard to the utilization of the Canadian small business tax rate by oil and gas companies: (a) how many oil and gas companies, broken down by their primary line of business, such as upstream exploration and production, midstream transportation and storage, downstream refining and distribution, and others, have claimed the small business tax rate, in each of the last five fiscal years; (b) what percentage does this represent of all oil and gas companies operating within the country; (c) what is the total amount of tax revenue received from oil and gas companies that claimed the small business tax rate, in each of the last five fiscal years; (d) how does the amount of oil and gas companies claiming the small business tax rate compare to agriculture and forestry, both in number and as a percentage of total companies in the respective sector; (e) are there any mechanisms or audits in place to ensure that larger oil and gas entities are not creating smaller subsidiaries primarily to benefit from the small business tax rate, and, if so, how many audits or investigations related to this issue in the oil and gas sector have been initiated in the past five fiscal years; and (f) broken down by province, where are the oil and gas companies claiming the small business tax rate primarily operating?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2012—Mr. Jeremy Patzer:

With regard to the ArriveCAN application: (a) how many employees were assigned to work on ArriveCAN, broken down by year and by executive level versus non-executive level; (b) broken down by each component in (a), how many and what percentage of those employees received bonuses; (c) what was the total amount paid in bonuses each year to employees that worked on ArriveCAN; and (d) what is the breakdown of (c) by executive level versus non-executive level?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2013—Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:

With regard to government information about housing: (a) how many non-primary residences are located within the greater area of (i) Edmonton, (ii) Vancouver, (iii) Calgary, (iv) Toronto, (v) Montréal; (b) of the residences in (a), how many are owned by (i) Canadian residents, (ii) non-residents; (c) what is the breakdown of (a) and (b) by vacant units versus occupied units; and (d) what is the breakdown of (a) by type of owner (foreign individual, domestic corporation, etc.)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2014—Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:

With regard to Nutrition North Canada (NNC), broken down by year since January 1, 2016: (a) what was the total amount of funding committed through the (i) NNC retail subsidy, (ii) harvesters support grant program; (b) what was the total amount of funding paid out through the (i) NNC retail subsidy, (ii) harvesters support grant program, for each year; (c) how much of the \$163.4 million committed in budget 2021 to expand NNC has been delivered to date; and (d) what is the itemized breakdown of how the money in (c) was spent?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2015—Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman:

With regard to the usage of the government's Hercules aircraft since January 1, 2016, excluding flights into war or conflict zones: what are the details of the legs of each flight which included the Prime Minister or other ministers as passengers, including, for each, 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. 2019—Mr. Eric Melillo:

With regard to the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario (FedNor), since August 12, 2021: what are the details of all contracts over \$1,000 awarded by FedNor, including, for each, the (i) vendor, (ii) vendor location, including the postal code, the municipality and the province, (iii) value, (iv) economic object code, (v) description of the goods and services, including the volume, if applicable (vi) date the contract was signed, (vii) start and end date?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2022—Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:

With regard to the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic: (a) has the government commissioned, contracted, or otherwise obtained the services of Dr. Mark Walport, the former Government Chief Scientific Adviser in the United Kingdom, to examine the Government of Canada's response to the COVID-19 pandemic; (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, (i) what are Dr. Walport's mandate and terms of reference, (ii) when did Dr. Walport begin his work, (iii) when will Dr. Walport issue an interim report, (iv) when will Dr. Walport issue a final report, (v) what is the value of the contract or other remuneration that Dr. Walport has received or will receive from the government for his work, (vi) why has the government not yet made any public announcement about obtaining Dr. Walport's services?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2023—Mr. Len Webber:

With regard to preparations made by the government for witnesses representing any department, agencies, or Crown corporation, including ministers, who appeared or were scheduled to appear before parliamentary committees during the current Parliament: (a) were any off-site meetings or retreats held for that purpose or where committee preparations occurred in any way; (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, what are the (i) dates, (ii) locations, (iii) list of attendees, (iv) scheduled date and subject of related committee meeting, (v) name of the committee, for each; (c) what were the expenditures related to each such meeting or retreat in total and broken down by item; (d) what are the details of any contracts signed in relation to such meetings, retreats, or preparations, including any contracts with consultants who were involved with the preparations in any way, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) vendor, (iii) amount, (iv) description of the goods or services, (v) location, if applicable, (vi) date and name of the related committee meeting or scheduled committee meeting?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2024—Mr. Kelly McCauley:**

With regard to the \$43,463,029 on page 133 of the Public Accounts of Canada 2023 Volume 3 related to the P.C. 2020-304, May 5, 2020, Certain Goods Remission Order: (a) what is the breakdown of the \$43,463,029 by the type of goods which had their duties, tariffs or import costs reduced; and (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by country where the goods originated?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2025—Mr. Kyle Seeback:

With regard to the \$26 million for defending the Canadian softwood lumber industry in both the 2023-24 and 2024-25 fiscal years, as laid out in budget 2023: what is the itemized breakdown of how this funding has been spent to date, and will be spent, including who has received or will be receiving the funding and how much each recipient has received or will be receiving?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2026—Mr. Fraser Tolmie:

With regard to meetings hosted or held by executives from Crown corporations which occurred at offsite locations, such as resorts or conference centres, since January 1, 2016, broken down by year: what are the details of each such meeting, including the (i) date, (ii) location, including the address, (iii) name of the venue, (iv) purpose of the meeting, (v) list of attendees, (vi) total expenditures relating to the meeting, (vii) itemized breakdown of the expenditures?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2029—Mr. Rick Perkins:

With regard to the Minister of Innovation, Science, and Industry's trip to Japan in November 2022: (a) what was the minister's detailed itinerary on the trip; and (b) what are the details of all meetings or tours attended by the minister during the trip, 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 and decisions made?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2030—Mr. Rick Perkins:

With regard to the Minister of Innovation, Science, and Industry's trip to the United Kingdom to attend the AI Safety Summit 2023: (a) what was the minister's detailed itinerary on the trip; and (b) what are the details of all meetings or tours attended by the minister during the trip, 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 and decisions made?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2032—Mrs. Tracy Gray:

With regard to expenditures related to the cabinet retreat which took place in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, from August 21 to 23, 2023, including expenses incurred by the Privy Council Office as well as by other departments or agencies, and including travel expenses incurred by ministers, ministerial staff, and others: (a) what are the total expenditures related to the retreat incurred to date; (b) what is the breakdown of the expenditures by type of expense (accommodation, hospitality, audio-visual, etc.); and (c) what are the details of all expenditures in excess of \$1,000, including, for each, the (i) amount, (ii) vendor, (iii) description of the goods or services provided; and (d) what are the details of all travel expenses incurred by ministers and their staff, broken down by individual, including, for each, (i) the title, (ii) the amount spent on airfare, (iii) the amount spent on other transportation, (iv) the amount spent on accommodation, (v) the hotel or venue name, (vi) the amount spent on meals or per diems, (vii) other expenses, broken down by type?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2033—Mr. Rob Moore:

With regard to departments and agencies lowering performance targets in order to claim that more targets are being met: (a) which targets have been lowered, or otherwise adjusted in a manner to make it easier to meet, since 2016; and (b) for each target in (a), (i) on what date was it adjusted, (ii) what was the previous target, (iii) what is the new target, (iv) what is the rationale for adjusting the target?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2034—Mr. Rob Moore:

With regard to podcasts sponsored by government departments or agencies, since January 1, 2016: what are the details of all such sponsorship agreements, including, for each, the (i) name of the podcast, (ii) subject matter, (iii) date the sponsorship began, (iv) date the sponsorship ended, if the agreement has concluded, (v) total amount paid to date, (vi) terms of the sponsorship, if the agreement is still in effect?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2035—Mr. Rob Moore:

With regard to podcasts run by government departments or agencies, since January 1, 2016: (a) what are the details of each such podcast, including the (i) name of the podcast, (ii) subject matter, (iii) date the podcast started, (iv) uploading schedule or how often new episodes are uploaded, (v) number of employees or full-time equivalents assigned to the podcast, (vi) expenditures to date related to the podcast, in total and broken down by type; and (b) what are the details of any contracts signed by the government related to the podcasts, including the (i) vendor, (ii) value, (iii) date, (iv) description of the goods or services provided?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2039—Mr. Stephen Ellis:

With regard to the figure in the Fall Economic Statement 2023 showing that 14,480 children in Nova Scotia have been helped by Canada Dental Benefit payments: (a) what is the breakdown of the ages of these children; (b) how many of the 14,480 children were eligible for Nova Scotia's Children's Oral Health Program for those age 14 and younger; (c) of the 14,480 children, how many received benefits (i) through both the federal and Nova Scotia benefits, (ii) only through the federal benefits, (iii) only through the Nova Scotia benefits; and (d) are parents of those under 14 eligible to receive benefits through both programs for the same procedure, and, if so, what is the priority for which benefits get used first?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2042—Ms. Michelle Rempel Garner:

With regard to the Decompression Program pilot project for front-line staff at Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada: (a) when did the program begin; (b) is it still a pilot project, or is it a permanent program; (c) what has been the overall cost of the program since its inception; (d) what are the yearly operating costs; (e) what does the curriculum consist of; (f) how many employees have participated in the decompression, in total and broken down by branch and level (EX, AS, etc.); (g) what is the breakdown of (f) by year, including 2023 to date; (h) what is the qualification criteria to participate in the program; (i) what is the qualification and application process; (j) how long is the decompression program; (k) are employees permitted to enter the program multiple times, and, if so, how often are they permitted to enter the program; and (l) is the pilot project being expanded to other departments or agencies, and, if so, what are the details of the expansion?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2043—Mrs. Laila Goodridge:

With regard to the government's Substance Use and Addictions Program and the funding of London InterCommunity Health Centre (LIHC) program: (a) what criteria has the government established to measure the success of the LIHC program, and are these success criteria being met; (b) how frequently does the government receive updates or reports from the LIHC regarding its performance and success in meeting the specified criteria; (c) what is the government's explanation for why the number of overdoses increased following the implementation of the program; (d) what is the government's explanation for why opioid-related deaths and hospitalizations are greater in the Middlesex—London area compared to the rest of Ontario; (e) is the government studying or assessing the diversion of drugs from the LIHC program; (f) what measures are being taken to prevent the diversion of drugs from the LIHC program; and (g) how is the government educating the public about the harms of diversion?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2044—Mrs. Anna Roberts:**

With regard to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP): (a) how many refugees have entered Canada, in total and broken down by refugee program, each year since 2016; (b) what were the total expenditures through the RAP each year since 2016; (c) what is the breakdown of (b) by year and refugee program; and (d) what is the breakdown of (b) and (c) by type of spending or allowance?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2045—Mr. Doug Shipley:

With regard to Correctional Service Canada (CSC), in total and broken down by year since 2016: (a) how many times has CSC overridden an inmate's security level in relation to the security level cut-off scores in the Custody Rating Scale; (b) of the instances in (a), how many times was the level of custody overridden to be (i) lower, (ii) higher, than cut-off scores; (c) what is the breakdown of (a) by security level overridden from and to (minimum security to maximum security, maximum security to medium security, etc.); and (d) of the inmates who were classified as (i) dangerous offenders, (ii) high-profile offenders, (iii) multiple murderers, how many had their security level overridden to a lower classification?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2047—Mr. Kelly McCauley:

With regard to the approximately \$150 million and other contracts paid by the government to SNC-Lavalin for field hospitals: (a) what are the details of each time field hospitals have been used to date, including, for each, the (i) dates the hospitals were used, (ii) location, (iii) number of patients seen, (iv) types of services offered in the field hospitals; (b) has any of the equipment or supplies for the field hospital expired or needed to be replaced, and, if so, what are the details, including, for each, (i) the type of equipment or supplies, (ii) the date of expiration, (iii) whether the item was replaced, (iv) the date of the replacement, if applicable, (v) the replacement cost; (c) what is the current status and location of the field hospitals; and (d) what are the details of all contracts signed to date, other than the \$150 million contract with SNC-Lavalin related to the hospitals, including any contracts to replace expired supplies equipment, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) vendor, (iii) value, (iv) description of the goods or services, (v) manner in which the contract was awarded (sole-sourced, competitive bid)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2048—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to funding provided by the government to the United Nations and other international organizations for the purpose of fighting climate change since January 1, 2016, and broken down by year: (a) what was the total amount spent; (b) what are the details of each funding agreement, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) recipient, (iii) purpose of the funding, (iv) amount of the funding; and (c) for each funding agreement in (b), (i) what has the government done to ensure that the money was spent appropriately, (ii) has an audit been conducted, and, if so, what were the findings?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2049—Mr. Jean-Denis Garon:

With regard to recreational boating schools in Quebec accredited under Transport Canada's TP-15136 standard: how many schools are currently accredited in Quebec, what are the names of these schools and in what municipalities are they located?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2050—Mr. Sameer Zuberi:

With regard to the purchase of zero-emission vehicles by the government, since January 1, 2016, broken down by year, and by department, agency, Crown corporation, or any other government entity: (a) how many zero-emission vehicles have been purchased in total, broken down by make and model; (b) what was the total cost of purchasing the vehicles; (c) what was the average cost per vehicle, overall and broken down by make and model; (d) of the vehicles in (a), how many are (i) still in service, (ii) no longer in service; (e) of the vehicles that are no longer in service, how many have been sold; and (f) of the vehicles sold, what was the average sale price, overall, and broken down by make and model?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2051—Ms. Rachel Blaney:

With regard to Veterans Affairs Canada: what was the amount and percentage of all lapsed spending in the department, broken down by fiscal year since 2012-13 to present?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2052—Mr. Matt Jeneroux:

With regard to Health Canada's (HC) July 18, 2023, approval of Zonnic flavoured nicotine pouches: (a) did the Minister of Health or anyone in the minister's office sign-off on the product's approval, and, if not, what was the highest level official at HC who signed-off on the product's approval; (b) what are the details of all memorandums or briefing notes sent or received since January 1, 2023, which mention the product or the application, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) sender, (iii) recipient, (iv) type of document, (v) title, (vi) file number; and (c) does the Minister of Health or the minister's office receive lists of products which HC is about to approve, and, if so, on what date were they received?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2053—Mr. Tony Baldinelli:

With regard to expenditures on accommodations by the government, broken down by department or agency, and by year since January 1, 2016: (a) what were the total expenditures on (i) Airbnb, (ii) Vrbo, rentals; and (b) how many different purchases or rentals do the amounts in (a) represent?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2055—Mr. Brad Redekopp:

With regard to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and media reports that medical doctors have been denied permanent residency due to factors including their age and marital status: (a) since January 1, 2016, and broken down by year, how many medical doctors' applications for permanent residency have been denied; and (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by the (i) reason their application was denied, (ii) country of origin, (iii) age range, (iv) marital status?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2056—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to the awarding of the \$8.9 million ArriveCan sole-sourced contract to GC Strategies: who (i) signed, (ii) authorized, the contract?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2061—Ms. Marilyn Gladu:

With regard to government spending for photographers or photography service contracts since January 1, 2020, broken down by department or agency: (a) what are the details of each contract including, for each, how much was spent; (b) what were the dates and durations of the contracts; (c) what was the initial and final value of the contracts; (d) what were the details of all events or occasions for each contract including (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) title of event or event description; and (e) who was the vendor?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2063—Mr. Tako Van Popta:

With regard to the government's response to reports that the BC Cancer Agency was refusing to provide life-saving cancer treatment and instead suggested that a patient receive medical assistance in dying (MAID): (a) what assurances, if any, does the government have to ensure that patients are given the opportunity to receive potentially life-saving treatment prior to being asked to consider MAID; (b) what specific remedies within the federal law, if any, are available to patients whose provincial cancer treatment agencies suggest MAID and refuse to offer life-saving treatment in a timely manner; (c) has Health Canada had any communications with the BC Cancer Agency or the British Columbia Minister of Health regarding what errors were made in this situation, and, if so, what are the details of those communications; and (d) what measures, if any, are in place to ensure that provincial cancer agencies do not use MAID as a mean to save money or as a reason to not provide treatment in a timely manner?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2064—Mr. Sameer Zuberi:**

With regard to Global Affairs Canada's funding to the West Bank and Gaza: (a) does the Representative Office of Canada to the Palestinian Authority receive a budget for spending on aid related projects, and, if so, how much is this budget in (i) 2023-24, (ii) 2024-25; (b) what oversight, if any, does Global Affairs Canada (GAC) in Ottawa exercise over the Representative Office of Canada to the Palestinian Authority in terms of (i) vetting grantees, (ii) approving projects, (iii) auditing projects; (c) how does GAC ensure that funds are not misappropriated by terrorist organizations, including Hamas and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine; (d) what are the details of Canada's "enhanced oversight policies" regarding international aid to the West Bank and Gaza; (e) what are the details of all grants Canada is currently providing to organizations in the West Bank and Gaza, including, for each, the (i) funding recipient organization, (ii) amount, (iii) purpose of the funding or the project description, (iv) local implementing partners; (f) is the government providing funding to World Vision for its work in Gaza via the Humanitarian Coalition, and, if so, how much funding is it providing; and (g) what action is being taken in response to intelligence reports detailing Hamas' use of Gaza hospitals for terror, including what kind of reviews GAC is taking to examine funding provided to humanitarian organizations that were active in Gaza hospitals?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2065—Mr. Michael Cooper:

With regard to the government's Challenger aircraft: what was the purpose, number of passengers, titles of non-military passengers, and costs associated with Challenger flights (i) CFC3062, which departed North Bay and arrived in Ottawa on December 4, 2023, (ii) CFC3062, which departed Trenton and arrived in North Bay on December 4, 2023, (iii) CFC3062, which departed Barrie-Orillia and arrived in Trenton on December 4, 2023, (iv) CHAL18, which departed Ottawa and arrived in Barrie-Orillia on December 4, 2023, (v) CFC3082, which departed somewhere in or near Haiti and arrived in Ottawa on December 2, 2023, (vi) CFC3082, which departed Georgetown and arrived somewhere in or near the Cayman Islands on December 2, 2023, (vii) CFC3082, which departed Ottawa and arrived in Georgetown on December 1, 2023?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2068—Ms. Heather McPherson:

With regard to Canada's military trade with Israel: (a) is Global Affairs Canada (GAC) aware of any evidence of use of Canadian military goods or technology, including components, by Israel in the current war; (b) has GAC conducted an internal review of previously authorized arms export and brokering permits to Israel since October 7, 2023, and, if so, (i) what branch or sector organized, (ii) what was the outcome of, the review, and if not, why not; (c) has GAC reviewed any applications for arms export and brokering permits to Israel since October 7, 2023; (d) has GAC issued any arms export permits to Israel since October 7, 2023; (e) has GAC reviewed its assessment on export permits to Israel in light of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the situation in the West Bank; (f) has GAC identified any serious violations of international humanitarian law or international human rights law since October 7, 2023; (g) in GAC's analysis, do the deaths of over 6,500 children and 4,000 women amount to serious violence against women and children; (h) has GAC reviewed its risk assessment of small arms exports to Israel given reports that the Israeli government has been arming extremist settlers in the West Bank, and given reports of Israeli soldiers participating alongside settlers in violent acts against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank; (i) how does GAC define "serious" when assessing risk of (i) a serious violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, (ii) serious acts of violence against women and children, under section 7 of the EIPA; (j) has GAC sought to mitigate the risk that Canadian arms exports to Israel could be used in serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and, if so, what were those mitigation measures; (k) have Canadian officials ever denied an arms export or brokering permit for the transfer of military goods to Israel, and if so, when and under what circumstances; (l) what assessments has GAC conducted with regard to Canada's obligations under the Arms Trade Treaty and violence in Israel and Palestine since October 7, 2023; (m) since 2015, have GAC officials conducted a review to determine the risk associated with Canada's arms exports to Israel, and if they have been used in serious violations of international humanitarian law or international human rights law in the occupied Palestinian territories (OPT), and, if so, what were the findings of this or these reviews; (n) are Israeli companies vetted for connection to serious violations of international humanitarian or human rights law in their bids for government contracts; (o) does Canada currently procure military goods or technology that is "battle-tested" in the OPT; (p) has Canada conducted an assessment of Elbit Systems for risk of complicity in breaches of international law in the occupied

Palestinian territories; (q) given Israel's arms trade relationship with Azerbaijan and their involvement in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, has GAC, since 2021, reviewed arms trade export and brokering permits given Israel's arms trade relationship with Azerbaijan and their involvement in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict; and (r) if the answer to (q) is affirmative, what branch or section handled the review, and what was the difference in risk evaluations between the export permits for Türkiye and export permits issued for Israel?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2069—Ms. Heather McPherson:

With regard to the government's policy towards the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ): (a) does the government continue to oppose the ICC's investigation into the situation in Palestine, and, if so, on what basis; (b) how many states does the government accept are parties to the ICC; (c) has the government communicated its opposition to the investigation into the situation in Palestine to the Prosecutor of the ICC, and, if so, when was the most recent time this occurred and has it happened since October 7, 2023; (d) does Canada work in conjunction or in collaboration with other states in its opposition to the ICC, and, if so, who are these states; (e) has the government of Israel communicated approval of the government's opposition to the ICC's investigation into the situation in Palestine; (f) has the Palestinian Authority communicated with the government regarding Canada's opposition to the ICC's investigation into the situation in Palestine; (g) does the government oppose an ICC investigation into alleged war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, committed by Hamas; (h) what is the government's position on the decision by the government of Belgium to pledge an additional €6 million to the ICC to financially support its investigation into the situation in Palestine; (i) what motivated Canada to submit its views opposing the ICJ's advisory proceedings on the legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in East Jerusalem; and (j) prior to submitting its opposition to the ICJ's advisory opinion, did government officials hold meetings with other states to coordinate efforts to oppose the case at the ICJ?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2070—Ms. Heather McPherson:

With regard to the government's policy towards international law and the situation in Israel and Palestine: (a) what is the government's position on the role that international criminal law plays in addressing alleged war crimes, crimes against humanity, and acts of genocide committed in the context of the war between Israel and Hamas; (b) with respect to the November 2023 United Nations General Assembly vote which reaffirmed the illegality of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights, what political and legal motivations led Canada to vote against the resolution; (c) does the government accept that Israeli settlements in Occupied Territories are illegal under international law; (d) does the government believe that, under international law, Gaza is a territory under occupation by Israel; (e) what is the government's position on and response to the proposal by Israeli government ministers and Knesset members to "voluntarily move" Gazans to other countries and that Israel can no longer put up with the "existence of an independent entity in Gaza";

Routine Proceedings

(f) what is the Canadian government's position on the principle of proportionality, as it relates to attacks in Gaza by the Israeli Defence Forces, (i) does the government believe that all of the attacks on Gaza since October 7, 2023, have been proportional, (ii) if not, which attacks have not been proportional or which attacks require further investigation; (g) does the government accept that the lawful right of states to self-defence must be proportional, and what is the government's position on the proportionality of self-defence under International Humanitarian Law; (h) what is the government's legal position with respect to both the blockade and siege of Gaza, and does it accept that the blockade is illegal; (i) does the government accept that it is obligated to prevent the commission of genocide under international law, and what obligations does the government accept in this regard; (j) does the government accept that it is under obligation to punish any persons responsible for the commission of genocide under international law; (k) does the government believe that the Responsibility to Protect doctrine is of relevance to the situation in Palestine, and does the government accept that it has a responsibility to protect civilians in Gaza, (i) if so, then how so, (ii) if not, why not; (l) what specific obligations does the government believe follow from Common Article 1 of the Genocide Convention which requires all High Contracting Parties, including Canada, "to ensure respect for the present Convention in all circumstances"; (m) should the opportunity arise, would the government be willing to exercise its universal jurisdiction powers, under the Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act, to prosecute, rather than deport, a person involved in the commission of genocide or war crimes in Israel or Palestine; and (n) does the government make any distinction between lawful and legitimate "unilateral actions" that are peaceful, non-violent and within the framework of international politics and diplomacy and "unilateral actions" that are illegal and war crimes (per the Rome Statute) under international law?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2071—Mr. John Nater:

With regard to Canadian ambassadors and consuls general assigned to place in the United States, broken down by each individual and by year from January 1, 2021 to date: (a) how many days were the ambassadors or consuls general at the location or area where they are stationed (e.g.: how many days was the Consul General of Canada in New York physically in the New York area); and (b) how many round trips did each ambassador or consul general make between Canada and their assigned post in the United States?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2072—Mr. Peter Julian:

With regard to federal health care investments, since October 1, 2021: a) how many personal support workers have been trained as a result of federal funding, broken down by province or territory and by year; and b) how many family doctors, nurse practitioners and nurses have been hired as a result of federal funding, broken down by province or territory and by year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2074—Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:

With regard to expenditures made by departments, agencies and other government entities under Treasury Board Object Code 3259 (Miscellaneous expenditures not Elsewhere Classified), since January 1, 2020, and broken down by year: (a) what were the total expenditures; and (b) what are the details of each expenditure made under the code, including the (i) date, (ii) vendor, (iii) amount, (iv) description of the goods or services, including the volume, if applicable?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2075—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to Canadian Forces Housing Agency (CFHA) rental properties at Canadian Forces Base Petawawa: (a) what is the electrical capacity of each unit; (b) what is the type and age of the heating and cooling units at each property; (c) is internet included with the rental of properties, and, if so, what is the internet speed; (d) how many maintenance or repair requests has the CFHA received, broken down by year from 2017 to date; (e) what is the breakdown of (d) by type of issue (mold, water leak, broken heating unit, etc.); (f) what is the current age of the roof of each property; (g) what renovations or upgrades have been completed since 2017, including the date and the unit to which each renovation was done; (h) what is the total number of units, broken down by the type of unit; (i) are any of the units in (h) uninhabitable, and, if so, which ones and why; and (j) what is the current retention factor value of each unit?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2076—Mr. Andrew Scheer:

With regard to expenditures on public relations, media training, or similar types of services for ministers or their offices, including the Office of the Prime Minister, since January 1, 2022: what are the details of each such expenditure, including the (i) date of the contract, (ii) amount, (iii) vendor, (iv) individual providing the training, (v) summary of the services provided, including the type of training, (vi) person who received the training, (vii) date of the training?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2077—Mr. Andrew Scheer:

With regard to the late-payment charges incurred by the government related to any type of telecommunications or cable services (telephone, cellular, data, cable, etc.), since June 1, 2020, in total and broken down by year, including 2023 to date, and by department, agency, Crown corporation, or other government entity: what is the total amount of late-payment charges and interest charges incurred for services provided by (i) Rogers, (ii) Bell, (iii) Telus, (iv) other telecommunications providers, broken down by provider?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2078—Mr. Andrew Scheer:

With regard to renovation, redesign and refurbishing of ministers' or deputy ministers' offices since January 1, 2020: (a) what is the total cost of any spending on renovating, redesigning, and refurbishing for each ministerial office, broken down by (i) total cost, (ii) moving services, (iii) renovating services, (iv) painting, (v) flooring, (vi) furniture, (vii) appliances, (viii) art installation, (ix) all other expenditures; and (b) what is the total cost of any spending on renovating, redesigning, and refurbishing for each deputy minister's office, broken down by (i) total cost, (ii) moving services, (iii) renovating services, (iv) painting, (v) flooring, (vi) furniture, (vii) appliances, (viii) art installation, (ix) all other expenditures?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2081—Mr. Pat Kelly:

With regard to recruitment and retention in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) for each year between December 1, 2015 and December 1, 2023: (a) how many personnel were recruited to the CAF, including all branches; (b) of the recruits in (a), what was the (i) median, (ii) longest, (iii) shortest, time for processing the applications; (c) how many applicants withdrew their candidacies after (i) three, (ii) six, (iii) 12, (iv) 18, months; (d) how many personnel were released from the CAF; (e) of the released personnel in (d), how many participated in exit interviews; (f) of the personnel in (e), how many mentioned a primary reason for the release; and (g) of the reasons in (f), what proportion was answered as (i) pursuing other opportunities, (ii) compensation, (iii) affordability, (iv) access to healthcare, (v) access to child-care, (vi) spousal employment, (vii) housing, (viii) other?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2082—Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:

With regard to radio direction finding technology, broken down by Marine Communications and Traffic Services (MCTS) centre and fiscal year since 2015: (a) was the MCTS equipped with radio direction finding technology; (b) was the radio direction finding technology ever out of operation, and, if so, between which dates was the technology out of operation; (c) how many requests for maintenance and repair of radio direction finding equipment were made; (d) what are the details of each request in (c), including (i) the date of the request, (ii) the MCTS centre, (iii) the estimated cost of the request, (iv) whether the request was fulfilled or denied; (e) how many requests for installation of radio direction finding equipment were made; and (f) what are the details of each request in (e), including (i) the date of the request, (ii) the MCTS centre, (iii) the estimated cost of the request, (iv) whether the request was fulfilled or denied?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2083—Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:**

With regard to emergencies and navigational hazards reported to the Canadian Coast Guard, broken down by Marine Communications and Traffic Services (MCTS) centre and fiscal year since 2015: (a) what is the total number of reports received by each MCTS; (b) of the reports in (a), how many required the use of radio direction finding technology; (c) were any audits, reports, or assessments done on how radio direction finding technology could improve emergency response outcomes; and (d) what are the details of all audits, reports, or assessments done in (c), including the (i) date of the document, (ii) title of the document, (iii) recommendations or conclusions arrived at?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2084—Mr. Andrew Scheer:

With regard to expenditures on Non-public servant travel - Key stakeholders (Treasury Board code 0262 or similar), broken down by department or agency and by year since 2019: (a) what were the total expenditures; (b) how many trips are represented by the amounts in (a); (c) of the amounts in (a), how much was spent on international travel; and (d) what are the details of each international trip for non-public servant travel-key stakeholders, including, for each, the (i) dates, (ii) origin, (iii) destination, (iv) total amount spent, (v) breakdown of expenditures, (vi) purpose of the trip, (vii) stakeholder name and title, (viii) business or organization represented by the stakeholder?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2085—Mr. Michael Kram:

With regard to the Regulatory Framework for an Oil and Gas Sector Greenhouse Gas Emissions Cap: (a) has any department, agency, Crown corporation or entity conducted a cost-benefit analysis, costing or study, including, but not limited to, job loss, investment in the oil and gas industry in Canada, oil and natural gas production in Canada, or devaluing retirement funds; and (b) what supporting documents exist regarding this analysis, including, but not limited to, emails, texts, briefing notes, memos and reports, and what are the details of such documents?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2086—Mr. Michael Kram:

With regard to the selection of locations for regional offices at the Canada Water Agency: (a) what are the details of all discussions and meetings regarding the (i) review, (ii) selection, (iii) rejection, of each proposed location of a regional office; (b) what departments, agencies, entities, offices and individuals, including those from First Nations, provincial and territorial governments, entities and NGOs, were involved in the (i) review, (ii) selection, (iii) rejection, of each proposed location; and (c) what supporting documents exist regarding this process, including, but not limited to, emails, texts, briefing notes, memos and reports, and what are the details of such documents?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2087—Mr. Gord Johns:

With regard to the electoral district of Courtenay—Alberni, since fiscal year 2005-06: what are all the federal infrastructure investments (including direct transfers to municipalities, regional district associations or First Nations, national parks, highways, etc.), broken down by fiscal year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2088—Mr. Gord Johns:

With regard to the communities which comprise the federal electoral district of Courtenay—Alberni, between the 2005-06 and current year fiscal year: (a) what are the federal infrastructure investments, including direct transfers to the municipalities and First Nations, for the communities of (i) Tofino, (ii) Ucluelet, (iii) Port Alberni, (iv) Parksville, (v) Qualicum Beach, (vi) Cumberland, (vii) Courtenay, (viii) Deep Bay, (ix) Dashwood, (x) Royston, (xi) French Creek, (xii) Errington, (xiii) Coombs, (xiv) Nanoose Bay, (xv) Cherry Creek, (xvi) China Creek, (xvii) Bamfield, (xviii) Beaver Creek, (xix) Beaufort Range, (xx) Millstream, (xxi) Mt. Washington Ski Resort, broken down by fiscal year, total expenditure, and project; (b) what are the federal infrastructure investments transferred to the regional districts of (i) Comox Valley Regional District, (ii) Nanaimo Regional District, (iii) Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, (iv) Powell River Regional District, broken down by fiscal year, total expenditure, and project; (c) what are the federal infrastructure investments transferred to the Island Trusts of (i) Hornby Island, (ii) Denman Island, (iii) Lasqueti Island, broken down by fiscal year, and total expenditure; (d) what are the federal infrastructure investments transferred to (i) the Ahousaht First Na-

tion, (ii) Hesquiaht First Nation, (iii) Huu-ay-aht First Nation, (iv) Hupacasath First Nation, (v) Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations, (vi) Toquaht First Nation, (vii) Tseshaht First Nation, (viii) Uchucklesaht First Nation, (ix) Ucluelet First Nation, (x) K'omoks First Nation, broken down by fiscal year, total expenditure, and projects; (e) what is the infrastructure funding of Pacific Rim National Park, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) total expenditure, (iii) project; (f) what is the funding of highways, including, but not limited to, (i) Highway 4, (ii) Highway 19, (iii) Highway 19a, (iv) Bamfield Road, broken down by fiscal year, total expenditure, and projects; and (g) what are any other infrastructure investments provided through the funding of national parks, highways, Build Canada, Infrastructure Canada, Gas Tax, Small Crafts and Harbours, BC Ferries, etc., broken down by (i) fiscal year (ii) total expenditure, (iii) project?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2089—Ms. Rachel Blaney:

With regard to the Veteran and Family Well-Being Fund, broken down by fiscal year since 2015-16 and by province or territory: (a) what are the details of each funding recipient's projects, including (i) overview, (ii) project goals, (iii) project activities, (iv) project results; (b) how are the project details of (a) collected and verified by Veterans Affairs Canada; (c) what are the criteria by which organizations are selected to receive funding; and (d) of the organizations in (a), reflected as a number and a percentage, how many organizations have been denied funding in subsequent applications?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2093—Mr. Colin Carrie:

With regard to Health Canada's (HC) authorization of the Pfizer, Moderna, and AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines: (a) how much of the vaccine components (lipid nanoparticles, modified RNA) and its derivative spike protein do peoples' bodies make after their injection of Pfizer, Moderna or AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines, (i) do different people make different amounts, (ii) in what bodily organs, tissues or systems, including breast milk, is the spike protein, lipid nanoparticles and modified RNA found after an injection, (iii) is there a blood test to detect the spike protein, (iv) is there a blood test readily available to Canadians, particularly those who have been vaccine-injured or for those with symptoms of long COVID, (v) how long can spike protein be found in the body post-injection; (b) at the time of release of the mRNA products, were genotoxicity, reproductive and carcinogenicity analyses completed; (c) if the answer to (b) is affirmative, (i) who completed these studies, (ii) were studies conducted on females and males, (iii) how long were the sires, dams and offspring followed in the studies, (iv) what methods were used to assess potential harms, (v) what species of animals were used in the studies, (vi) do the animals express high or low affinity ACE2 receptor; and (d) if the answer to (b) is negative, has HC, the Public Health Agency of Canada, or the National Advisory Committee requested these studies from the manufacturers or from independent researchers, and, if not, when might these studies be (i) completed, (ii) released, and by whom?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2095—Mr. Warren Steinley:**

With regard to the Clean Fuel Regulations (CFR): (a) how many compliance credits have been issued through the CFR's credit creation process; (b) how many individual applications for credits through the process in (a) have been received; (c) of the applications in (a), how many (i) were granted, (ii) were rejected, (iii) are still awaiting a decision; (d) how many different firms have received credits through the CFR process; (e) what is the breakdown of the number of credits issued by each of the three categories that compliance credits can be created (undertaking projects that reduce the lifecycle carbon intensity of liquid fossil fuels, supplying low carbon fuels, supplying fuel or energy to advanced vehicle technology); (f) is there a clearly defined set of standards used internally for the assessment of compliance credit applications, and, if so, what is it; (g) are there projects that reduce the carbon intensity of the fossil fuel throughout its life cycle that are not eligible for credits, and, if so, what are such projects and why are they not eligible; (h) is there a formal appeal process from credit applicants whose applications were denied, and, if so, what is the process; (i) who is responsible for reviewing (i) applications for credit, (ii) appeals to credit decisions; and (j) do applicants whose application or appeal for credit has been denied receive the rationale or justification for the denial, and, if not, why not?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2096—Ms. Michelle Ferreri:

With regard to the National Advisory Council on Early Learning and Child Care: (a) what amount of remuneration is each member of the council paid; (b) what is the total amount spent on travel and hospitality by members of the council since the council's membership was announced in November 2022; (c) what is the breakdown of (b) by each member of the council; (d) what are the limits, if any, on the amount of travel and hospitality expenses that can be claimed by members of the council; (e) what are the dates, locations, and names of attendees of each meeting the council has had; (f) what is the council's annual budget; and (g) how much has been spent by the council to date, broken down by item and type of expenditure?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2099—Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:

With regard to Health Canada's interim policy on the importation and sale of infant formulas, human milk fortifiers and dietary products for the treatment of inborn errors of metabolism to mitigate shortages: (a) how many kilograms of infant formula did Canada import in (i) 2023, (ii) 2022, (iii) 2021, (iv) 2020, (v) 2019, (vi) 2018; (b) how many kilograms of infant formula are needed to "stabilize" the Canadian supply of regular formula; and (c) by what date does Health Canada project that the supply will stabilize?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2100—Mr. Michael Barrett:

With regard to foreign interference in Canadian elections and the report from the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security entitled, "Cyber threats to Canada's democratic process, 2023 update": (a) what are the state actors that are known to be utilizing artificial intelligence to disrupt municipal, provincial and federal elections; (b) what federal electoral ridings are most at risk of being targeted by identified foreign state actors; (c) for each riding in (b), what country or countries' state actors are at risk of being targeted by; (d) which political parties or entities are being targeted by identified foreign state actors; and (e) which demographic groups are being targeted by identified foreign state actors, broken down by which states are targeting which demographics?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2101—Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:

With regard to the funding commitments in budget 2023 related to combatting foreign election interference: (a) how much of the \$48.9 million committed to the RCMP to protect Canadians from harassment and intimidation, increase its investigative capacity, and more proactively engage with communities at greater risk of being targeted, has been transferred to the RCMP to date; (b) of the amount in (a), what is the breakdown of how the money has been spent, including the locations of where it has been spent; (c) how much of the \$13.5 million committed to Public Safety Canada to establish a National Counter-Foreign Intelligence Office has been transferred to date; (d) what is the breakdown of (c) by what the money has been used for; and (e) what is the projected timeline for when the National Counter-Foreign Intelligence Office will be fully operational?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2102—Mr. Scott Reid:

With regard to all lines of business for Afghans being delivered by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, such as programs, temporary public policies, ministerial instructions, pathways, or other measures, as of December 11, 2023: (a) which lines of business are accepting applications; (b) which lines of business are not accepting applications; (c) which lines of business are processing applications; (d) which lines of business are not processing applications; (e) since August 1, 2021, how many Afghans have been admitted to Canada in total, and broken down by line of business; (f) how many Afghans have been admitted to Canada under lines of business relating to extended family of former Language and Cultural Advisors in total, and broken down by line of business; (g) how many applications have been received through the Permanent Residence for extended family of former Language and Cultural advisors program; (h) how many applications have been approved through the Permanent residence for extended family of former Language and Cultural advisors program; (i) is the Permanent Residence for extended family of former Language and Cultural advisors program accepting applications and, if not, why not; (j) is the Permanent Residence for extended family of former Language and Cultural advisors program processing applications and, if not, why not; and (k) how many Afghans have applications on humanitarian grounds pending acceptance, processing, or decision?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2103—Mr. Scott Reid:

With regard to federal correctional institutions, since September 1, 2020: (a) which Red Seal apprenticeships are offered in federal correctional institutions; (b) how many inmates have been registered in Red Seal apprenticeships during their incarceration; (c) how many inmates have successfully completed Red Seal apprenticeships during their incarceration; (d) how many inmates have been released while registered in a Red Seal apprenticeship; (e) does Correctional Service Canada track, seek, or otherwise possess data on the completion or non-completion of Red Seal apprenticeships by inmates who were released while registered in a Red Seal apprenticeship; (f) of the inmates who have been registered in Red Seal apprenticeships during their incarceration, what is the breakdown by region, by institution, and by specific type of Red Seal apprenticeship; (g) of the inmates who have successfully completed Red Seal apprenticeships during their incarceration, what is the breakdown by region, by institution, and by specific type of Red Seal apprenticeship; (h) what non-Red Seal apprenticeships are offered in federal correctional institutions; (i) how many inmates have been registered in non-Red Seal apprenticeships during their incarceration; (j) how many inmates have successfully completed non-Red Seal apprenticeships during their incarceration; (k) how many inmates have been released while registered in a non-Red Seal apprenticeship; (l) of the inmates who have been registered in non-Red Seal apprenticeships during their incarceration, what is the breakdown by region, by institution, and by specific type of non-Red Seal apprenticeship; (m) of the inmates who have successfully completed non-Red Seal apprenticeships during their incarceration, what is the breakdown by region, by institution, and by specific type of non-Red Seal apprenticeship; (n) how many vocational training certificates have been issued through CORCAN's on-the-job training opportunities; and (o) what are the three most common vocational training certificates issued through CORCAN's on-the-job training opportunities, broken down by number, region, and institution?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2104—Mr. Randy Hoback:

With regard to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, since January 1, 2023: (a) how many bilateral meetings has the minister had with representatives of foreign nations in the Western Hemisphere, in total and broken down by country represented; and (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by type of meeting (in person, phone, Zoom, etc.)?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2107—Mr. Daniel Blaikie:**

With regard to the government's proposal in budget 2023 to reduce government spending by \$7 billion over four years: (a) what indicators did the government use to determine that \$7 billion was the necessary level of spending reduction while still serving Canadians effectively; (b) how did the government determine that \$7 billion in spending reductions could be made without impacting the direct benefits and services that Canadians rely on; (c) what is the total dollar value of expected spending reductions from the loss of (i) full-time equivalent, (ii) part-time equivalent, employees; and (d) what is the total dollar value of expected spending reductions on contracts with third-party management firms?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2108—Mr. Daniel Blaikie:

With regard to the government's proposal in the 2023 Fall Economic Statement to extend and expand the budget 2023 efforts to refocus government spending: (a) what indicators did the government use to determine an additional \$345.6 million in 2025-26 and \$691 million ongoing was the necessary level of spending reduction while still serving Canadians effectively; (b) how did the government determine that a reduction of \$345.6 million in 2025-26 and \$691 million ongoing could be made without impacting the direct benefits and services that Canadians rely on; (c) how did the government conclude that the amounts in (a) were needed in addition to the \$7 billion reduction in budget 2023; (d) what is the total dollar value of expected spending reductions from the loss of (i) full-time equivalent, (ii) part-time equivalent, employees; and (e) what is the total dollar value of expected spending reductions on contracts with third-party management firms?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2109—Ms. Rachel Blaney:

With regard to the calculations of Old Age Security (OAS) and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) base payments, broken down by province and territory and fiscal year since 2015-16: (a) what types of payments to seniors made by provincial or territorial governments are included in the eligibility requirements for maximum annual income; (b) how are lump sum payments provided to seniors by provincial or territorial government organizations calculated in terms of eligibility requirements for maximum annual income; (c) what is the total number of seniors who have (i) been disqualified from these benefits, (ii) had their OAS or GIS benefits clawed back, because they received compensation for a workplace injury; and (d) what is the total number of people who have (i) been disqualified for an Allowance for the Spouse, (ii) had their Allowance for the Spouse clawed back, because their spouse received compensation for a workplace injury?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2110—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to government research related to home equity, since November 4, 2015 and broken down by department or agency: (a) what are the details of all contracts entered into by the government for research, polling, publications, projects, or any other activity related to the topic of home equity including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) amount or value, (iii) vendor, (iv) description of goods or services; and (b) what are the details of all polling or analysis the government has conducted related to home equity, including, for each (i) who conducted the polling or analysis, (ii) what specific questions were polled or analyzed, (iii) what were the findings?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2111—Mr. Adam Chambers:

With regard to government statistics on violent offences involving firearms, since 2015 and broken down by year, including 2023 to date: (a) what was the number of violent offences involving firearms, in total, and broken down by type of offence; (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by province or territory and by municipality; and (c) what is the breakdown of (a) and (b) by the number and percentage of crimes that resulted in (i) prosecutions, (ii) convictions?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2113—Mr. Dave Epp:

With regard to government vehicles stolen or vandalized, broken down by year since 2016 and by department, agency, crown corporation, or other government entities: (a) how many government vehicles have been (i) stolen, (ii) vandalized; and (b) what are the details of all such incidents, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) make, model, and year of the vehicle, (iii) location, (iv) type of incident (theft, vandalism), (v) description and costs associated with damage to the vehicle, (vi) if

stolen, whether the vehicle was recovered, (vii) title of the individual driving or assigned to the vehicle?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2114—Mr. John Barlow:

With regard to government dealings with Canada Royal Milk ULC: (a) what are the details of all funding that government departments, agencies, or other entities such as the Canadian Dairy Commission provided to the company since 2016 including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) type of contribution (grant, loan guarantee, etc.), (iv) purpose of the grant; (b) what information does the government have regarding the amount of infant formula that Canada Royal Milk ULC has produced in the last year; (c) of the formula in (b), how much was (i) sold in Canada, (ii) exported to China, (iii) exported to a country other than China; and (d) has the government received any applications from Canada Royal Milk related to being allowed to produce or distribute infant formula in Canada, and, if so, what are the details, including (i) which federal department, agency, or entity received the application, (ii) the date the application was received, (iii) purpose of the application, (iv) date the application was approved or rejected, (v) whether the application was approved or rejected?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2116—Mr. Gord Johns:

With regard to Health Canada's Substance Use and Addictions Program (SUAP), and broken down by fiscal year since 2021-22: (a) what are the details of all requests for funding from community-led and not-for-profit organizations, including the (i) date of the request, (ii) requester name, (iii) amount of funding requested, (iv) amount of funding approved; (b) what is the total amount of funding that was requested by community-led and not-for-profit organizations; (c) what is the total amount of funding that was provided to community-led and not-for-profit organizations; (d) broken down by level of government, what are the details of all funding transfers to provincial, territorial, or municipal governments, including the (i) date of the request, (ii) requester name, (iii) amount of funding requested, and (iv) amount of funding approved; (e) what is the total amount of funding that was requested by other levels of government; and (f) what was the total amount of funding provided to other levels of government?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2117—Mr. Gord Johns:**

With regard to economic development funding for the communities which comprise the federal electoral district of Courtenay-Alberni, between the 2005-06 and current year fiscal year: (a) what are the federal investments in all economic development spending, including direct transfers to the municipalities and First Nations, for the communities of (i) Tofino, (ii) Ucluelet, (iii) Port Alberni, (iv) Parksville, (v) Qualicum Beach, (vi) Cumberland, (vii) Courtenay, (viii) Deep Bay, (ix) Dashwood, (x) Royston, (xi) French Creek, (xii) Errington, (xiii) Coombs, (xiv) Nanoose Bay, (xv) Cherry Creek, (xvi) China Creek, (xvii) Bamfield, (xviii) Beaver Creek, (xix) Beaufort Range, (xx) Millstream, (xxi) Mt. Washington Ski Resort, broken down by (A) fiscal year, (B) total expenditure, (C) project; (b) what are the federal economic development investments transferred to the regional districts of (i) Comox Valley Regional District, (ii) Nanaimo Regional District, (iii) Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, (iv) Powell River Regional District, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) total expenditure, (iii) project; (c) what are the federal economic development investments transferred to the Island Trusts of (i) Hornby Island, (ii) Denman Island, (iii) Lasqueti Island, broken down by (A) fiscal year, (B) total expenditure; (d) what are the federal economic development investments transferred to (i) the Ahousaht First Nation, (ii) Hesquiaht First Nation, (iii) Huu-ay-aht First Nation, (iv) Hupacasath First Nation, (v) Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations, (vi) Toquaht First Nation, (vii) Tseshaht First Nation, (viii) Uchucklesaht First Nation, (ix) Ucluelet First Nation, (x) K'omoks First Nation, broken down by (A) fiscal year, (B) total expenditure, (C) project; (e) what are the details of funding delivered through the Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF), broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) total expenditure, (iii) project; (f) what are the details of funding delivered through the Forest Industry Transformation (IFIT) program, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) total expenditure, (iii) project; (g) what are the details of funding of the Sectoral Initiatives Program (SIP), broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) total expenditure, (iii) project; and (h) what are any other economic development investments, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) total expenditure, (iii) project?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2120—Ms. Leah Gazan:

With regard to the Nutrition North Canada Advisory Board, broken down by fiscal year since 2015 to present: (a) what was the membership of the Advisory Board; (b) were there any vacancies on the advisory board; (c) for each vacancy in (b), how long did the vacancy last; (d) what is the total amount of funding given to the Advisory Board for the purpose of carrying out their mandate; (e) how many times did the Advisory board meet (i) in-person, or (ii) virtually; (f) on what dates did the advisory Board meet directly, either in-person or virtually, with the Minister or Ministers responsible for Nutrition North; and (g) what are the details of all consultations carried out by the advisory Board, including (i) date of consultation, (ii) names of individuals, groups, or organizations consulted, (iii) recommendations heard by the advisory Board?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2121—Ms. Leah Gazan:

With regard to the 2 Billion Trees Commitment, and broken down by province or territory since its inception: (a) what is the total amount of funding allocated to each province and territory; (b) what amount of funding has been delivered to provinces, territories, or organizations; and (c) what is the total amount of funding that is on hold or remains undelivered as part of this program?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2123—Mr. Matthew Green:

With regard to the usage of replacement workers in federally regulated industries and workplaces, since January 1, 2006: (a) how many replacement workers have been hired by the federal government, broken down by (i) province and territory, (ii) year; and (b) how much federal funding has been used to compensate and recruit replacement workers, broken down by (i) province and territory, (ii) year?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2124—Ms. Leah Gazan:

With regard to the \$4 billion in budget 2022 to accelerate work in closing Indigenous housing gaps: (a) what are the details of all funding allocations to support First Nations housing on reserves, including (i) name of government or project supported, (ii) amount of funding delivered, (iii) amount of units built; (b) what are the details of all funding allocations to support housing in First Nations Self-Governing and Modern Treaty Holders communities, including (i) name of government or project supported, (ii) amount of funding delivered, (iii) amount of units built; (c)

what are the details of all funding allocations supporting housing in Inuit communities, including (i) name of government or project supported, (ii) amount of funding delivered, (iii) amount of units built; and (d) what are the details of all funding allocations for housing in Métis communities, including (i) name of government or project supported, (ii) amount of funding delivered, (iii) amount of units built?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2125—Mr. Marty Morantz:

With regard to government aircraft used by the Prime Minister, and broken down by year since 2019: what were the expenditures associated with flights taken by the Prime Minister, in total, and broken down by flight, type of aircraft, and type of expense?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2126—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With regard to the \$4 billion in budget 2022 to accelerate closing Indigenous housing gaps, and broken down by fiscal year: (a) what is the total amount of funding given to (i) Indigenous governments, (ii) Indigenous non-profits or not-for-profit housing providers, (iii) for-profit housing providers, (iv) individuals to support housing projects; and (b) what is the total amount of lapsed spending for each fiscal year this funding was made available?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2127—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With regard to all federal funding committed to the creation and maintenance of housing stock in the Northwest Territories, broken down by fiscal year since 2015-16: (a) what is the total amount committed; (b) what was the total amount spent; (c) how much new housing stock was created in the Northwest Territories; and (d) what are the government's projections on the number of housing units that will be built in the Northwest Territories by 2030?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2128—Mr. Charlie Angus:

With regard to all federal funding committed to the creation and maintenance of housing stock in the Yukon broken down by fiscal year since 2015-16: (a) what is the total amount committed; (b) what was the total amount spent; (c) how much new housing stock was created in the Yukon; and (d) what are the government's projections on the number of housing units that will be built in the Yukon by 2030?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2131—Mr. Frank Caputo:

With regard to Correctional Service Canada, broken down by year since 2018: (a) how many assaults were committed by inmates on guards, in total and broken down by security level and correctional institution; (b) of the assaults in (a), how many resulted in additional charges against the inmate; and (c) what is the breakdown of (b) by type of additional charge?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2132—Mr. Frank Caputo:

With regard to compensation for executives at Correctional Service Canada (CSC): (a) how many and what percentage of CSC executives received bonuses (or similar types of performance awards), broken down by year since 2016; (b) what was the total amount paid out in bonuses for executives, broken down by year since 2016; (c) what criteria is used to determine the level of bonuses the CSC executives receive; and (d) what specific factors are considered when determining the level of bonuses awarded to CSC executives, including how the number of lockdowns or the percentage of inmates in certain security levels are taken into account?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2134—Mr. Garnett Genuis:

With regard to visas and study permits for international students in Canada: (a) what are the names of all the institutions at which international students are studying; and (b) how many international students are studying at each institution?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2135—Ms. Leslyn Lewis:**

With regard to the Canada Infrastructure Bank (CIB): (a) what is the total amount of federal funding given to the CIB since January 1, 2022; (b) what are the details of all infrastructure commitments and investments made by the bank, since January 1, 2022 including, for each project, the (i) name, (ii) location, (iii) description, (iv) date the agreement was signed, (v) total agreed expenditure by the CIB, (vi) total expenditures to date by the CIB, (vii) original expected completion date, (viii) current expected completion date, (ix) the loan's risk allocation, term and pricing, (x) evaluation results from the Investment Framework process; and (c) what is the amount spent by the CIB in the 2022-23 fiscal year on (i) salaries, (ii) bonuses, (iii) consulting fees, (iv) rent or lease payments, (v) travel, (vi) hospitality, (vii) infrastructure programs, (viii) other expenses?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2137—Ms. Leslyn Lewis:

With regard to Infrastructure Canada's funding programs: (a) is there a standard timeline by which funding applications are to be reviewed by the government and approved or rejected; (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, what is that standard timeline for each of the major funding programs, including, for each stream of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP), the Canada Community Building Fund and the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings program; (c) what percentage of project applications are meeting the standard processing timelines, broken down by stream; (d) what is the average processing time for applications received overall, and broken down by (i) program, (ii) province and territory; (e) how many applications submitted to the ICIP program are still being reviewed; and (f) what is the average length of time that current ICIP project applications have been under review, overall, and broken down by province or territory?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2138—Mr. Alex Ruff:

With regard to Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) benefits delivered via contract by Medavie Blue Cross: (a) from January 1, 2022, to December 12, 2023, how many technical issues with the Medavie Blue Cross online portal were reported listed by (i) month, (ii) claim area affected; (b) how many veterans did these technical issues affect; (c) what was the dollar amount of outstanding or delayed claims; (d) what communication did Medavie Blue Cross and VAC issue to veterans to alert them of issues with the online portal and alternative submission processes; (e) how many pages are in the forms required to request a special medication authorization; (f) does VAC reimburse costs to physicians and pharmacists for completing these requests; (g) what are the claim processing service standards as set out in the contract; (h) what standard did Medavie Blue Cross report listed by month in (i) 2022, (ii) 2023; (i) what contract supervision have VAC undertaken with Medavie Blue Cross to ensure a high standard of service delivery and correct technical issues with the online portal?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2140—Mr. Alistair MacGregor:

With regard to federal funding investments in infrastructure, programs, and services in the Cowichan-Malahat-Langford riding: what are the total monetary investments in that will come into effect as a result of the adoption, on December 7, 2023, of Supplementary Estimates (B), 2023-24 for (i) a new school in Port Renfrew on the traditional unceded territory of the Pacheedaht First Nation, (ii) a new marine safety centre in Port Renfrew on the traditional unceded territory of the Pacheedaht First Nation, (iii) all housing initiatives in the riding, (iv) all childcare initiatives in the riding, (v) the wine producing sector in the Cowichan Valley?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2147—Mrs. Rachael Thomas:

With regard to Sport Canada: what are the details of all reports or documents Hockey Canada has filed with Sport Canada since Hockey Canada's funding was restored in April 2023, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) title, (iii) type of report or document, (iv) summary of contents?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2148—Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:

With regard to federal spending in the constituency of London North Centre, in each fiscal year since 2020-21, inclusively: what are the details of all grants and contributions and all loans to any organization, group, business or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) municipality in which the recipient is located, (iii) date the funding was received, (iv) amount received, (v) depart-

ment or agency that provided the funding, (vi) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made, (vii) nature or purpose?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2151—Ms. Laurel Collins:

With regard to the Nature Smart Climate Solutions Fund, from 2021 to present: (a) what is the total amount of funding committed, broken down by project and funding stream; (b) what is the total amount of funding spent, broken down by project and funding stream; (c) for the projects identified in (a), what (i) are the annual greenhouse gas emission reductions, (ii) are the projected long-term greenhouse gas emission reductions, (iii) is the total area (hectares) restored, (iv) is the total area (hectares) conserved, (v) is the number of direct jobs created, (vi) is the total area stewarded for greenhouse gas mitigation, (vii) is the total area secured for greenhouse gas mitigation, (viii) is the number of Indigenous-led projects supported?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2152—Ms. Laurel Collins:

With regard to the 2030 Emissions Reduction Plan: (a) how did the government determine the projected sectoral contribution to Canada's greenhouse gas emissions pathway from the oil and gas sector of 110 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent by 2030; (b) what measures were modelled to determine the projected sectoral contribution from the oil and gas sector of 110 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent by 2030; and (c) for each of the measures identified in (b) what is the projected reduction in megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent by 2030?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2155—Mr. Garnett Genuis:

With regard to government development assistance projects delivered in Israel and the Palestinian Territories and projects aimed at supporting Palestinian refugees in other countries, since 2016: what are the details of each project, including the (i) name, (ii) amount, (iii) all of the organizations involved in delivering the project, (iv) project description?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2156—Mr. Damien C. Kurek:

With regard to government subsidies for EV battery manufacturing by Northvolt, Volkswagen, and Stellantis-LGES: (a) did the contracts contain any clauses to provide for a certain number of jobs being provided to Canadian workers, and, if so, what were those clauses; (b) what is the government's position related to the Parliamentary Budget Officer's assessment that the federal government's estimates "significantly overstated the economic and fiscal impacts of the production subsidies"; and (c) if the government does not fully accept the assessment of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, where and on what do they believe that the PBO has erred?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2157—Mr. Alex Ruff:

With regard to the federal government's announcement to reboot post-war efforts to construct housing with a housing design catalogue: (a) who will be eligible to participate in the consultation process; (b) what are the key design aspects or characteristics for these houses that the government is prioritizing; (c) what is the duration of the consultation period; (d) what are the estimated number of dwellings that the program is aiming to produce; and (e) what factored into the decision to announce this initiative in December 2023?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2159—Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:**

With regard to all federal funding committed to the creation and maintenance of housing stock in the federal electoral district of Nanaimo-Ladysmith, broken down by fiscal year since 2015-16: (a) what is the total amount committed, broken down by funding stream; (b) what was the total amount spent; (c) how much new housing stock was created in Nanaimo-Ladysmith; and (d) what are the government's projections on the number of housing units that will be built in Nanaimo-Ladysmith by 2030?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2160—Mr. Blake Desjarlais:

With regard to federal spending in the constituency of Edmonton Griesbach, broken down by fiscal year and department or agency since 2021-22: what are the details of all grants and contributions and all loans to any organization, group, business or municipality, broken down by the (i) name of the recipient, (ii) date the funding was received, (iii) amount received, (iv) program under which the grant, contribution or loan was made?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2161—Mr. Blake Desjarlais:

With regard to the social housing needs in the territories of the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut, since November 2015: (a) did the government conduct an audit in order to determine the social housing needs of each territory; (b) what were the results of each audit conducted in (a); (c) how does the government determine social housing needs in each territory; (d) how are social housing needs in (c) determined with respect to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities; (e) what mechanism does the government have in place to ensure that First Nations, Inuit and Métis social housing needs are addressed on an equitable basis; (f) what is the average age of social houses, broken down by territory; (g) how many houses have been constructed in each fiscal year, broken down by territory; (h) what is the average occupancy per social housing unit; and (i) how many social houses have been constructed per territory that are now deemed uninhabitable?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2164—Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:

With regard to the making of regulations for the Canada Disability Benefit: (a) what additional costs associated with living with a disability is the government taking into consideration when setting the amount of the benefit; (b) what are the average annual costs for persons with disabilities, both in dollars and as a percentage of disposable income, for (i) food, (ii) housing, (iii) medical expenses, (iv) assistive devices, (v) transportation; (c) for the costs identified in (b), what are the average annual costs for persons without disabilities?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2165—Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:

With regard to the Freshwater Action Plan: (a) what is the total amount of funding committed, broken down by each priority watershed identified in the plan; (b) what is the total amount of funding, broken down by each priority watershed identified in the plan; (c) what is the total amount of funding spent for freshwater protection in British Columbia?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2166—Ms. Bonita Zarrillo:

With regard to the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA) funding for British Columbia, from 2015 to 2023: (a) what is the total amount of funding committed, broken down by specific project; (b) what is the total amount of funding spent, broken down by specific project?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2169—Ms. Kerry-Lynne D. Findlay:

With regard to Canada's vote at the United Nations on December 12, 2023 in favour of a ceasefire: (a) on what date was Ambassador Bob Rae instructed to vote in favour of a ceasefire, and who provided that instruction to the Ambassador; (b) which Jewish groups were consulted prior to the government making the decision and what feedback did they get; (c) if Jewish groups were not consulted about this vote prior to Canada taking this position, why were they not consulted; and (d) what is the government's rationale for changing its longstanding position on Israel?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2171—Mr. Richard Cannings:

With regard to the administration of the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) loan: (a) on what dates do existing contracts with Accenture Inc. for the administration of CEBA end; (b) has the government approached Accenture Inc. about extending contracts related to the administration of the CEBA program; (c) has Accenture Inc. informed the government that it will not be able to continue the administration of the CEBA program; (d) has the government approached any other management firms or corporations with a sole-source contract in order to continue the CEBA program; and (e) has the government done any evaluations or assessments of the ability for Export Development Canada or another government department or agency to operate the CEBA program beyond the current end date?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2173—Mr. Richard Cannings:

With regard to federal expenditures on wildland fire management for 2023, broken down by province and territory: (a) what are the total expenditures to date on wildland fire protection and suppression, including (i) fire preparedness, (ii) mitigation, (iii) response, (iv) recovery; and (b) what are the total anticipated expenditures on wildland fire protection and suppression, including (i) fire preparedness, (ii) mitigation, (iii) response, (iv) recovery?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2175—Mr. Don Davies:

With regard to the funding agreement with Prince Edward Island to improve affordable access to prescription drugs signed on August 11, 2021: (a) what are the details of all analyses done by the government that show greater access to prescription medications; (b) what indicators does the government use to show that individuals have greater access to prescription medications; and (c) what is the total number of individuals who have experienced improved access to prescription drug coverage?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2176—Mr. Don Davies:

With regard to the funding agreement with Prince Edward Island to improve affordable access to prescription drugs signed on August 11, 2021: (a) does the government have analyses on whether this initiative provides better access to prescription drugs when compared to (i) the recommendations of the Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare, (ii) the Cost Estimate of a Single-payer Universal Drug Plan report issued by the Parliamentary Budget Officer on October 13, 2023; (b) what are the details of all analyses in (a); (c) does the government have analyses on whether this initiative would result in better cost savings compared to (i) the recommendations of the Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare, (ii) the Cost Estimate of a Single-payer Universal Drug Plan report issued by the Parliamentary Budget Officer on October 13, 2023; and (d) what are the details of all analyses in (c)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2177—Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:

With regard to any polling data obtained by the Privy Council Office, since January 1, 2023: (a) what are the details of all polling conducted, including (i) who conducted the poll, (ii) the start and end dates of when the poll was conducted, (iii) the number of participants, (iv) the topic or subject asked about, (v) the results of the poll, (vi) the value of the contract related to the poll?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2180—Mrs. Carol Hughes:

With regard to Translation Bureau operations, broken down by fiscal year since 2011-12: (a) what is the total number of hours that simultaneous interpretation was provided, broken down by (i) sittings of the House of Commons, (ii) meetings of House committees; (b) how many employees have provided simultaneous interpretation for (i) sittings of the house of Commons, (ii) meetings of House committees; (c) how many freelance contractors have provided simultaneous interpretation of (i) sittings of the House of Commons, (ii) meetings of House committees; and (d) what is the dollar value of all contracts related to (c)?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2181—Mrs. Carol Hughes:**

With regard to Translation Bureau operations, broken down by House of Commons committee and fiscal year since 2011-12 to present: (a) what is the total number of requests submitted by each committee to the Translation Bureau for document translation; (b) what are the details of all requests in (a), including the (i) total number of pages requested, (ii) total number of hours to fulfill translation requests, (iii) total number of overtime hours required to fulfill translation requests, (iv) total cost to fulfill all requests?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2182—Mrs. Carol Hughes:

With regard to funding allocated through the Rapid Housing Initiative to Northern Ontario: (a) what was the (i) total number of approved projects, (ii) total number of approved housing units, (iii) total dollar value of each housing project (iv) dollar value of the federal contribution of each housing project, (v) dollar value of any other contributor of each housing project; (b) what is the breakdown of each part in (a) by (i) municipality, (ii) federal electoral constituency; and (c) what are the details of all applications in (a), including (i) project description, (ii) number of approved units, (iii) date the application was submitted to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, (iv) date the project was announced publicly?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2185—Ms. Michelle Rempel Garner:

With regard to the Sectoral Workforce Solutions Program: (a) how much money has been distributed through the program to date; (b) how many funding applications were received through the program; (c) of the funding applications, how many were granted; (d) what is the total amount distributed through the program to date by province or territory where the applicant is based out of; (e) what are the details of all funding provided to date including, for each, the (i) applicant, (ii) date the money was provided, (iii) amount of funding (iv) type of funding (grant, repayable loan, etc.), (v) purpose of the funding, (vi) project summary; (f) what accountability mechanisms are in place to ensure that funds distributed through the program are used as intended; and (g) have the accountability mechanisms in (f) determined that any funding has not been used appropriately, and, if so, what are the details of each such instance including the name of the recipient and what action was taken by the government in response?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2186—Ms. Michelle Rempel Garner:

With regard to cancellation fees or similar types of fees for items and services that were booked but not used, since January 1, 2020, and broken down by department, agency, and government entity: (a) what was the total amount spent in cancellation fees, broken down by year; and (b) what are the details of each such instance, including, for each, the (i) vendor, (ii) cost to the government related to the cancellation, (iii) reason for the cancellation, (iv) description, including quantity, of items cancelled (e.g. hotel room, conference hall, car rental, etc.) (v) location of the vendor, (vi) date the items were originally booked for?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2187—Mr. Sameer Zuberi:

With regard to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change's trip to Dubai to attend COP28: (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. 2188—Mr. Sameer Zuberi:

With regard to Canada's Climate Change Ambassador trip to Dubai to attend COP28: (a) what was the Ambassador's detailed itinerary on the trip; and (b) what are the details of all meetings attended by the Ambassador, 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. 2189—Mrs. Laila Goodridge:

With regard to the government's Draft Federal Offset Protocol: Reducing Enteric Methane Emissions from Beef Cattle: (a) has the government analyzed whether the proposal will lead to higher beef prices for consumers, and, if so, (i) who con-

ducted the analysis, (ii) what were the findings; (b) what measures are in place, if any, to ensure that the proposal will not lead to higher beef prices for consumers; (c) what are the projected government expenditures related to (i) establishing the program, (ii) the annual costs associated with operating the program; and (d) how many government employees or full-time equivalents will be working on the program?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2190—Mrs. Laila Goodridge:

With regard to meetings involving the government about safe supply, safer supply, pharmaceutical alternatives to the toxic, illegal or illicit drug supply, pharmaceutical grade medication as an alternative to the toxic, illegal or illicit drug supply, and medications for substance use disorder and to provide pharmaceutical alternatives to the contaminated illegal or illicit drug supply: what are the details of meetings over the last five years between government and pharmaceutical companies, government and opioid manufacturers, government and lobby companies, and government and stakeholders, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) type and purpose of the meeting, (iv) names of the organizations represented, (v) names and titles of the individuals in attendance, including both government officials and other attendees?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2191—Mrs. Laila Goodridge:

With regard to the government's efforts in Indigenous health and substance use treatment facilities: (a) How many treatment facilities currently exist on Indigenous reserves; (b) what are the details of each facility, including, (i) the First Nation (ii) the location and address, (iii) the name of the facility, (iv) the year it was built, (v) the square footage, (vi) the date of additions or renovations to the facility, (vii) the current number of beds or spaces broken down by inpatient and outpatient treatment, (viii) current staffing and patient level, (ix) the maximum staffing and patient capacity level, (x) whether it's currently operating understaffed or under the maximum possible; (c) how frequently does the government receive updates or reports from these government-funded treatment facilities regarding their performance and success in meeting specified criteria; and (d) when was the last time such a report or update was received, broken down by each facility it was received from?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2195—Mr. Taylor Bachrach:

With regard to the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative: (a) for the \$33.5 million that has been disbursed under the Conservation and Stewardship pillar, (i) what specific projects were funded, (ii) what organization or agency received the funding, (iii) what are the project deliverables, (iv) what is the project's timeline; (b) for the \$28.4 million that has been disbursed under the Salmon Enhancement pillar, (i) what specific projects were funded, (ii) what organization or agency received the funding, (iii) what are the project deliverables, (iv) what is the project's timeline; (c) for the \$33.0 million that has been disbursed under the Harvest Transformation pillar, (i) what specific projects were funded, (ii) what organization or agency received the funding, (iii) what are the project deliverables, (iv) what is the project's timeline; and (d) for the \$8.4 million that has been disbursed under the Integration and Collaboration pillar, (i) what specific projects were funded, (ii) what organization or agency received the funding, (iii) what are the project deliverables, (iv) what is the project's timeline?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2196—Mr. Taylor Bachrach:

With regard to any polling data obtained by the Privy Council Office concerning pharmacare, since January 1, 2023: (a) what are the details of all polling conducted, including (i) who conducted the poll, (ii) the start and end dates of when the poll was conducted, (iii) the number of participants, (iv) the questions asked, (v) the results of the poll, (vi) the value of the contract related to the poll?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 2197—Mr. Taylor Bachrach:**

With regard to any polling data obtained by the Privy Council Office or the Department of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard concerning open-net pen aquaculture in British Columbia, since January 1, 2023: (a) what are the details of all polling conducted, including (i) who conducted the poll, (ii) the start and end dates of when the poll was conducted, (iii) the number of participants, (iv) the questions asked, (v) the results of the poll, (vi) the value of the contract related to the poll?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2198—Ms. Jenny Kwan:

With regard to federal housing investments, between February 1, 2006, and October 1, 2015, broken down (i) by province or territory and by year: (a) how much federal funding was provided to support the construction of non-profit or community housing and how many units were developed; (b) how much federal funding was provided to support the construction of cooperative housing and how many units were developed; (c) how much federal funding was provided to support the construction of purpose-built rental housing and how many units were developed; (d) how much federal funding was provided to support the construction of housing dedicated to First Nations, Inuit, or Métis communities or delivered to Indigenous-led housing providers and how many units were developed; (e) how much federal funding was provided to support the construction of single and multi-family homes and how many units were developed?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2199—Mr. Taylor Bachrach:

With regard to testimony from Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) at the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs on December 12, 2023: (a) what are the details of all committees created to review research and policy and provide advice to senior staff, including (i) the title of the committee, (ii) committee membership, (iii) the specific topic or focus of the committee, (iv) the dates of meetings held in the last 18 months, (v) conclusions or advice provided to the Minister of Veterans Affairs; (b) how many times have the committees in (a) discussed matters relating to (i) women's reproductive health, (ii) sex-specific illnesses and injuries, (iii) illnesses and injuries impacting Veterans' offspring, (iv) women-specific uniforms and equipment, (v) intimate partner violence among Veterans, (vi) barriers to accessing VAC services for victims of the LGBT Purge, (vii) survivor pensions for Veterans marrying after age 60, (viii) the Merlo-Davidson class action settlement agreement, (ix) groups representing LGBTQI+ and women Veterans, (x) groups advocating for better health outcomes for Veterans; (c) how do the committees in (a) solicit input from other organizations including (i) the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), (ii) the Department of National Defense (DND), (iii) groups representing LGBTQI+ and women Veterans; and (d) how do the committees in (a) share their findings with organizations including (i) the CAF, (ii) the DND, (iii) groups representing LGBTQI+ and women Veterans?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2200—Ms. Jenny Kwan:

With regard to the Canada Border Security Agency's management of immigration detention: what is the title, location, and address of each facility used for immigration detention in Canada, and for each of these facilities (i) how many detainees are currently incarcerated therein, (ii) what are the reasons for detention ranked from most to least common, (iii) what percentage of detainees are deemed 'high-risk', 'dangerous', or flight risks, (iv) what percentage of detainees are refugee claimants or asylum seekers, (v) what percentage of detainees are under 18 years of age, (vi) what is the median and mean time period of incarceration, (vii) what is the longest period of ongoing incarceration of any detainee, (viii) have immigration detainees been subject to segregation or solitary confinement at any point after March 1, 2020, and, if so, for how long on average?

(Return tabled)

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Mission—Mat-squi—Fraser Canyon is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Brad Vis: Mr. Speaker, in good faith, I just want to clarify that he had 2122.

The Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order, but we will go back to get the information that the hon. member needs.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, knowing how important that particular question was to my colleague across the way, if he wants to walk over, he can look at the numbers I read off. I suspect it was there, as the clerk at the table is very efficient and has already indicated it is there.

A number of thoughts come to my mind in regard to what we are debating. Members would be very familiar with my standing up to express concerns whenever there is a concurrence report that is brought to the floor of the House of Commons. I do that because I recognize the finite amount of time that the House is in fact operational or open where we are actually able to deal with Private Members' Business, opposition days, government business and so forth.

Over the last number of months, we have seen a great deal of effort to prevent government agenda items from being debated. I am going to speak specifically to this concurrence report but before I do, I want to highlight that we are going to be sitting later tonight. The reason we are going to be sitting later tonight is that we have the 12th report of the Standing Committee on Finance that we have to deal with. We also have to deal with the 14th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

These are all concurrence reports. Opposition members also have other mechanisms or tools, and this is where it becomes a little more relevant, even for the motion that has been put forward today by the Bloc.

We all have a very good sense of our feelings with respect to the report, which I support, and I believe the majority of the House will be supporting the report. We know that because it passed through a standing committee with a majority vote. There were two opposition reports attached that are dissenting reports.

My concern is that, in this case it is the Bloc, but most often it is the Conservatives, when they bring up these concurrence reports, they are actually preventing substantive debate on a wide spectrum of different issues.

For example, today, we were supposed to be debating the fall economic statement and the legislation.

Routine Proceedings

It was interesting. The very first debate that we had was a private member's hour, and it was dealing with the farm carbon pricing. The member stood up, and the first thing he said was that they have four priorities, as the Conservative Party. It was interesting when, an hour later, the leader of the Conservative Party stood in this place and, in essence, said the same thing, that they have four priorities. He listed the four priorities of the Conservative Party.

Mr. John Nater: Name them.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I know what they are. "Axe the tax" is one of them. I do not really want to get into them. Housing was the second one. They then had the deal with the government cuts. That is the hidden Tory agenda. They then want to deal with the crime issue, even though they filibustered the bail reform legislation.

We had the very first debate, and then we had the second debate on the fall economic statement. Then, during members' statements, we had another member of the Conservative Party stand up and say that they have four priorities they want to debate today. If one listened to question period, I think at least three of those priorities were, in fact, raised.

The government says, "Let us talk about those priorities." I love to contrast Conservative policy with the government's or the Liberal Party's policy. I love the contrast. I welcome it. In fact, I was looking forward to debating that today. Much like previous concurrence reports, by introducing the concurrence report, it is preventing that debate.

We have already had the debate about the Speaker. We have spent hours debating that issue. It has gone to committee, and now the committee has provided a report.

● (1640)

Why would we want to talk about the Speaker again? I do not believe it has the priority that members opposite think it has. Canadians are more concerned about issues like inflation, interest rates, jobs, investments and health care. Those are the types of things Canadians from coast to coast to coast are concerned about, not the regurgitation of another report that was already passed in the House by a majority of the members.

Now there is a sense of frustration. As opposed to preventing the debate on those types of important issues, the Bloc has opposition day motions and could have incorporated this into an opposition day motion if it so chose. If the Bloc really felt that this was a road it wanted to take Canadians down, that would be an excellent opportunity. I listened earlier, because I am the one who asked questions of the Bloc members. This morning, they, too, started their debate on the fall economic statement. I listened. I disagreed with a lot of what they said, but there was some merit in some areas where comment was provided.

I honestly thought we would have that continuation of what is so important in every region of our country, and that is the concern about the realities of what is taking place in our communities. I do not believe I am alone. I think a majority of members would agree that we need to talk about issues that are relevant to what our constituents want us to reflect on.

I looked at the report. It is very short. There are three recommendations. Let me read the recommendation that surprised me. I would have thought it would have already been in place.

Recommendation 2

That the House Administration be tasked with preparing, as part of the briefing binder, guidelines for any future Speaker of the House that presents clear boundaries for impartiality and non-partisanship.

To be honest, I thought there would have been something of that nature, and I suspect there is maybe more of an informal one, but I do not know. I think that is a wonderful recommendation. As the member for Kingston and the Islands has pointed out on many occasions, it is not like what happened here with our current Speaker has never happened before. It has happened before.

I question the motivation as to why the Conservatives and the Bloc want to persist with this issue. I believe it has more to do with the Conservative agenda. I often talk about the idea of that MAGA right and how things from the south creep up north. The Leader of the Opposition's office seems to be opening the door wide to it. They want to try to say that Parliament is dysfunctional.

Today, they are trying to amplify the Speaker's chair as if there is something wrong with the institution. There is nothing wrong with the institution. The Speaker made a mistake like other Speakers in the past have made mistakes. That happens.

● (1645)

This time when it happened, there was not only a great deal of debate before we adjourned but also a recommendation. That recommendation was to bring it to PROC for a report, and that is what they want to debate now, even though they had hours of discussions and debates prior to going into PROC, whether it was formal or informal, or while at PROC.

There has been a thorough vetting in terms of what has taken place, and members have been able to express their concerns. I, too, believe in the impartiality of a Speaker. I understand the importance of it. I have highlighted that fact in my political career, and most of it has been while in opposition. I have gone through Progressive Conservative Speakers, New Democratic Speakers and Liberal Speakers, and I can tell members I do not think any of them are absolutely perfect.

I can say that, with the discussions we have heard both here and second-hand and with what has taken place in the procedure and House affairs committee, the conclusion I would draw is that enough is enough. At the end of the day, I do not believe for a moment that this is the type of issue Canadians, in all regions of our country, want us to debate.

Routine Proceedings

It is much like when we talk about the Conservatives wanting to show, as much as possible, that the institution is broken. That is one reason, I would argue, they bring in the concurrence reports or they, at weird times, will try to adjourn debate or adjourn the day's proceedings. There are many different filibusters we see put into place by the Conservatives. There is legislation that is unanimously supported in the House, yet they will still filibuster.

There are all sorts of tactics. I am used to the tactics. I spent many years in opposition. There is a good reason we have those types of levers. The way the Conservative Party is using it, in cooperation at times with others, like the Bloc today, is to disrupt the government's legislative agenda. Who really pays the price? It may be individual members because there is a legislative agenda, and we have to try to get that legislative agenda through. If there is a finite number of hours, that means the more they filibuster, the less time there will be for debate on government legislation.

I was in opposition in a third party. The wonderful thing about Hansard is we would be able to find this. I remember saying that time allocation is a necessary tool, at times, to be able to use in order for government to get its agenda through the House, even if there is a majority government. There is a legislative agenda, a budget that has to pass, and that time is very precious. I look at what we have witnessed, which is a lot of politics. Let me give an example of that.

There were some interesting quotes. When the issue first came up, the member for Mégantic—L'Érable stood up and provided some comments. This was actually before it went to PROC. He said, "The solution for the Speaker is none other than to ask for his resignation, because he has lost the confidence of the House." This is something that he said in Hansard before it even went to PROC. PROC was responsible for studying it.

● (1650)

The House referred the matter to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs with instructions that it recommend an appropriate remedy. That was the essence of the motion, which was actually brought forward by Conservatives.

The member for Red Deer—Lacombe stated:

Of course I will listen objectively to all the witnesses who will come to the committee... I am looking forward to hearing from...the Speaker, who I hope will come to the procedure and House affairs committee...

I alone am not judge and jury on the procedure and House affairs committee. I am just one member. I will have my questions, and I expect that I will get fulsome answers from all [who come].

The member for Red Deer—Lacombe supported the Speaker's resignation even before it went to the PROC committee.

At the end of the day, when we look at some of these quotes, there is an actual report that has come up with those three recommendations, which I will go through very quickly, but there were also dissenting reports. Is there any surprise about that? I was not surprised, because we knew about this even prior.

The official opposition's dissenting report states:

The office of Speaker of the House of Commons is one of the oldest in our constitutional form of government, dating back seven centuries.

It goes on:

The current Speaker of our House...shattered that ancient tradition—three times in a week—earlier this month.

In doing so, he failed to meet his duty of care to the House, thereby squandering the good-will and trust of the Official Opposition. Compounding that, the evidence before the Committee undermined the Speaker's version of events.

The Conservative Party, in a dissenting report, is suggesting that the Speaker resign. It is the same thing with respect to the dissenting opinion from the Bloc.

However, we have the three recommendations that ultimately have the support of the majority.

Recommendation 1 states:

That the Speaker undertake the appropriate steps to reimburse a suitable amount for the use of parliamentary resources that were not related to the performance of parliamentary functions.

I already made reference to recommendation 2, to ensure that there are guidelines.

Recommendation 3 states:

That the Speaker issue another apology clearly stating that filming the video both in his office, and in his robes was inappropriate, his remorse for the situation, and a clear outline of what he and his office will do to ensure this does not happen again; and that the principle of respect, impartiality, and decorum are values he will continue to prioritize as Speaker.

As has been clearly enunciated over many hours of debate and discussion, both formally and informally, the Speakers from the past have also made mistakes. I think these recommendations are fair; we support them. We have seen the Speaker give a formal apology at the PROC committee itself, and he may have done so twice in the House. I suspect, and I am purely speculating, that he might have even said it informally to others. I say that because I believe he is very remorseful and that this is not going to happen again.

We can take a lot from the main report from PROC and feel good about what it has done. However, I believe that the need to have the issue go back to PROC or to carry on the debate indefinitely in one form or another is doing a disservice to Canadians. At the end of the day, there are far more issues in reality that Canadians are facing every day that we should be dealing with.

Today, we are supposed to be debating the fall economic statement, which is a wonderful opportunity for members to be able to express what their constituents are saying about what is taking place here in Ottawa.

Routine Proceedings

• (1655)

[Translation]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is always so interesting to listen to my colleague. I would just like to reassure him that I do not really like being compared to my Conservative colleagues. The Bloc's approach is not partisan. Our goal is not to cause chaos in the House. On the contrary, this is about upholding a principle. We are advocating for a rigorous approach.

I was there for the study of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs report. I participated in all the committee meetings, and I treated the Speaker, the member for Hull—Aylmer, with respect. At no time was I disrespectful toward him. However, the facts are in. I wonder if my colleague opposite can honestly tell me why the member for Hull—Aylmer, the current Speaker, did not say on December 11 that he had also made a mistake by attending a cocktail fundraiser for André Fortin, a Liberal MNA in Quebec. Given his experience, can he tell me if he understands why the Speaker did not admit to this mistake himself?

• (1700)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, here is the Bloc's recommendation in its minority report:

A) That the Speaker resign from his office as Speaker as he no longer has the confidence of a substantial number of Members...

I challenge the member, or any member of the Bloc, to stand in their place and give a clear indication that no other prior Speaker had things of a similar nature happen when they were Speaker and explain why the principle of yelling and demanding a resignation was not put forward by them. The member for Kingston and the Islands specifically referred to how the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, as a Speaker, participated in a major fundraiser. There is even more to that.

At the end of the day, no one is saying that what happened is something we should support. We have all been very clear that it was inappropriate. The Speaker recognized this, demonstrated remorse and apologized. I can honestly say that, in my number of years as a parliamentarian, I have not yet seen a perfect Speaker. The present company in the chair is a possible exception.

No one is perfect. A remorseful Speaker went to the committee, and there are recommendations. In particular, I think recommendation 2, which is the one I really like, draws and should draw the matter to a close.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one thing I find curious every time the member gets up to speak to this is this almost contemptuous nature with which he speaks about members for bringing these issues up. The Bloc Québécois has a right and an obligation to be an opposition party, which it is doing. We are dealing with a concurrence report from the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs that not just investigates what happened with the Speaker but also gives an opportunity for the House to deal with this. We also understand that there is other business of the House that can occur, but in this case, through the whip, the Bloc Québécois wanted to bring this to the House to have

this debate, to talk about it more and to find concurrence of the House.

The hon. member can vote either for or against the concurrence report, but the Bloc has the right to use those tools, as every opposition member does, in a way that holds the government to account and, in this case, to find concurrence on a report that came out of committee. Why does he hold so much contempt for this? In fact, I would argue that, when he was in opposition, these very same issues would come up. They would also do concurrence reports on this, so why the difference now compared to when he was in opposition and this contemptuous nature with which he continues to hold this institution and our ability to hold the government to account?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I was not born yesterday. I have been a parliamentarian for many years. What the member for Barrie—Innisfil just said is a bunch of crap, quite frankly. When he uses the word “contempt”, maybe the member should be—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. There is a line drawn on the words that we are allowed to use in this chamber. The member has been a parliamentarian since 1988, which is, by the way, the year I graduated from high school. Maybe the hon. member could back up and retract that word.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I withdraw that word completely and without hesitation, but it is an acronym that was used for the Reform-Conservative union.

At the end of the day, the member is not fooling anyone, no matter how genuine or sincere he tries to come across as. The member knows full well that there is a finite amount of time for government legislation. The member can say that, if Conservatives want to stop debate on government agenda items every day with concurrence motions on reports, they should be able to do that. Yes, they can do that. There is no doubt about that. However, we should remember how upset members of the Conservative Party got when there was a concurrence motion on a report on one of their opposition days. They were crying. They went berserk. They could not believe there was going to be debate on concurrence in a committee report on an opposition day, because those days are really sacred. As for the government, no. To the Conservatives, government only counts if, by chance, they are on this side of the House, maybe 10 or 15 years from now.

An hon. member: Twenty.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Yes, maybe 20.

Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, I am familiar with the rules, as I am sure the member opposite is. This is an obstruction tactic that the Conservatives use time and time again.

• (1705)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am rising for the first time since the former leader of the NDP, Ed Broadbent, passed. I want to send my condolences to his family and everybody across Canada who loved Ed, especially those in Os-hawa and Ottawa.

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The Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs has been seized with this serious issue. We know this mistake was not just made by the current Speaker. When the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle was Speaker, he made the same error. In fact, he made that error as an MP as well. This is an ongoing occurrence, and we need it to stop.

I was glad to hear my colleague talk about supporting recommendation 2, but what about recommendation 1 and recommendation 3? They are in this report. There are only three recommendations. This is not complicated. New Democrats are looking to work together in this House to ensure that this does not happen.

Recommendation 1 asks:

That the Speaker undertake the appropriate steps to reimburse a suitable amount for the use of parliamentary resources that were not related to the performance of parliamentary functions.

Recommendation 3 is:

That the Speaker issue another apology clearly stating that filming the video both in his office, and in his robes was inappropriate, [showing] his remorse for the situation....

This is not a lot to ask. It makes sense. We should come together on this. Hopefully, the Liberal government can listen to the rest of the parties in this House and support this report.

Will my colleague support those other recommendations?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, just to be perfectly clear, the Liberal Party supports all three recommendations. With recommendation 2, I was highlighting that I was a bit surprised when I first read it. I honestly would have thought there would be some formal binder or proceeding where whomever is elected as Speaker of the House would be told to listen for a while, go through it in great detail and put some checks in place, because there is a huge expectation.

I have a huge expectation of the Speaker's office, as I am sure all of us do. It is an important issue; there is no doubt about that. However, the issue has been thoroughly debated both here and in committee and, to the very best of my knowledge, with the consultation and work that I do with my constituents, it is time that we leave this issue and start talking about the real issues that are affecting Canadians every day.

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, everybody, including the Speaker or the member, is a human being and we all make mistakes, many times unintentional mistakes. I think we should consider those things and move on.

The hon. member has been a parliamentarian for the last 30 years, since 1988, when I finished my MBA and started my career. Now I am close to retirement. With his long experience, I want him to comment on whether the tone of debate with which members interact in this House has changed. Is there any way we can bring back more decorum in this place?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, never before have I seen an official opposition party go as far or be as extreme as I am witnessing now. I do believe that plays somewhat of a destructive force on the floor of the House of Commons. This is what I have witnessed, particularly over the last two years.

• (1710)

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is with some sadness and in unfortunate circumstances that I rise to debate the concurrence motion brought forward by our colleagues in the Bloc Québécois. It is disappointing because I wish we did not have to be in a situation where we have to debate the conduct and actions of the Speaker of this House. Indeed, in a perfect world we would be here talking about axing the carbon tax, building more homes, fixing the budget and stopping crime. However, unfortunately here we are debating this issue due to not only a single lapse in judgment but what appears to be a series of lapses in judgment by the Speaker of this House of Commons.

I, like many Canadians, did not expect this to happen. Indeed, I am sure many of us were surprised when this story first broke. I was just wrapping up a community event and received a text from a provincial counterpart informing me that they had just seen the Speaker of the House of Commons at the Ontario Liberal Party convention. I thought he was joking, especially since he said the Speaker was in his robes. I thought surely to goodness the Speaker of the House of Commons would not be at the Ontario Liberal Party convention wearing his robes. However, he sent me a picture of the large screen at the Ontario Liberal Party convention, and it was a picture of the Speaker in his robes in the Speaker's chambers here on Parliament Hill. I was, quite frankly, shocked.

I hold the institution of Parliament in high regard and with it the office of the Speaker. While I may disagree with some of the opinions and judgments that a Speaker may offer, I have the greatest of respect for the office and the institution of Speaker. Indeed, if we were to review what was then called the British North America Act, the Constitution Act, 1867, we would see that the office of the Speaker is mentioned no fewer than four times, showing the high regard with which Canadians and the founders of this country held the office of the Speaker. Consider also that the office of the Prime Minister was not even mentioned in that original 1867 document.

If we review the great history of the office of Speaker, going back quite literally centuries, we are reminded of the central role that the Speaker of the House of Commons plays in defending the rights and the privileges of parliamentarians. I need not remind members of the famous quotation from Speaker William Lenthall, who, in direct response to King Charles I in 1642, said, “May it please Your Majesty, I have neither eyes to see, nor tongue to speak in this place, but as the House is pleased to direct me, whose servant I am here”.

The servant of this House is the Speaker. We as parliamentarians elect Speakers with the understanding that they will be impartial and will serve members to the best of their ability in a manner of non-partisanship. Indeed, if we refer to the authorities of this place, this concept is fundamental to the impartiality of the Speaker of this House.

I draw members' attention to citation 168 of Beauchesne's *Parliamentary Rules and Forms*, 6th edition. It states:

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The chief characteristics attached to the office of Speaker in the House of Commons are authority and impartiality.... The actions of the Speaker cannot be criticized incidentally in debate or upon any form of proceeding except by way of a substantive motion.

Confidence in the impartiality of the Speaker is an indispensable condition of the successful working of procedure, and many conventions exist which have as their object, not only to ensure the impartiality of the Speaker but also, to ensure that there is a general recognition of the Speaker's impartiality.

The Speaker takes no part in debate in the House, and votes only when the Voices are equal, and then only in accordance with rules which preclude an expression of opinion upon the merits of a question.

- (1715)

It goes on to say, "In order to ensure complete impartiality the Speaker has usually relinquished all affiliation with any parliamentary party. The Speaker does not attend any party caucus nor take part in any outside partisan political activity."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention to this citation from Beauchesne's because the rulings of the Speaker are not subject to appeal. What is more, we cannot criticize the judgments of the Speaker because we, as partisan members of this House, accept that we have chosen a Speaker who ought to be acting in accordance with an impartial and non-partisan approach. When we lose the ability to trust the impartiality and the non-partisanship of the Speaker, every judgment and ruling of the Speaker has the potential to be seen in a negative context.

The rules of electing our Speaker have evolved over time, to the point that we now elect our Speaker by secret ballot rather than by a motion of the Prime Minister. I am reminded of the first time this occurred, with the election of Speaker John Fraser. At the time, the then leader of the Liberal Party, the former prime minister, the Right Hon. John Turner, in congratulating the Speaker, said:

You know what we demand of you, Mr. Speaker. Perfection! We want fairness, independence, decisiveness, patience, common sense, good humour, upholding the traditions of the House, knowledge of the rules and an intuition for the changing mood and tone of the House as we move through our days.

Former prime minister John Turner recognized the role that an elected impartial Speaker would have in this place. As I said, the authorities of this place recognize that as well. As Bosc and Gagnon wrote:

The duties of the Speaker of the House of Commons require the balancing of the rights and interests of the majority and minority in the House to ensure that public business is...protected against the use of arbitrary authority.... The Speaker is the servant, not of any part of the House or any majority in the House, but of the entire institution and the best interests of the House as distilled over many generations in its practices.

That begs the question of how the Speaker of this House can continue to serve all parliamentarians when the two largest opposition parties have expressed their non-confidence in him.

I want to focus on what brought us to this place, the series of events and activities that led us here.

I want to quote from the remarks made by the Speaker to the Ontario Liberal convention and want to again reinforce the point that the Speaker delivered these remarks in his robes in the Speaker's office with a chyron stating that it was a message from the Speaker of the House of Commons. The Speaker said, "And boy, did we have fun. We had a lot of fun together through the Ottawa South Liberal association, through Liberal Party politics, by helping Dal-

ton McGuinty get elected." It is bad enough that the Speaker would make such comments, again in his Speaker's robes, but he went even further to reflect on the fact that he was the Speaker of the House of Commons, saying, "when I think of the opportunities that I have now as being Speaker of the House of Commons, it's because of people like John". He actually reflected on that fact. The Liberal Party has tried to explain this away as a singular mistake, a one-off, but the fact of the matter is that it is not a one-off.

- (1720)

The Speaker can claim that he was confused or did not fully understand what the video was being made for, but that does not negate the fact that he gave a public interview in which he, again, expressed partisan leanings. It was in a Globe and Mail article on December 1, 2023, which he freely undertook with a journalist. It was not as though he was scrummed on the way into question period, as many of us often are. He sat down for an interview and talked about the work of the Liberal leader, Mr. Fraser, on behalf of "our party", on behalf of the Liberal Party. Within a period of about 48 hours, there were two specific examples of partisanship from an entity that ought to be non-partisan.

What happened immediately after this came to light? After having clearly been called to account for partisan activity, the Speaker jetted off to Washington, D.C. He jetted off to relive his glory days as president of the Ontario Young Liberals. At an event in Washington, D.C., where he quickly threw in some official activities to carry on with his visit to reflect on an old, dear friend, he talked about his activities and his glory days with the Young Liberals of Canada. We are now at number three.

Then afterwards, once the report was finalized and tabled in the House of Commons, we found two more examples of partisanship by the Speaker. We found out that he attended a Quebec Liberal event, which was organized for supporters and where donations were solicited, at a riding in Pontiac. Then we found out that he had actually called up a former Liberal Party MP and encouraged him to write an article defending him and criticizing the opposition Conservatives. This is a pattern of activities that we have seen coming from a position that ought to be non-partisan.

Like many colleagues in this place, when the Speaker was first elected, we had some concerns. We were willing to give the benefit of doubt, as we ought to give to a new Speaker, but we had concerns going in. This is a Speaker who was elected just days after having served as the parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister. This is a Speaker who, in the procedure and House affairs committee, of which I was a member when he was a member, would filibuster for lengthy amounts of time to try to protect the Prime Minister's chief of staff from testifying at committee. This is an individual who served as a senior adviser to Liberal cabinet ministers, a national director of the Liberal Party of Canada and as president of the Young Liberals of Canada. He has a long history of partisanship, which many in this House have. Many of us have histories of partisanship. That is why we get elected. That is why we run under the banner of certain parties.

However, in recent times, it has been clear that those who seek the office of Speaker try to find a way to step back from partisanship. Indeed, the preceding Speaker had served as the Assistant Deputy Speaker for four years, prior to becoming the Speaker in 2019. The Speaker before that had served as both Deputy Speaker and Assistant Deputy Speaker. Of course, the former member for Kingston and the Islands, known to be an expert, served for a long period of time prior to becoming the Speaker of the House of Commons. The fact is that Speakers try to go beyond what is minimally necessary to ensure that their partisanship is not an issue.

This has been quoted a few times in this place, and it is about past precedents and where things have occurred in the past. Indeed, I will quote from the Hansard of March 8, 1993, found at page 16,578 of Debates, when the then member Mr. David Dingwall, the House leader of the official opposition, said:

How can an officer of the House appear to be impartial or claim to be impartial when she undertakes so active a role in the partisan activities of her own political party? How can members of the House who belong to other parties put their trust in the impartiality of the Chair under such circumstances, especially in the heat of the most partisan part of the parliamentary day, Question Period?

● (1725)

I agree. I do not agree on much with Mr. Dingwall, but I agree with his comments in that context.

Now, the Speaker made it very clear in that particular case. Speaker Fraser ruled that there was not a *prima facie* question of privilege on that specific issue because they were dealing with the Deputy Speaker, but he made it clear that Speakers themselves were held to a higher standard. In his ruling he said, "I have some difficulty in agreeing with the hon. member for Cape Breton—East Richmond that the Deputy Speaker is cloaked with the same exigencies that are expected of the Speaker himself or herself". The Speaker himself or herself is expected to be beyond the pale, beyond any threat of partisanship when they are coming to this place.

I would like to refer the House back to the original motion that referred this to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs because what is often overlooked is that the House had collectively condemned the actions of the Speaker already. The motion, which was passed unanimously reads: "a breach of the tradition and expectation of impartiality required for that high office, constituting a serious error of judgment which undermines the trust required to discharge his duties and responsibilities". The House,

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collectively and unanimously, has already declared that there has been a breach of the trust of the House.

The committee came back with what amounts to, I would suggest, a slap on the wrist for such a flagrant violation of the impartiality of this office. I would draw the House's attention to the dissenting report of our Conservative opposition, which laid out some of the major concerns we have with the Speaker's actions.

First of all, I would point out the fact that the Speaker claimed that he did not realize this was going to be played in such a public setting, implying that perhaps it would be okay to display partisanship if there were fewer people watching it, that somehow, if it were a private gathering, it would be okay to be partisan while wearing Speaker's robes and being titled as the Speaker of the House of Commons.

However, it goes beyond that. The testimony that was delivered at committee by none other than John Fraser himself indicated that it was never under discussion and that it was always meant to be shown at a public gathering of the Ontario Liberal Party. It was never even meant to be a private gathering. It was always meant to be something that would be publicly shown and livestreamed for Canadians to see. Unfortunately, it reflected that very negative concept that occurred in seeing a Speaker in his robes, in his tricorne hat, delivering a partisan message highlighting the fun that the Speaker had with the Ontario Liberal Party. It is exceptionally unfortunate and exceptionally disappointing. I have a strong degree of respect for the institutions of the House, and it is unfortunate that it has come to this.

While I am on my feet, I would move an amendment, seconded by the hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil. I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following: "the 55th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented on Thursday, December 14, 2023, be not now concurred in, but that it be referred back to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs with instruction that it amend the same so as to recommend that the Speaker tender his resignation in light of additional examples subsequently coming to light of his partisanship and poor judgment, including asking a former Liberal Member of Parliament to write an opinion column condemning the Official Opposition as well as attending a Quebec Liberal riding association's cocktail reception for partisan supporters where donations were solicited."

● (1730)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will take the amendment under advisement and will come back with a decision as to whether the amendment is admissible as soon as possible.

We will continue with questions and comments. The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in the midst of this ordeal that occurred late last fall, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle tweeted this in reference to this issue: "It's...totally unacceptable.

"When I was Speaker the only fundraiser I attended was for my own riding. This is something all Speakers are allowed to do because they must run under a party banner, and other parties run candidates against them."

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We now know that this was categorically false because, prior to that, and I know the member for Barrie—Innisfil is finding this surprising too, and he should, we have a photo of the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, who was the Speaker at the time, along with the member for Regina—Wascana and the member for Carleton, posing at that fundraiser he attended. We know that he was not telling the truth in that tweet.

I am wondering if the member can comment on whether we should also be opening up an investigation into not only the untruthfulness of the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle but also the fact that he did something that he categorically claims to be unacceptable.

Mr. John Nater: Madam Speaker, I thank the investigator from Kingston and the Islands for his crack investigatory work on this matter.

I would throw it right back at him. Does he have a picture of a Speaker in his robes, in his tricorne hat, as this Speaker was doing? Was it when the House was sitting? Was it when the House of Commons was in session, or had it been at the point that Parliament had no longer been sitting, in the lead-up to a general election, as was the case?

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. John Nater: Madam Speaker, it is very clear that this is a pattern of abuse by this Speaker, by this Liberal-appointed Speaker, in his robes and in his tricorne hat.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would advise the hon. deputy House leader that he had an opportunity to ask a question and that, if he has anything else to add, he should wait until it is time for other questions and comments.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Salaberry—Suroît.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. I have a simple question for him.

We know that members on the other side of the House are practically spreading disinformation by saying that the report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs addressed all of the Speaker's missteps. That is false.

After the study, a new event emerged. What we are asking is that the new event be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs and that the committee examine it. This is not about making comparisons and determining whether the Conservatives or the Liberals are more at fault. That is not the point. The fact is that the Speaker made another mistake after the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs had finished its work and issued its conclusions and recommendations.

We want to know why the Speaker did not disclose during his appearance on December 11 that he had participated in a partisan event in November 2023. Does my colleague agree that this matter should be dealt with at the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs?

• (1735)

Mr. John Nater: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. Bloc Québécois whip for that great question.

I agree that we need to know why the Speaker did not provide all the information to the committee. Why did he not say that he had attended a partisan event in Pontiac hosted by the Liberal Party of Quebec, with Liberal supporters from Quebec, and that donations were solicited by people at the event? That is a big question.

We even have information showing that he asked a former MP to write an article condemning the opposition parties here in the House of Commons.

These facts are new to the committee. They were not brought up during the committee meeting, and we need to ask the Speaker of the House these questions.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have always enjoyed working with the member. We used to sit together in PROC, and I appreciate a lot of the information he shared with us today. I would say that I am concerned that this is becoming very much focused on one Speaker instead of looking at the office of the Speaker. What we have seen very clearly here, and I do not have a lot of time for this context and that context, is that the point is that when we have a Speaker, they should be above that, because we need to trust them in this place to be the voice of the House and to help deal with some of the fun issues we seem to have in this place.

I am wondering if the member agrees that perhaps PROC does need to do a study that is not related to this study but to the role of the Speaker and how we can broaden the scope, so that when these types of things happen there is not a lack of clarity on what to do, but there are actual rules. We cannot continue to have these things happen, not just from one Speaker but from multiple Speakers, and we know the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle participated in a fundraising event that was outside of his riding, and that is the point.

Let us get clarity so that Speakers, moving forward, know their role.

Mr. John Nater: Madam Speaker, the member for North Island—Powell River made the comment that the Speaker should be above partisanship, and I would hope that all of us in the House can agree that whoever is the Speaker of the House of Commons has to not only be above partisanship, but also be seen to be above partisanship. I think the unfortunate case we have seen here is a series of infractions by one Speaker, the current Speaker, that have led us down this path, and we have to deal with this issue, first and foremost.

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Before we go to a broader study of the role of the Speaker and the office of Speaker, we have to first agree with the exigencies of the current situation, in which we have seen a Speaker, on multiple occasions, undertake actions that have seemed to be partisan and outside the scope of what the impartiality of a Speaker ought to be. First and foremost, we need PROC to deal with the current Speaker before any further studies are undertaken on the more broad question of the office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

• (1740)

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, and I would also like him to comment on the fact that the current Speaker has also shown a lack of judgment on numerous other occasions. Is the current Speaker the only Speaker to also have an ethics violation found against him in his role as well? Does that also speak to some of the possible lack of foresight he has had as the Speaker?

Mr. John Nater: Madam Speaker, my colleague from Regina—Lewvan is unfortunately correct that the current Speaker is the only one to have broken the ethics law and to have been found in violation by the Ethics Commissioner for past actions, so that is a concern, and this ties into some of the concerns we all had when we tried to provide him with the benefit of the doubt, when he was first elected, with respect to his past partisan activities. We remember him rising in the House of Commons immediately after the Prime Minister physically elbowed a member from the Bloc Québécois. The current Speaker rose in his place to try to dismiss it and say that the member was diving like a soccer player. There was a real concern in the past activities we have seen from this particular Speaker in the time leading up to his taking on this current responsibility.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Perth—Wellington, who is as ever thoughtful and lays out the precedents. I am not saying I am not troubled by the events, but I am troubled by another issue, and I would like the member for Perth—Wellington to share his thoughts with the House.

It is unprecedented to have removed one Speaker since the last election. If we were to remove another, would we not undermine the role of the Speaker, so that the role becomes insecure? As he mentioned, there are unwritten rules: We cannot question a Speaker's decisions, and we cannot appeal a Speaker's decisions. This is a very slippery slope we are on if we remove Speakers frequently.

I do not think that the offences so far meet that threshold, but I wonder if the hon. member is troubled by the precedent we might be setting.

Mr. John Nater: Madam Speaker, I am troubled by it. I am troubled by the entire situation. We ought not to be in a situation of removing Speakers prior to the end of a term. One of the reasons we elect a Speaker at the beginning of the term is that they ought to be there for the entirety of the Parliament, so we can build the trust that they are there from a non-partisan perspective for the entirety of the Parliament.

What we have seen now is that it did not happen. Normally, a member would run at the beginning of a Parliament and be able to

express their platform and their ideas. That did not happen in this particular case, because of the mid-session removal of the Speaker.

This ought not to become the norm. It would certainly be my preference if we elected one Speaker at the beginning of the Parliament and they had the full trust of the House to serve out the entirety of a Parliament.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am a little disappointed that we have to be here today to speak on this issue again. It has gone through the committee, and we are here debating concurrence in it. Obviously there was enough support to get it to this place, so hopefully we can move on as quickly as possible to some very important issues I definitely heard in my riding while I was home during the time we spent with constituents.

It makes me think of the Myra Falls mine in that area, which just recently was shut down. The workers are very concerned about what that means for their future and are talking to me about the bankruptcy laws and the fact that they know their pensions are still at the bottom of the list. We have done some work on it in this place, but it has not gone through the regulatory process, and that concerns me. It is something I will be fighting for, because we want to make sure the workers of this country, when they are faced with significant challenges, get the support they desperately need.

I also want to take a moment to recognize that today is a very sad day in Canada. I remember in 2017, when there were the mosque shootings in Quebec, how horrific it was to realize that had happened in our country. I had a great deal of broken-heartedness, because it was definitely not something I wanted to see as the fabric of our country. One of the things that is always hard for us in this place is how we have to face the realities that are reflected in our country and then, as parliamentarians, internalize what that means and find a way to process it, not only as individuals but as representatives of ridings across this country.

Today, in the hecticness of our schedules, I hope that we also remember basic human rights and dignity for all people; that we always stand against any form of discrimination that happens in front of us or in our communities, and that we be fearless voices. Our voices carry an amount of power that not everyone is granted by their constituents, and we need to always fight against any form of hate that jeopardizes the safety of people in our country and around the world.

We are here talking about the Speaker, and I cannot help but share this very strange story about being here in this place when we had, of course, the representative from Ukraine here speaking about what is happening in Ukraine. There are a lot of people in my riding who are of Ukrainian descent and were very happy to see Canada working here, and then of course we know what happened. It was the NDP that first asked the past Speaker, who did resign, to resign. We stood up and said he could not do that kind of behaviour and that he had a responsibility to this House and had failed it. It did have an impact on our communities.

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I had a bit of skin cancer on my forehead later last year and needed to go in and get it removed. I want to thank all of the amazing health professionals who help us in these trying times. As I lay on that table having the cancer removed from my forehead, all they could talk about was the role of the Speaker in the House and how having that person, who represented something Canadians mostly stand firmly against, in the House felt like a betrayal of their Canadian identity. As I was dealing with that and having that conversation with the people performing surgery on my forehead, it really let me know that this had a profound impact on our communities in a way we perhaps do not understand and that it is really important that when we are in the House we make sure we are doing the best we can in everything we do.

We understand that people make mistakes. We are human, after all, but we have to set a tone, and when that tone is broken it is important for us to stand up.

It would also be remiss of me to not talk about the fact that we had a state funeral yesterday for Ed Broadbent, who was a man of such incredible character who led the NDP so fiercely in his time as leader but also just as a continuous member of this party. He always talked about basic human rights and respecting them. He also talked very often and personally to me about having integrity in the House. He said that decorum really matters, and how we treat one another really matters.

• (1745)

I continue to do the best I can. I can have a bad day, but I continue to try to have decorum in my behaviour and respect. Although I have heckled a few times, I do not believe I have ever heckled personally against another person in this place. I may not agree with their policies and may share that louder than I should, and I have been called on it once publicly, but I try to never attack people personally because I believe that underneath, regardless of party, we are all Canadians who really believe in our country and Quebeckers who believe in their areas as well. We must always stand up to build a better and stronger community and country.

I was really disappointed and totally taken aback and shocked when I saw the Speaker wearing his robes on television when he had been shown in a video at an event that was of a political nature. I found that extremely upsetting, especially after the fragility that I was feeling in this House, as the member from the Green Party said earlier, after we did something that in this place had not really been done before. It creates a sense of insecurity within our place of work because we have to figure out how to deal with something that we do not necessarily want to deal with. We also have to figure out how to articulate what that means to our constituents when it is something new that we all have to deal with.

When I saw that, I was heartbroken. I felt like it was “here we go again”. We were just getting back to some normalcy and trying to move forward on things that matter to Canadians, and here we are again put in this place where the Speaker of the House is being perceived in a way that is less than what we would like to see.

I will always give grace. When we are new to something, we may not know and may not think out what it could mean. However, I really hope that any of us would take a moment to think about what it means.

I always make jokes about this to my husband. People invite me to lots of things, but they are not necessarily inviting Rachel. They are inviting the member of Parliament for North Island—Powell River. They acknowledge that because I have that title, I have a role to play in my riding and in this country, and they want me, in that role, to hear something so that it can be carried back to the work in this place. For a Speaker to not think about what that means, to not be careful and conscious, does concern me greatly.

I am also really disappointed about something else in this debate. When something goes wrong, we have to stop making it personal and go back to the process, because the more personalized we make things, the less we focus on changing and modifying the rules so that we can have better outcomes.

We know for a fact that, with respect to other Speakers, the Conservative House leader, as an example with proof, participated in a fundraising event outside of his riding. We know that other Speakers have done the same; they have participated outside. A Speaker in their riding must participate in fundraising because they have an election to run. I think we all understand that and give allowances for it. However, when they step outside of their riding, they are no longer the MP for that riding; they are the MP for that riding and the Speaker of the House. They are both of those things and that means something.

I would love to see us let go of this report. This report is done. However, if we want to see some work done in PROC around what the rules are and how we will deal with them better, let us look at what other things have happened that show concern for the Speaker and how we elevate that. The Bloc Québécois whip, when I asked a question about this, said that these rules are implied and asked why they do not understand. I understand that; it makes a lot of sense. For me, it seems like an automatic thing as well. It would never occur to me to do some of the things that I have seen done. That is just my nature. However, I also understand that it is not everyone's nature. I am not going to put a lot of judgment into that. I am just going to say that it is not everyone's nature.

• (1750)

We need clear rules that make sure we get the kind of Speaker we want in this place so that we know what to do when something untoward happens or makes us feel uncomfortable. We are not debating it in this situation, but we are looking meaningfully at the rules, reflecting on them and making recommendations so that we can change and modify these rules moving forward. It concerns me when we focus on one person, to say it again, and not the process. I want to focus on the process so we can get to a solution, because I do feel that in this place, we are losing a lot of respect for one another.

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I have been here over eight years. I remember speaking about things that really mattered to my riding. I come from a more rural and remote riding, and we have particular challenges that are meaningful for us. I would stand up in a speech and talk about the people in my riding and how things were impacting them. Members from other parties would say they hear the same things too, and we would begin to have conversations about what that meant and how we could work collaboratively to create a solution so that our constituents across the board were better treated and more respected and so that the policies put in place would have a better impact on our folks. We know this is a big country with a lot of different needs and a lot of different realities.

Unfortunately, I do not see that anymore. I do not believe for a minute that our country is broken because I know the people of our country. I think we go through hard times and they are extremely painful and sometimes extremely unfair, but I do not believe it is broken because we in this place do not get to decide that. Our country and the people who live in it get to decide that. I really hope that as we have these debates, we remember this dignity and remember that people are asking us not to go forward and get them angry, but to go forward and find a way for us collectively to do better by them.

We are here talking about the Speaker. The NDP obviously stood up and asked the previous now-resigned Speaker to resign because we saw what happened. Unfortunately, either intentionally or unintentionally, the impact was so profound that it was really affecting how people saw their country. It was affecting the perception internationally that Canada has. We needed to stand up in that moment and say that it cannot happen, because not only did it make the citizens of Canada feel uncomfortable and betrayed, but it was also having an impact on how we were seen internationally.

That is our job in this place. It is our job to stand up at those moments and say we cannot abide by that. An apology simply will not do because of the depth of the betrayal. Again, I am not here to negotiate the intention. I am here only to say the impact that this has.

We are now in a position where we are seeing a lot of political mistakes that I certainly hope will stop. I hope that whoever is elected to sit at any seat in this House, including the Speaker's seat, understands that their role is to support all of us to do the work to support Canadians. That has to be our fundamental goal when we are in this place. How do we support Canadians? We do not need this instability. I hope deeply that we do not see any more of that behaviour in this place, because we need a stable place to do our jobs. I do not appreciate seeing this become so personal and not about a process or policy, and we should all reflect on what we see happening. Let us not just blame but look at how we can all do better.

I think about the role of a Speaker, their commitment to being impartial and not being political in the seat, and that is really important. I thank the member who is in the seat right now. I find you in particular, Madam Speaker, very fair. Sometimes I do not appreciate when you are hard on us, and I have had a few moments where you have been very firm with me, but I will deal with that because I want to know that the person sitting in the seat will provide leadership and will not use it for any other method, except to make sure this place is dealt with in a very positive way.

• (1755)

When I look at this debate, I hope we can move on from it and see a meaningful motion tabled at PROC around reviewing what we want to see in the future, reviewing the rules we currently have and where the gaps are and understanding that we now have a society that is changing. Everything we do is eventually going to show up on a video somewhere anyway, so we better be more thoughtful about what we do in front of a camera, especially when it is planned. We should also be careful in how we speak about our party and other parties, especially if we are in the role of Speaker.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): 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 Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Automotive Industry; the hon. member for Victoria, Oil and Gas Industry; the hon. member for Battlefords—Lloydminster, Carbon Pricing.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I know the member listened to my comments already in regard to this debate. Not to take anything away from the importance of the institution and the role the Speaker plays, but she raised an interesting point that I picked up on and I would like her to expand on it.

There is nothing to prevent the procedure and House affairs committee from setting its agenda to review a wide spectrum of different issues. If in fact there is a need for opposition parties or any member of the government to look further into X, Y or Z, that opportunity is there because, quite frankly, it is a majority of members who make the determination as to what PROC will look at.

Could the member expand on that? From my perspective, there is no such thing as a perfect human being. Mistakes do happen and there has been a great deal of remorse demonstrated. Recommendations, from I understand, have been fulfilled. Could she provide her thoughts in regard to PROC and its potential agenda in the future without—

• (1800)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for North Island—Powell River.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Madam Speaker, I appreciate that there have been expressions of remorse. I just want to start there. However, what I am really looking for are actions to follow them. I would hate to be in a position again where we have to ask the Speaker to resign. I am hopeful, very hesitantly hopeful, that we will see ongoing respect of that office in a way that will make us all feel comfortable.

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As to the other part of his question, yes, I think it is up to PROC. I was a member of PROC for many years and I know that it is an important committee. It is the mother committee. I think this is relevant. It should be brought up, and there is a different mechanism to bring forward this really important issue.

I am not on PROC right now, so I do not know everything it is studying off the top of my head. However, I think it is also very important that in this place we do not decide in this context what the committee should be doing. That is really up to the committee to decide.

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

Before I begin my comment for my hon. colleague, I would like to recognize the life of former city councillor John DeCicco, who passed away during our break. May perpetual light shine upon Mr. DeCicco. I wish his family all the best in this difficult time. I went to school with his son. He did a number of great things.

I listened with great interest to my colleague's speech. We got to know each other at the veterans affairs committee and I respect her quite a bit. She was very truthful about her decorum in this place. I have seen with all parties that perhaps sometimes things get out of hand. We have all made mistakes.

One question I have for her is with regard to her capacity as a whip. Are the exhortations she makes to this House something she is prepared to extend to her party as well? Every party needs improvement in this area.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Madam Speaker, I am so sorry to hear of the passing in the member's community. It is always hard to lose a community leader in our areas. It is good to appreciate them and of course their tremendous loved ones, who support them so much.

As a whip, I know that we all struggle with trying to support the Speaker in providing as much decorum as possible. I have had many challenges, both in my party and outside of my party, trying to figure out how to do that. I will continue to work with my party, as I have since 2019 when I became the whip, to make sure that if our members do heckle, they do not make personal attacks and I have chats with them.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, it goes without saying that the office of Speaker is a difficult one to occupy. One reason is that, if I am not mistaken, the rules state that the Speaker must leave his caucus and must even cancel his membership in the party. I am not sure about this, but it is what I have been told.

The member made some interesting suggestions about the office, but we still have to deal with the case before us. A study was done, but facts have since come to light that we did not know at the time.

Does my colleague find it interesting that the Speaker chose not to make those facts known when he was on the spot because of the previous facts?

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Madam Speaker, I think all of this is peculiar, to be quite honest.

This is a very trying time for us, and it is a very internal process. However, it is very legitimate because we have to make sure that as we do our work, we have people who are in certain roles that provide a good context for us to move forward.

What I would say is that I still see the personal attack that is happening. It is not that I agree with the behaviour; that is not what I am saying at all in my speech and in my time here. What I am saying is that we have proof that other Speakers in the role have done similar activities. The member has asked me whether the Speaker should have said this or that. If other Speakers, at different times, have done the same thing he was doing, then why would he think it was something he had to confess? That is the problem.

The process, not the person, is the problem. That does not mean I agree with the person. It means that we have to do better in this place, to have rules or clarity or a process of training for new Speakers. I am not sure what the answer is. That is really up to the committee, if it chooses to make that study.

● (1805)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I know this is difficult for all of us.

I want to reflect on how the Green Party handled the previous controversy, which we found egregious. The hon. member for Nipissing—Timiskaming was in the wrong, accepted responsibility and stepped down. We are the only party in this place that did not call for his resignation. It was difficult. I hugely respect the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby. I remember the sort of intake of breath and the shock when I heard him say we thought the hon. Speaker must resign.

I think it is a very dangerous thing, and it gets worse. I take the point from the hon. member for North Island—Powell River that it gets worse not just when it is personal but also when it becomes partisan. It is very difficult in this place to say that we have gotten over any sense of partisanship. I go back to Lucien Lamoureux, and of course in those days, in the 1960s, one was not elected as Speaker. He chose to leave his caucus while serving as Speaker. That is not uncommon. However, he chose to run for re-election in his riding as an independent. Two major parties stood down so he could do that. Strangely enough, it was the NDP candidate who ran against him. When he ran for re-election the second time when he was Speaker, he still ran as an independent. Nobody stepped down, and he still won.

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However, unless we are prepared to make those kinds of concessions, that no one ever runs again as other than an independent, we will always have the risk of partisanship, and if—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for North Island—Powell River.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Madam Speaker, this is the important debate that does need to happen. We do have to find a space where we are outside partisanship, where we think, from an all-party perspective, as a place that needs to function, how we do this in the best way, moving forward. It is hard to step out of partisanship. What I would hope is that as parties, we all think very carefully about whom we send to certain committees when we are having those kinds of debates. We would like them to be as non-partisan as possible so we can actually have a meaningful debate and create rules that fit for all of us.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the health care workers who supported the member through her difficult journey last month.

The member talked about where this debate should take place. We know PROC has been seized with this issue. Here we are with another concurrence motion. I am not saying that this is not an important issue, but I am wondering where the debate should take place. We had concurrence motions before Christmas.

I have been trying to table a petition in support of volunteer firefighters and search and rescue since early December, and the House has been seized with concurrence motions. We have not been able to table an e-petition that has been signed by over 16,000 people from rural Canada who cite that this is important. Are we going to get to that business? How are we going to get there?

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Madam Speaker, I hope we do get to petitions today. It would certainly be timely. We have seen a lot of concurrence motions, and it is important for us to reflect on the purpose of them and whether they are actually helping us help Canadians. At the end of the day, I know that I and my NDP colleagues really want to make life better for Canadians, so I hope we can all find a space to do that here.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before I go to the next Speaker, I want to indicate the hon. member for Perth—Wellington's amendment, which was seconded by the member for Barrie—Innisfil, is in order.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

• (1810)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will start by saying I find the character assassination of the Speaker of the House of Commons by the Conservatives and the Bloc is extremely troubling. The reason I say that is that, unlike a politician who is assigned to a political party and actively participates in a political party, the Speaker of the House of Commons, quite honestly, does not have the ability to give their side of the story. The Speaker of the House of Commons has to remain neutral even in a time when there is an attempt to assassinate his character, which is exactly what is going on.

I find it extremely troubling that once again, and we thought we had dealt with this matter in the fall, the Bloc and the Conserva-

tives, for their own reasons that I will mention shortly, are just absolutely insistent that they do whatever they can to destroy the reputation of the Speaker of the House of Commons. They have their motives, and I will get to what I think those are in a second.

What did the Speaker do when he recognized he made a mistake? The Speaker came before the House, apologized to the House, accepted that what he did was wrong, and left it at that. This is because that is all he can do quite frankly.

I learned a lesson very early on in my municipal political career, which was that one does not attack the staff. We do not attack the people who support us, the people who are there to give us advice and opinions, because they do not have the vehicle to defend themselves. They do not have the ability, the voice, that a sitting member has to defend themselves.

It is the same reason we do not attack the table officers. I regret to say I have seen it happen in the House that they have been shouted at. However, we do not go after them, because they do not have an ability to defend themselves. When we elect a Speaker, we ask the Speaker to be as impartial as the table officers. The Speaker right now has to be subjected to all of this and does not have an opportunity to give their side of the story. However, what he did do was apologize.

Another Speaker was basically being accused of the same thing, or was being accused of being partisan. Members already know which Speaker it was; it was the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle. On September 24, 2014, he said, "Another of our time-honoured traditions is that of respect for the office of Speaker. O'Brien and Bosc, at page 313, state that 'Reflections on the character or actions of the Speaker—an allegation of bias, for example—could be taken by the House as breeches of privilege and punished accordingly.'"

That is how the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle dealt with similar accusations: Threats of breaches of his parliamentary privilege. This is not what we see from the current Speaker. The current Speaker accepted his faults, apologized for his faults and asked forgiveness.

The Bloc is going to tell us now, as its members have been saying today, that it just wants to calmly say that it wants a full investigation into this to look into the new information. How are we being so unreasonable? The Bloc members want to paint a picture of their having just shown up on the scene and of being the arbiters of good versus evil, of partisan versus non-partisan.

Let us not forget that it was the Bloc Québécois, on day number one, before the issue went to PROC and before anybody had an opportunity to discuss this matter, that was calling on the Speaker's resignation. As a matter of fact, and I remember it vividly, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle came out here to stand on a point of order. I am pretty sure he thought it was going to end at that, which is that the Speaker had made an error. Then the Bloc Québécois stood up and demanded that the Speaker resign. Not to be outdone, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle sprinted back into the House and said that he too called for his resignation. The Bloc Québécois has been leading this charge from day one. Its members sat there through committee and have had the debates in the House, and now they are here.

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● (1815)

Why are they doing it? They are doing it for political opportunity. They are doing it for the exact same reason that the Conservatives have jumped on the same bandwagon. They see opportunity in Quebec to take Liberal seats by showing that there is chaos within the Liberal Party. That is their sole reason. Everybody knows it; it is as clear as day and very obvious. The Conservatives just do not want to be outdone by the Bloc. They are fighting for those seats too, so they are pulling the same moves, trying to trump up and over-exaggerate allegations.

I represent the riding that Peter Milliken once represented. I knew Peter Milliken in my time as a city councillor and before that. I am very aware of what the longest-serving Speaker of the House of Commons did in our riding and perhaps the one or two neighbouring ridings, what he deemed to be acceptable and what he did not. As a matter of fact, there is a CTV article from August 25, 2015, ironically written by Jordan Press when he was with the Canadian Press, a Queen's grad and a former reporter with The Kingston Whig-Standard. I will read what he wrote on what Peter Milliken had to say on that:

Peter Milliken, the longest-serving Speaker in Canadian history, didn't attend the Liberal party's weekly caucus meetings, nor did he go to party conventions. During elections, he didn't attend any events where Liberal leaders stumped for votes, believing it would be "inappropriate" to be in attendance....

Milliken said the trick to campaigning as Speaker is to avoid taking stands on federal policy issues: You can say what your party's position is on a particular topic, but you don't express a position on a topic on which the party hasn't taken a stand. The same rule doesn't apply to local issues—only national ones, he said.

Milliken also said he avoided attending any events where the Liberal leader was stumping for votes, believing it was "inappropriate" given how he tried to keep a firewall between him and the party....

[The member for Regina—Qu'Appelle], however, opted to attend Harper's event at a farm outside Regina where many of his supporters were in attendance to hear from the Conservative leader.

Thus, while the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle was the Speaker of the House of Commons, while he was threatening MPs not to challenge his non-partisanship over the possibility of breaching his privilege, he was attending events where Stephen Harper was showing up for campaign events. The double standards are endless, and I have more examples.

We can go to the Regina—Qu'Appelle Conservative Association: "Back by popular demand. Cigar and Scotch tasting, \$175 per person. Dinner and shooting that will be held at the Regina—Qu'Appelle skeet shoot and dinner event." This was not during a writ period; it was in advance that. The member will argue that away by saying, "Well, it was my riding, and so it was okay."

However, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle has countless violations. He hired his sister-in-law, in the Speaker's office, by the way, whom he then had to fire after the press found out about it. The member for Regina—Qu'Appelle shifted cash to a Tory campaign smeared in the robocall scandal. This is the same individual who then had to preside over those deliberations after the election where the robocall scandal came out. It turned out that his riding was the one giving money for the robocalls into Guelph, and he presided over it. However, do not dare question his impartiality, because if we do, we are breaching his privilege. He did not waste

any time making sure members knew about that, as I previously indicated.

The House Speaker, referring to the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, on December 14, 2011, used a firm linked to the Cotler calls, which were the calls that went out to say that Irwin Cotler had resigned. As well, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle broke Parliament's rules by filming a partisan video in his office, and that was not even that long ago.

● (1820)

When I thought we were having the last debate on this, on the very last sitting day prior to the break, I referenced a tweet that the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle had put out the day before. On December 14, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle said, in reference to what was going on with the member for Hull—Aylmer, the Speaker of the House of Commons, "It's all totally unacceptable. When I was Speaker the only fundraiser I attended was for my own riding. This is something all Speakers are allowed to do because they must run under a party banner, and other parties run candidates against them."

The next day, on December 15, just over a month ago, I said:

I know that yesterday the member tweeted out an explanation as to why it was okay for him to attend a political campaign fundraiser in his own riding and suggested that it is okay to do it in one's own riding but not outside one's own riding. I am wondering if the member can just expand a bit on that and inform us why it would be okay in their own riding if they are the Speaker, but not another riding outside their riding.

The member for Regina—Qu'Appelle responded to my question by saying:

Madam Speaker, that is a great question. I appreciate the friendly question from the member from Kingston because there is a very important difference and it really does change the nature of it.

Speakers have always had to run under party banners. Until the day comes when parties have a convention or agreement that we will not run candidates against the Speaker, the Speaker has to go into an election and has to have signs and pamphlets and organize volunteer meetings. There has never been an expectation that a Speaker would cease partisan activities in that nature for their own re-election. Previous Speakers have done that for decades. In fact, the previous Speaker, the member for Nipissing—Timiskaming, made a government announcement in his riding for government funding. Nobody objected to that because it was clear that he was communicating to his own constituents. He was talking about the work that he does as a member of Parliament and informing his constituents as to a government decision in his riding. We were aware that the former Speaker had made that announcement, but that did not offend members of Parliament because it was in his own riding. The same is true for partisan fundraising activity.

That is very important. The member for Regina—Qu'Appelle told me in this House that the same can be true for partisan funding activities and members should be doing them only in their own ridings, according to him.

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The problem is that in 2015, the member for Regina—Wascana, which is a neighbouring riding, not the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle's riding and not the Speaker's riding, long before the election, as this was in May and the writ period did not start until August, and the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle attended a \$100-a-person fundraising event. The Regina—Wascana Conservative EDA was pleased to invite them to a private networking event with the now Leader of the Opposition, the member of Parliament for Carleton, on Tuesday, May 19, at 6:30 p.m. This event was taking place in a member's home; therefore, space was very limited. They fully expected the event to sell out, and tickets were \$100.

Posted on May 21, days later, is a picture that has the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, the member for Regina—Wascana and the now Leader of the Opposition standing next to each other, and the member for Regina—Wascana had a caption under the picture that said that on Tuesday evening he was joined by the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle and the hon. member for Carleton at the wine and cheese event hosted by the Regina—Wascana Conservative Party EDA, and that it was a great night of discussion and fellowship.

We have the Conservatives trying to use this, in my opinion, for nothing more than political chaos and political gain. The member for Regina—Qu'Appelle knows full well the countless violations that his standard would have applied to him when he was Speaker, but, for some reason, there is absolutely no shame in his approach when he makes the demands that he is making on the current Speaker of the House, who, by the way, as I said when I started my speech, acknowledged his error, apologized and asked for forgiveness.

• (1825)

I have told members how the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle dealt with similar scenarios. He threatened parliamentary privilege upon people if they continued to challenge his potentially biased nature while sitting in that chair.

What message are we sending to people? What message does this send to our children? If someone apologizes and asks for forgiveness, they are going to get doubled down on by the Conservatives and the Bloc. They are going to go after them even harder. They see them as weak now. They see them as a political target. They see them as somebody they can exploit for political gain.

That is all that is happening. That is what has happened with this issue from the beginning. It is how it started, with the Bloc outdoing the Conservatives. It is completely how this was conducted in PROC. It is how this is being conducted now. There is just absolutely no sense of being able to rectify, no sense that somebody has made an apology, that somebody has said they will attempt to do better and has owned up to their mistakes, which is exactly what we are seeing.

Instead, we hear from the Bloc, who are now saying that new information has come to light because the Speaker was at a provincial Liberal volunteer event.

I listened with interest when the Bloc spoke earlier, because Bloc members kept repeating two fallacies. They referred to it as a fundraiser. It was not. It was a volunteer appreciation event.

They also said it set a precedent. It certainly does not set a precedent. The only thing that has set a precedent with respect to this issue is the manner in which the Bloc and the Conservatives are treating it.

The precedent was set, most likely, long before the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, but it certainly was a precedent that he upheld, because he continued to act in a manner that he now deems as being completely inappropriate.

The Bloc wants us to believe that if we set this precedent now, it changes everything going into the future. I have news for the Bloc. This is not precedent-setting.

Just so we are absolutely clear on this issue, the Bloc Québécois takes great exception, suddenly, to the Speaker going to a volunteer appreciation event at an Ontario Liberal event.

I do not know how it works in Quebec. Maybe the federal Bloc Québécois and its provincial counterparts all get together, but I can tell members that in Ontario, the Ontario Liberals and the federal Liberals are two completely separate entities. We see each other at Christmastime, in my riding anyhow, and say hello and shake hands.

In any event, it really offends the Bloc that the Speaker went to a provincial riding association volunteer appreciation event, but somehow the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle going to a \$100-a-person fundraiser at the equivalent federal-level riding association next door to his, which he had to pay money to go to, is somehow a non-issue. Do not worry about it. It happened so long ago that it does not even matter anymore, I guess.

No, that is not what this is about. It is not about the Bloc comparing the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle to the Speaker now. It is not about the Bloc Québécois comparing the present Speaker to any other Speaker. It is about a character assassination by the Bloc Québécois. That is what this is. Bloc members want to stir up political turmoil, and they are seizing their opportunity. That is all that this is.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, the accusations that we just heard are absolutely ridiculous. The whip of the Bloc Québécois respectfully presented the issue earlier. This is not personal matter. It is a matter of confidence. That is what the member for Kingston and the Islands does not seem to understand or does not want to understand. I think it is the latter.

He is saying that we asked the Speaker to resign. Yes, we did, because members' confidence in him had been undermined. A Speaker must be absolutely impartial in their duties. That is essential for the democratic institution in which we work. People can accuse the Bloc Québécois of many things in this federal Parliament, but they can never accuse us of not having respect for institutions. We are asking to proceed in this way in order to defend this institution.

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Because confidence was undermined, we agreed to participate in the study in good faith. We were not very satisfied with the outcome. Everyone knows that, because we wrote a dissenting opinion. Other facts came to light afterward, facts that should have been disclosed during the study. It was incomplete. This is not personal. The study is incomplete and absolutely has to be completed. By the same token, we also need to clarify the rules so this does not happen again, as my NDP colleagues suggested. Just saying that someone else did the same thing does not make it all okay. If a police officer gives me a ticket and I say that someone else did the same thing I did, the officer will give me the ticket anyway. We will eventually stop going back 25 years.

• (1830)

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I do not know if the member from the Bloc knows what we are debating right now. What he just said that the NDP are asking for is in the concurrence motion. We are going to vote in favour of it. I voted in favour of it at PROC. I am fully aware of the concurrence motion. To set standards for the Speaker is exactly what is in there.

The member suggests that the Bloc members came here with good intentions, and in a nice, calm way their whip said what they really think should be done. That would hold a lot more water if they had not been hell-bent on demanding the resignation of the Speaker. From the first opportunity they sniffed a little blood, they started circling around like a group of sharks looking to pounce on the Speaker. That is all that happened. The member knows it.

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 begin, I want to recognize a constituent who passed away during the break. His name was John Gnitt. I owe a debt of gratitude to John, because when I was a brand-new lawyer, opening up my own firm, he gave me my first set of robes, which any lawyer out there knows are quite expensive. My deepest condolences to his family, and may perpetual light shine upon him.

My question for my hon. colleague is this. I have seen the member make a big deal out of small things and out of some things bigger than others. I wonder, if the shoe was on the other foot and if this was a Conservative Speaker, would he not be similarly calling for his or her resignation? History tends to repeat itself, so I wonder whether he would believe this if he was in the same position.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I grew up in my riding with the Speaker of the House of Commons being someone I saw all the time. I am aware of what the Speaker of the House of Commons does in their riding and region.

I think that is a fair question to ask on any other issue, because I quite often ask myself, “How I would act if I was on the other side of this?” Believe it or not, I have the ability to self-reflect from time to time. However, I will say that I am very confident in my position on this issue, because I literally grew up watching Peter Milliken. I watched him from the time I was in high school. I watched him as a member of Parliament and a Speaker of the House of Commons. I saw what he did. I saw how he engaged. I saw what his role was like in this House, and I believe I am on the right side of this.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague talked a bit earlier about the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, who also was a Speaker and broke the rules but who is now coming forward in the House, which is the height of hypocrisy. My colleague from Hamilton stated that earlier as he moved a motion at the ethics committee to have the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle come and testify, because that member also broke the rules, not only when he was the Speaker but also when he was a member of Parliament, using parliamentary resources to support his candidate from Oxford in a partisan way.

My comment is this. If the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle is calling for the resignation of the Speaker, should he also resign if the Speaker resigns? That would be my question for the member.

Also, does he support the three items we have identified in the report?

• (1835)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I support the report, and I did at committee along with the NDP. I certainly support it here. There are some good recommendations in here.

Who would want to be Speaker now? Honestly, who would now want to sit in that chair knowing they cannot defend themselves when accusations are brought against them? The most they could do would be to say that they are sorry. If they do that, by the way, they should expect to be looked at and perceived as being weak while people pounce on them and look for even more blood to extract.

We are in a really interesting position right now. It is important that we define what those rules are, so I certainly support the motion. I apologize to the member, but I forgot the first half of his question.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, could the member comment on the fact that we are having a concurrence motion?

We had this debate for hours in December. It went to committee and was studied. We got the recommendations. A majority supported the recommendations. Today, I look to my constituents and think about what they want us to talk about in the House, which is the reality of what is happening in our communities across this land. There are issues such as inflation, affordability, the need for investments and the types of things government is doing to support Canadians. That is actually what we were supposed to be debating today: the fall economic statement.

Could the member provide his thoughts on that?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, by using similar tactics, the Conservatives did not let us vote on the last fall economic statement until June 2023. It was almost summer by the time they finally let us vote on it.

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When we are wondering why we have not passed the fall economic statement, and when Conservatives get up to rhetorically wonder why that is in March, April and May, I hope they remember this moment and, undoubtedly, so many more moments like this to follow. It has just become a procedural tactic that is now also being utilized by the Bloc Québécois.

There are very important things in the fall economic statement, things that actually mean something to people and could significantly change people's lives. However, rather than actually help people, which is the reason we are here, Conservatives and Bloc members would rather just create controversy and turmoil, sometimes where it does not even exist, because it will slow things down. Their priorities do not lie with Canadians. Their priorities lie with their political futures.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot for a brief question.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, it will be hard to keep this short, because what we have been hearing for the past little while is really fascinating. The main thing that fascinates me is hearing a member who did not listen to the speech by my colleague from Salaberry—Suroît because he was too busy talking.

We could hear him from over here. He was not listening. Then he makes a big show of being offended and upset. He just told us that he does not like it when we look at things too closely. He said that no one would want to be Speaker because they would be scrutinized. Being scrutinized is called democracy and parliamentarianism. That is quite an admission from the Liberals.

He is still talking. He is not listening. He should take a moment to listen. It might do him some good. I do not know at what point someone decides to leave their critical judgment at the door just to engage in full-time partisanship, to be a partisan machine.

What is the point of saying that because the Conservatives did it in the past, we have the right to do the same thing and wash our hands of it? What kind of argument is that?

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, the member should review Hansard. In the exact same question where he said I did not listen, he also said that I said I did not like it. I had to have listened to it if I was going to make a comment.

I am sorry that the member does not like the fact that I disagree with him, because I do disagree with him. I disagree with the intentions that he sets out. I disagree with the intentions of his whip. I disagree with the intentions of the Bloc on this. I think they are motivated, not by replacing the Speaker because they think it is the "right" thing to do, but I think they are motivated by political reasons only.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address the House today.

Before I get to the subject at hand, I want to acknowledge a tragic anniversary. Today is the seven-year anniversary of the Quebec

mosque shooting, a horrible act of Islamophobic violence in our country. I want to extend my condolences to the families and the members of that community who are still dealing with the pain of that, to all those throughout the country who have been profoundly affected by that event and to those who are deeply concerned about Islamophobia today. I had many conversations today with members of the Muslim community about the challenge of present Islamophobia and about some of the escalating tension and division we are seeing in our society.

In the course of those conversations, I had an opportunity to reflect a little on the importance of integrity. When we are looking at difficult issues, issues that may be contentious within or between different communities, what people are looking for from their politicians is integrity. That is to be a fully integrated person and to be the same consistent person, regardless of where one is and regardless of what group one is speaking to. It is very important for us in the Conservative Party to act with integrity.

If we speak to one group and deliver a message in that group, and if we then speak to another group perhaps with a different perspective, then we nonetheless deliver the same message. We stand for the same things, and we believe the same things and we are the same things, regardless of who we are with or who we are talking to. We do not change who we are, how we describe our convictions or what we say our policies are depending on who we are talking to, but we are leaders with integrity.

One thing that is really driving some of the tension and confusion around the government's position is that, on some of the critical issues facing our country and the world, we see very clearly an absence of integrity. We have a government that, on certain issues, has a strategy to say different things to different groups of Canadians and to try to sell them the message they want to hear. Reflecting on this issue of what integrity means and why it is so important is what brings us to this discussion today, a discussion about an action taken by the Speaker.

Following a decision by the Bloc to move this motion, we are debating a concurrence motion on a report by PROC, the procedure and House affairs committee, that deals with the conduct of the Speaker. It responds to a series of incidents involving the Speaker acting in a partisan way that is contrary to what is appropriate to the office.

The largest incident, the most prominent incident, was a video recorded of the Speaker wearing the Speaker's robes in the Speaker's chamber, speaking in a partisan fashion and identifying himself with a political party. When he was caught for doing that, he provided an explanation, a challenging explanation, and then, subsequently, there have been other points or revelations brought up of the Speaker acting in a partisan way.

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I think what we would expect from the Speaker and what we need from the Speaker is to have confidence that there is a consistency, an integrity, in his or her, as the case may be, presentation and that, as they are in a role that requires non-partisanship, they would be consistent in demonstrating that non-partisanship. Again, regardless of what room they are in or who is in the room, the Speaker would act with that kind of consistency. It is clear that this particular Speaker comes to the position with a history of partisan activity, but we would have expected that to be put aside when he took on that role, and that has not happened.

● (1840)

This led, close to but not quite, a majority of members of the House to take the position that we needed to have a new Speaker. The reason the committee, in the end, did not recommend a new Speaker is that, ironically, the committee divided along partisan lines.

When the governing coalition of New Democrats and Liberals says that it endorses the Speaker's continuing in his role, a role that has included his acting in a partisan way, and then the two real opposition parties say that they do not have confidence in the Speaker, that underlines the problem. When the Speaker's position is a point of partisan cleavage, that illustrates the problem that the Speaker is in fact no longer able to identify as a non-partisan representative of the whole House.

However, in a way, the Liberals' taking the position that they did is not particularly surprising. We have a Speaker in his robes, speaking at a Liberal Party event, who was then supported by the Liberal Party in continuing in his position.

Obviously, there was a problem at the end with the last Speaker, but I will give the last Speaker credit for making a very important ruling that went against what the government wanted and that protected the prerogatives of the House right before the last election. The previous Speaker demonstrated integrity in that ruling by applying the precedent and by defending the prerogatives of the House even when the government likely did not want him to.

Therefore, after his resignation, when he took the fall for something that the government bears a substantial amount of responsibility, a Speaker came in who had a history of much more partisan positioning. The partisan Liberals have supported the continuation of a Speaker who engaged in partisan Liberal activity while in his office. This is unfortunate and is not defensible from a view to grand principle, but it is understandable based on past behaviour of the Liberal Party.

What is perplexing is what the NDP members have in mind. Not just in this case but across the board, we have seen how the New Democratic Party is defending and protecting the Liberals from scandal prosecution. Why would the coalition partner of the government be so eager to always provide cover for a scandal-plagued Liberal Party? That is a question that is harder to explain.

The NDP, for a long time now, has been supporting Liberal cover-ups, supporting the adjournment of committee meetings that are looking into scandals and preventing questions of privilege from proceeding to the House when the privileges of a committee have been violated in terms of their requests for documents. We have

seen how, time and time again, when Conservatives have tried to probe Liberal scandals, Liberals have been able to rely on their cover-up coalition cousins in the corner to block those investigations. We saw this again in this particular case with the Speaker.

I have been talking about integrity, about saying the same thing regardless of where one is and about presenting oneself in a consistent fashion in different environments. Far from this vision of integrity, the New Democrats have themselves twisted up into knots because they now want, for electoral reasons, to be seen to be challenging the government. They want to talk tough on the government. We heard the NDP leader's question today. He was trying to sound very tough and was asking why the current government has not done more on homelessness?

● (1845)

He has an opportunity to oppose the government, to express his non-confidence, if he does not have confidence in how it has handled the homelessness challenge or other problems facing our country. We gave the NDP leader hundreds of opportunities in the fall to express his lack of confidence in the government if he was so willing, but he was not.

The NDP is increasingly trying to perform in a tough way while, on every occasion when it counts, providing a blank cheque to the Liberal government, helping to cover up its corruption, and supporting its confidence and supply measures as it persists in showing flagrant disregard for the concerns of Canadians.

The NDP brings forward motions at committee asking the government to do things that it did not include in its confidence and supply agreement with the government. It says that the situation is unacceptable, yet it continues to preserve the status quo through its blank cheque coalition with the Liberals.

Most critically, when it comes to the issues of scandal and corruption we are discussing today, the NDP consistently stands with the Liberals in helping them do those cover-ups.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I invite the member across the way to heckle a little louder, and I will respond. I cannot quite—

● (1850)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members that, if they have questions and comments, they should wait until the appropriate time to do that.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, it is good to hear from the member—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member is not in his seat. If he wants to be recognized, he has to be in his seat.

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

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Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, I am always happy to debate my colleague from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, and I wish he had given me an opportunity to actually respond to some of the accusations he has made. However, I understand that decency is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): This is going into debate. That is not a point of order. Members might want to look at the Standing Orders to see what a point of order really is and what it is not.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, it is good to see my friend from Edmonton Griesbach here. I enjoy debating with him. I also enjoyed door knocking in his riding, which I think is very enthusiastic about the Conservative message. It is a riding that did not think it was voting to keep the Prime Minister as the Prime Minister. When New Democrats campaign in Alberta, they rarely admit how close they are to the current Prime Minister or how complicit they are in covering up corruption with their Liberal partners. However, the reality is very clear.

In this vein, it is important to underline for the House what happened in the arrive scam scandal and how the NDP continues to facilitate the government's efforts to avoid accountability. We have a situation in which two senior public servants gave very frank testimony at the government operations committee on November 7. Within three weeks, they both received letters saying that they were the subject of investigations for inappropriate behaviour. Those investigations have not been concluded, yet these senior public servants have now been suspended from their jobs without pay. Therefore, we had two public officials come and give critical, frank testimony about what happened with the arrive scam scandal, and then they were suspended without pay within months after that testimony.

In response to that, I raised a question of privilege at the committee. I said that parliamentary committees need to be able to hear from public servants and from others without those potential witnesses fearing that they will face reprisals as a result of their testimony. When we call and insist on a public servant coming before the committee, that person has an obligation to do so and to tell the truth as they see it.

When we have a situation in which public servants come to committee, tell the truth as they see it and then are subjected to very rare, extreme forms of professional reprisals, this undermines the privileges of Parliament and the ability of Parliament to be able to ask frank questions and get frank answers. It is notable that some of the most explosive testimony from these individuals was not part of their opening remarks. It was not stuff that they necessarily came planning to say. However, they were asked frank, direct questions, and they provided answers to them.

I asked in question period today if the government could explain why there are reprisals being levied against people immediately after their presentations at committee. What is the government trying to hide with respect to the arrive scam scandal? We saw this explosive report from the Office of the Procurement Ombud just today. It just came out. This new report from a critical watchdog finds that 76% of the contractors did no work.

• (1855)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member is really stretching the relevancy issue here. Maybe he could just make some reference to what the debate is all about. I think that would be very helpful. He is referring to something that is completely off base.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members that, when MPs are doing their speeches, they have a bit of latitude, but they should be speaking to the motion before the House. I am sure that the hon. member is linking that together.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, the irony of these points of order interruptions, by the way, from a procedural perspective, is that there is limited time for this debate. The more points of order we have, the less time will be available for questions and comments. I welcome the opportunity for debate. If members do not interrupt on points of order, there will be more time after my speech for us to have an actual debate in the proper format.

The point of highlighting what happened with the arrive scam and talking about how—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would prefer if members could tell me which standing order they are referring to when they rise on points of order.

The hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni.

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Speaker, we are talking about relevance.

The member is deep into OGGO and ArriveCAN. He is going through a list of “gotchas” instead of talking about relevant debate that is happening here in the House. That is exactly what is happening here.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, I want to remind members that there is latitude. The hon. member is just getting back into his speech from a previous point of order.

I want to remind the hon. member again that, if he could refer to the motion and specific points within it, that would help his ability to not be interrupted with points of order.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, the NDP member says this is just a “gotcha”. The NDP is really “got” here, I have to say, and that is why they are objecting.

What I have been talking about for some time is how this issue with the Speaker, the issue with ArriveCAN and the investigation we wanted to do on the Prime Minister's vacation are all examples of the NDP choosing to cover for their coalition partners in the Liberals. The NDP could have done the right thing and joined with the opposition in standing for integrity and consistency in the Speaker's office. The NDP could have joined with us in demanding accountability for those who are trying to penalize those who spoke out—

Routine Proceedings

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to ask members to wait until it is time for questions and comments.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan has the floor.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I know members have been missing me over the Christmas break. It is good to see everyone back and to be restored to my friends here in the Chamber. It is sad in a way, because many of them will not be here after the next election. We should spend as much time together in fruitful, substantial debate as possible.

The point is that we have a concurrence report regarding the actions of the Speaker. It should have been a clear case. After repeated instances of partisan activity by the Speaker, including an incident involving being in the Speaker's office, wearing the Speaker's robes and so forth, it should have been clear that the Speaker would not continue with the confidence of the full House.

However, the governing coalition, backstopped by the NDP, chose to defend scandalous behaviour. The NDP is consistently tied up in knots, because it wants to be tough and challenge the government. It wants to be in opposition and in government at the same time. However, Canadians can see the hypocrisy. They can see how, every time there is an important vote or Liberals are under investigation, which is a lot these days, their friends in the NDP will back them up.

We are calling for a restoration of integrity in politics, where people do the things they say and where they are consistent in what they say, regardless of where they are or whom they are talking to; where politicians do not take on an office and then do things that are contrary to the requirements of that office; and where politicians do not attack the government on the one hand and then provide them with a blank cheque on the other hand.

That is what this debate is fundamentally about. I challenge the NDP, in particular. Liberals are going to act in a scandalous way, but the NDP should stop covering for them. What I said when this coalition deal came about was that we were at risk of getting the worst of both worlds: NDP economics and Liberal corruption. That is what we have: radical left-wing NDP economics with typical, same old Liberal corruption.

• (1900)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 7:02 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings on the motion at this time.

The question is on the amendment.

[*Translation*]

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

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the recorded division stands deferred until

Tuesday, January 30, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

* * *

[*English*]

PETITIONS**FIRST RESPONDERS TAX CREDIT**

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is a great honour for me to table petition e-4594, which was signed by 16,724 people from coast to coast to coast in support of Canada's volunteer firefighters and search and rescue volunteers. Petitioners are asking the government to increase the tax credit from \$3,000 to \$10,000 to help with recruitment and to help deal with the cost of inflation, but most importantly, to let them know they are valued. These volunteers put their lives on the line, and it works out about \$450 a year with this tax credit. It would be increased to just over \$1,200. This is based on them doing 200-plus volunteer hours a year.

I hope everyone in the House of Commons will join these e-petitioners in support of that, and I hope the government will acknowledge it in the upcoming budget. I have 91 certified petitions for any member in the House if they would like one to table in support of the volunteer firefighters and search and rescue volunteers of this great country.

• (1905)

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I present a petition. Whereas employment insurance, maternity and parental benefits provide parents with critical financial support while they care for and bond with a new child, and having a parent at home longer in the critical first year of a child's life or placement within a family better supports healthy attachment and the well-being of a child, adoptive and intended parents are at a disadvantage under the current EI system.

All parents are deserving of equal access to parental leave benefits. Bill C-318 would deliver equitable access to parental leave for adoptive and intended parents. The Speaker of the House of Commons has ruled that the passage of Bill C-318 requires a royal recommendation. The undersigned citizens and residents of Canada call upon the Government of Canada to support adoptive and intended parents by providing a royal recommendation for Bill C-318.

*Orders of the Day***ORDERS OF THE DAY***[English]***COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

FINANCE

The House resumed from December 15, 2023, consideration of the motion.

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is quite unusual to be here tonight debating RBC taking over HSBC because it already happened. We were in debate on this important motion in December, and there was an adjourning of the debate made by the NDP, of all parties, which supported the Liberal government. Lo and behold, during the Christmas break, the finance minister approved the merger of RBC, with the number one bank in Canada buying the number seven bank in Canada, and its 800,000 mortgages, in one big gulp. The result is going to be a disaster for Canadians. Why is that? Well, we have a monopoly problem in Canada.

Canadians pay the highest fees in the world for cell phones, with the largest cell phone bills on the entire planet. Two airlines control 80% of all the airline business in Canada. Five groceries stores, three Canadian and two American, control not only 87% of groceries but also the wholesale for groceries. Insurance companies are dominating with oligopolies in Canada. It is a travesty that 85% of Canadian beer is owned by two companies, and neither is Canadian. Six banks control 87% of the mortgage market, but now that HSBC has been bought by RBC, it means that five banks will control 90% of all Canadian mortgages.

The government, and its lacklustre Competition Act, protects monopolies and oligopolies, and we have a monopoly problem. We have an over-regulated government industry that protects them. Our banks are an oligopoly, which is a word invented in 1930 that literally comes from the word “oligarch” because it means “a few sellers”. It stays true to its name of a few sellers because it only benefits a few, such as its stock owners and the government, but not consumers. Our monopoly problem means that consumers lose with higher fees, less choice, higher mortgage rates, lower investment, lower productivity, fewer start-ups and, more importantly, really bad service, lower wages and low wealth inequality.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, the NDP may want to listen to this because monopolies and oligopolies—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There seem to be some conversations going on at the other end that are disturbing the speakers in the House. I would ask members, including the minister, to please step out to the lobby and have their conversation there.

The hon. member for Bay of Quinte.

• (1910)

Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, the members may want to listen to this because we are in the worst housing crisis in the history of this country right now and the worst housing bubble in the whole world. In eight years, rent has doubled, mortgages have dou-

bled and the amount needed for a down payment has doubled. Sixty-six percent of the average Canadian income is needed now to pay for a mortgage payment. A down payment in Toronto averages \$220,000, and in Vancouver it is \$237,000. It takes 25 years to save up for a down payment when it used to take 25 years to pay off a mortgage.

Tent cities are popping up all over Canada, not only in major cities, but also in rural cities like my hometown of Belleville, Ontario. In 2015, the Prime Minister made an election promise to expand the learn to camp program, which, when he was elected, was meant to help Canadians camp. However, Canadians did not have in mind that they would not be camping in the wilderness for fun, but on public land just to survive.

This is a distinct Canadian problem. Canadian housing prices are 45% to 75% higher than our American counterparts. A lot of the time in border cities the prices are 100% higher. Canada built fewer homes than it did in 1972, which was 50 years ago.

When it comes to HSBC, it was a competitor. Most importantly, it was a competitor in the areas of Vancouver and Toronto. It held 10% of Vancouver's mortgage book and 5% of Toronto's. These are areas that are some of the most expensive and unaffordable in all of Canada. When it provided rates, if we want to talk about a scrappy competitor, a month and a half ago it provided five-year variable mortgage fixed rates at 6.4%. If we compare that to RBC at 7.15%, it means that HSBC would save a family with a half a million dollar mortgage \$312 a month, and good luck having a half a million dollar mortgage in Vancouver.

When we look at the number one bank, RBC, with \$1 trillion in assets under management and total assets of \$2 trillion, buying the number seven bank, HSBC, with \$120 billion in assets and 800,000 mortgage customers, we have taken that competitor out of the market and given it to the largest bank, making that oligopoly and monopoly larger.

However, there was a fail-safe: the regulator. How the Competition Act failed to protect consumers was that the minister, the regulator, could have rejected this deal on behalf of Canadians who are in the worst housing crisis this generation and country has ever faced. However, she approved the deal to protect HSBC from having to find another buyer or, at the very worst, having the remaining banks competing for its clients. I say that she approved it because we had a debate schedule in December. We passed a motion at the finance committee, which was approved, to reject the merger, to have real debate, and again the NDP shut down debate and stopped us from having a debate before the merger was approved by the finance minister. It will be going through in March. The NDP member for Elmwood—Transcona shut down debate in the House of Commons. At the end of the day, we have to look at why. When we look at Vancouver and B.C. mortgage holders who are having a tough time making their mortgage payments as a whole, but are really trying to find ways to keep their homes, why would the government approve a merger that would raise prices for those consumers?

Orders of the Day

This happens all the time with a monopoly. Dozens of studies now show that, every time a merger goes through, prices go up. More importantly, this is the comment I have for the NDP. More studies now are showing that, through oligopolies and mergers, wages are going down. Dozens of studies now document how monopolies and oligopolies are driving income inequality.

An OECD study of seven European nations found that oligopolies reduced wages an average of 7% overall, but 13% for the working class. A U.K. Competition and Markets Authority study published a report last week that said that there is mounting evidence of suppressed wages from labour market concentration, or oligopolies, and wages are on average 10% lower in the most concentrated markets. Economists in the U.S. found that going from a very competitive industry to an oligopoly resulted in a 15% to 25% reduction in wages for workers.

Therefore, this vote and this debate to allow an oligopoly to get bigger, and it is not just about prices, which are really important, is about wages in a country that cannot afford any more wage erosion. That is easy to see.

● (1915)

We can go all the way back to 1776 when Adam Smith wrote *The Wealth of Nations*. For those who have never studied this, he talked about the invisible hand. If there are many buyers and sellers, price is negotiated and price goes down. It is the same thing for wages with the invisible hand. When there are many employees working for the same employer, with competition and the invisible hand, wages go up, but when the invisible hand is eliminated, it means we create monopolies and oligopolies. With the invisible hand, losing those employers and concentrating that, we not only have high prices, but low wages, and that is what the NDP supported when it adjourned this debate.

At the end of the day, monopolies and oligopolies are destroying the economy and the way of life of Canadians. Because I have the option, I am going to talk about what happened since the minister approved this merger. HSBC had variable mortgage fixed rates at 6.4%, which was pretty low compared to RBC at 7.15%. Since the merger has been approved, those rates went to 6.55%, meaning it just cost a Vancouverite \$750 a year on a half-million dollar mortgage. It is not hard to see since the evidence is barely a month old that approving mergers and acquisitions, concentrating our banking industry in the hands of a few, hurts consumers. I shudder to think how this is going to affect workers going forward.

It is not just one industry, as I have indicated. The banking industry has concluded that this merger should never have gone through, but it is following another merger that is giving pains and fits to Canadians at a time when they should not be seeing increased costs. There is the cellphone industry and the merger between Rogers and Shaw. There was an announcement only about three weeks ago that Rogers is increasing its prices by 9%. The average monthly cellphone bill for Canadians is \$106. Australians pay \$30 a month. Canadians, who are already paying the highest cellphone bills in the world, are going to have their bills increased by Rogers and Shaw by \$9 a month, which is 14.5%. At the end of the day, Canadians are going to be paying four times what Australians pay for cellphone bills. That is for 50 gigabytes a month and unlimited talk

and text, the minimum that Canadians are looking for just to survive.

When we talk about cellphone bills, we need to talk to our families and friends, and talk about education, job and workplace navigation, but also safety. Cellphones are what saved Canadians when they got alerts this summer, if they could get alerts during the Rogers outage, when the wildfires were raging across this country.

At the end of the day, the RBC-HSBC report from the Competition Bureau stated that the HSBC company was a scrappy competitor and that there were high barriers for other companies to get in. It talked about low and flexible mortgage rates. Leaders in Vancouver say that in losing HSBC, they are losing a company that donated locally to many charities and organizations. They talk about a head office that is not guaranteed to be there after two years or even six months. That is going to disappear and it is a loss for Vancouver. Of course, these things are lost when we look at what oligopolies want and we are not looking after Canadians.

More importantly, we are losing start-ups. Canada has 100,000 fewer start-ups and entrepreneurs compared to 20 years ago, despite our population growing by 10 million people, and it is easy to see why. When we consolidate these industries, we block new competitors from coming in. I have a consumer-led banking bill that is coming up this Thursday that would give an option for that. Instead of protecting the oligopolies, it would allow many new entrepreneurs and financial tech organizations to compete with banking. It would do one thing: create competition in banking. In the meantime, the government held that back six years and yet it approved the HSBC-RBC merger within several months.

The Competition Bureau knows that competition is broken because it wrote a report on it. It said that from 2000 to 2020, the concentration rose in the most concentrated industries, the top firms are less and less challenged, fewer firms have entered industries and we are seeing profits and markups rise. We see that prices are up and wages are down. Nobody wins with oligopolies and monopolies. At the end of the day, Canada only wins when we have new start-ups, new entrepreneurs and many industries competing for Canadians' dollars because that is how we drive prices down, that is how we create Canadians jobs and that is how Canadians win.

● (1920)

The government has failed Canada by supporting our uncompetitive monopoly problem. When we say monopoly, which is what we use interchangeably, we think of the board game. We all learned young what happens when someone owns all the railroads or all the utilities, or they own one block of properties. If someone owns one block of coloured-coded properties, the rent doubles right away, and we have seen that happening in Canada.

Monopolies and oligopolies result in higher prices, less service, lower wages, greater wealth inequality, and lower productivity and innovation. We should be embracing competition. We should be ensuring that we create Canadian companies. We should be leading the world in IP commercialization, meaning we have companies that create great ideas as we have done in the past, and then commercialize that to create paycheques and great wealth.

However, the government is intent on protecting oligopolies and monopolies, and really protecting what these big companies and their shareholders want, rather than Canadians and stakeholders. The only answer is to push forward quickly with consumer-led banking to create competition in the banking sector and hopefully we are going to allow some good news for Canadians in a whole lot of hurt.

Before I finish, I want to move an amendment.

I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word “That” and substituting the following:

“the 12th report of the Standing Committee on Finance, presented on Wednesday, November 1, 2023, be not now concurred in, but that it be recommitted to the Standing Committee on Finance for further consideration, in light of the recent decision of the Minister of Finance to approve the RBC-HSBC merger, despite the finance committee’s unanimous decision, on October 23, 2023, calling for the merger to be rejected, and to allow the House an opportunity to pronounce itself on this merger before the ratification process is completed.”

The hon. member for Beauce will second it.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The amendment is in order.

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in general, I agree with the member on the issue of monopolies and oligopolies in Canada because of the lack of competition in the banking sector and the telecom sector. As the member mentioned, we are not getting a fair deal in terms of consumers. The cost of banking is high. The cellphone cost he mentioned is also high, but importantly, so are the data charges, which are becoming necessary today. Access to Internet is no longer a luxury; it is a necessity.

What can we do to increase competition so the banking sector—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member has asked his question. We are out of time, but I will allow the hon. member to answer briefly.

The hon. member.

Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, it is great to hear from the other side that they are seeing what is happening here as being a travesty. I hope the member has a strong voice in his caucus to talk about this.

Orders of the Day

What we need to do is increase competitors and stop the mergers; it is really important. There are three mergers we could have stopped: RBC and HSBC; Rogers and Shaw; and WestJet and Sunwing.

I hope he can speak up in caucus.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 7:25 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion are deemed put and recorded divisions are deemed requested.

● (1925)

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 66, the recorded divisions stand deferred until Wednesday, January 31, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[*English*]

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

The House resumed from December 1, 2023, consideration of the motion.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to a really important report that was actually tabled some time ago. I am very pleased now that the Conservatives have found time in their very busy schedules to concur in this report. It relates directly to Canada’s food system. It is no secret that Canadians from coast to coast to coast right now are dealing with the reality of price-sticker shock. They are seeing that for something they would always buy, whether that is dairy products or the extra thing they get for their kid, every time they go the prices are increasing.

This is a direct consequence of our country’s inability, for the many decades leading to this report, to properly plan and prepare for when an emergency strikes and how it impacts our supply chains and how Canadians can get ahead of these factors. The report is good in the sense that it directly looks at the crisis that pertained to the supply chain issues that we were experiencing due to COVID-19, but is important that this report be understood as one to better prepare Canada, not just for a pandemic but for any instance where we would see a devastation to our supply chain that directly impacts the cost of goods for Canadians.

Orders of the Day

Today, we spoke about the importance of looking at the root causes of some of this terrible price gouging that we are seeing in grocery stores. It is no secret that under the cover of inflation we have seen grocery stores directly profit from the crisis across the country. We are seeing this kind of profiteering manifest in record-breaking profits. When we see the record-breaking profits of some of these huge megacorporations like Loblaws or Empire or Metro, we often see it is those who are most vulnerable who suffer the greatest. As a matter of fact, Statistics Canada was clear that one in seven Canadians, which is almost 15%, are experiencing food insecurity as of May 2020. It is an increase of 10.5% from two years earlier.

I hope we have some kind of common goal here among ourselves as parliamentarians and we would see this issue as a non-partisan one because all of our neighbours right now are experiencing this. Whether one is a constituent of Edmonton Griesbach, a constituent of Carleton or a constituent of Kingston and the Islands, it is true that Canadians are feeling the pinch. Canadians really expect us as parliamentarians to use the time that they so desperately do not have to do the work of ensuring they have what they need to get by.

We did remark this day on the passing of Ed Broadbent, and I want to make clear my condolences to the family and to all those who served with him. However, I do also want to speak to a powerful message. So often in his time as not only a politician but also as an academic he advocated for social democracy, to increase the material benefit for Canadians to ensure that Canadians, no matter the poverty they were to experience, had a place at our democratic table. That is only possible through the important work of ensuring that our social institutions can make possible their political will.

When we start to see poverty in our communities to the extent we are seeing it and when we see our food system at a place where during the time of COVID-19 it was impacted so greatly, it is up to us now to deliver on the recommendations within this report. It is up to us to ensure that we have a stronger system of preparing, so that when an emergency strikes our food system, Canadians are ready. We do not have to wait for the next emergency to happen in order to do that. We can do this work today. As a matter of fact, I would ask that we consider doing that today, given the extreme issues we are seeing of price gouging right now. It is an emergency, certainly in my mind.

Canadian households with children are also more likely to experience food insecurity, which is a terrible reality I spoke to last year pertaining to the good people of Saskatchewan. While people in Saskatchewan right now are experiencing the highest costs for food, we are seeing a provincial government that is unwilling to support those people, especially when it comes to a national food program that was tabled here in this House. It is something that families and children need.

Let me speak to the importance of a food program. I grew up in a very poor family in a very poor community known as the Fishing Lake Métis Settlement. There, we were provided with meals at school. I remember, for example, my mom being nervous and she would sometimes sweat, wondering, as a single parent, how she was going to help her child get food today. I would see the difficult

decision in her mind as to whether she should make a car payment or she should make rent, versus feeding us.

● (1930)

It is truly one of the most heartbreaking truths happening right now. It is one of the most heartbreaking realities families are going through as we speak. They are wondering what tomorrow is going to look like for their child and wondering if they will be in the cafeteria with their friends and be able to open a lunch or if they will spend that time in a bathroom at school because they do not have enough.

Today, in light of Mr. Ed Broadbent, I want to be able to speak to my colleagues in a way that hopefully unites us. We speak oftentimes of the things that divide us in this place, but it is true that much unites us. For example, a member just spoke about monopolies and our need to break down those monopolies, and I fully agree it is now time. Subsequent to decades of Conservative and Liberal policies that have allowed megacorporations to flourish, it is time. We have the courage and the moral will to break up those companies, to increase competition and to make possible the material enhancements for those living without.

Over the last decade, food insecurity rose twofold in my home province of Alberta. A new vital statistics report found that in 2011 just over 12% of Albertans were food insecure, and in 2022, that number rose more than 20%. It is heartbreaking to know that our friends and our families, the ones we all care about, are silently suffering in line at a food bank, knowing that these prices are going to continue to climb. These prices will be unchecked forever unless we have the ability to take control of both the vulnerabilities facing our food system and the challenges facing those small and medium-sized businesses, while also ensuring that those profiting off Canadians are held accountable.

When we hold those companies accountable, and I speak of Loblaws, we take the immense wealth they have been able to obtain from Canadians, with record-breaking profits, and use it to ensure that those who do not have the means to survive truly get the opportunity to have a full belly.

Why is that important? Why is it that in the seat of our democracy here in Canada, one of the wealthiest countries in the globe, we happen to be debating food insecurity? It is because of poor decisions. I am not here to point fingers about why we are presented with this challenge today. I hope I can find a way to unite my colleagues toward a better goal, a goal that sees the truth we all hold toward a solution we may debate. That solution will enable tens of thousands, if not millions, of Canadians to truly control their own destiny. It will allow them to participate in our democratic institutions unlike ever before.

Orders of the Day

We know that Canadians living under poor socio-economic conditions are less likely to vote and are less likely to participate. What does that say for our democracy? In a time when we cannot feed those who need it most and they cannot participate, what does that end up with? It ends up with those who would seek to protect the profits of those who win elections.

It is up to each and every one of us to steer clear and to know deep in our hearts the reasons we were sent here. It is up to us to hold accountable those who are the most powerful so that the vulnerable in our society truly have a voice. This is something that has been ingrained in me since I was born, something passed down from generations of indigenous people whose principles lie in the fact that we are only as strong as our weakest link.

Canadians across the country are really suffering and are holding on as best they can. I know the government has the best will and intentions. However, it may not have all the best ideas, and we have been very critical of those ideas, as have our other opposition colleagues. What is needed in our country today is truly a path forward, one that would see the immense food insecurity of northerners. There are particularly dramatic, terrible and sad stories we hear from our Inuit relatives in Nunavut. We have seen some of the largest price gouging in human history taking place there for things as basic as milk.

We know, for example, that there is the nutrition north food program. It is good in its intentions, and I commend the government for ensuring people have food when they can. It is a good program.

• (1935)

The fault with the program is the fact that we do not then check up on the companies that would absorb that subsidy. We see, in fact, companies that would take a goodwill program and abuse it by increasing the prices of those goods in order to increase their profits. These are the fine details that companies that are ruining competition in our country thrive on. They thrive on the fine print that allows them to get away with it.

That leads me to an important piece in regard to tax fairness. We know that some of these megacorporations are not paying their fair share. I know for certain that small and medium-sized businesses in our ridings are paying their fair share. They are doing hard work. They are trying as best they can to put food on the table while making sure they can give back to their communities. They do so by ensuring that the local parade, whether it is for Canada Day, Christmas or any other community event, is sponsored by the few thousand dollars they can take in as profit. We never get to see Loblaw's in a parade. As a matter of fact, I have never seen that in my community, and I do not think it has been in anyone's community.

This is to say that those who are supporting our communities need our support now more than ever. I was disappointed to see that the CEBA loans were not extended, as were my Conservative colleagues and my Bloc colleagues, and, I am sure, many of my Liberal colleagues. That is something we will have to reckon with as companies continue to default and fall behind.

I want to make mention of these companies, because they are the very same companies that would end the crisis we are seeing in our food supply chain insecurities. We know that if we strengthen small

and medium-sized businesses, increase competition and ensure that those who are providing for our communities truly get the benefit and the support of a government that is willing to support them and support communities, it is good policy. I really do think we can find some kind of consensus here as long as we have the political will, but we are still in a position where megacorporations continue to hide and avoid taxes.

I spoke to the CRA in the public accounts committee, where this report came from, about the reality of tax evasion in the billions of dollars. We can, in fact, if we have the courage, use the funding that is being taken out of the hands and mouths of families and that is driven into the coffers of multinational corporations and put it back in the hands of communities. That could truly end the crisis we are seeing with our food supply.

I will even go further. When we support those small and medium-sized businesses, local grocers, our farmers and the local production of goods, we support Canada's future.

Members may recall that when this report was commissioned, there were protesters from Prince Edward Island outside this place. They were good, hard-working potato farmers who showed up every day, no matter the conditions, to make sure we had food on our tables. We saw piles and truckloads of potatoes wait there because we were unable to get and to secure export to the United States.

That should not be the case. Those potatoes should be going right across this country where there are hungry families. Rather than looking for the better dollar elsewhere, we should have the courage and the moral will to ensure that Canadians, even if a dollar is not to be made, get the food they so desperately need rather than have so much of it gather in sites where it goes to waste.

We need laws in this country that protect Canadians from the time a food product is produced to the time that food product is eaten. We shall not and we should not allow companies to use their purchasing power to overcome the consumer, but we are seeing that. If we do not buy the goods that they put out front, they throw them away. What a travesty and a terrible reality it is to know that in a food crisis, in a wealthy country like Canada, we throw away tonnes of food, and we allow those corporations to get away with it.

Orders of the Day

New Democrats have been consistent in our approach that we need an understanding of both the wants and the needs of Canadians. We have to be clear about the wants and needs. The free market that my Conservative colleagues so often speak about should be the market of wants. If we want an Xbox, a PlayStation, a new skateboard or whatever goods we find our kids for Christmas, it should be on the free market. We should certainly ensure that there is fair competition, that those goods are on the market and that Canadian products are innovative and have a fair chance at hitting the shelves for Canadians to choose from.

● (1940)

When it comes to the needs of Canadians, we need to be certain that in order for Canadians to actually practise their democratic rights in a political democracy, we need to guarantee their social access to the things they need: housing, food, water and dignity, things that no human should ever be deprived of. When we deprive humans of these things they need, we deprive them of the very real outcome of being able to participate in our political democracy.

Political democracy is so well connected to the social outcomes of Canadians, to something as simple as food. I will warn Canadians that if we do not get a hold of the dramatically increasing prices of the things Canadians need, of water, food, housing, etc., we will begin to see a dramatic erosion of our democratic institutions. We will begin to see a great mistrust, a great apathy, a great nihilism in our future.

For me, coming from very humble beginnings in rural northeast Alberta, it is a dream to be able to stand in this place. It is a dream to be able to speak to such hon. colleagues about the solutions I think could help us. It is a dream that is still alive, a dream of a better Canada, a dream that still lives on in so many hungry hands and hungry mouths today. They pray that our democracy and the institution of which we are members will come together, not just on the problems facing the country but on the solutions.

I have tried my best to ensure that I speak to the very real realities of the people of Edmonton Griesbach, the realities they are facing in terms of the lack of housing, unaffordable groceries or the immense violence they face due to poverty. I also want to ensure that we can deliver, even in a position from which we may not politically benefit, and the Conservatives remind us every single day that we may not be politically salient as a party or politically salient enough to win government. I accept that. That is fine.

What I trust deeply is the goodwill of Canadians. I trust deeply that they will know the kind of hope that lives in my heart, that they will know that I truly desire the kind of Canada that unites us, the kind of Canada that says no one should go without, and the kind of Canada that feeds us.

This is a dream that I think all parties share. I hope they will guarantee our party the same goodwill, to know that our solutions, when we speak of dental care and ensuring there is a tax on the most wealthy banks, or when we speak of anti-scab legislation, that it comes from a place of deep respect for Canadians, a deep understanding that they, too, are hurting, and an understanding that says we will not sit idly by while conditions get worse.

We can, in fact, ensure a kind of future that is morally correct, socially correct and economically correct. We can, and I believe it, so long as we speak not only of the problems but also of the solutions.

Our report makes clear, and I sat with hon. colleagues from all parties to form a consensus on the report, that we must change and we must prepare Canadians for an economy and a system that protects them from what can be a devastating outcome. We must protect, first and foremost, the quality of food, the supply of food and its transport. This would ensure that we have a base to our economy that could make possible the truths I have spoken about today.

I believe that when we enact the policies that we have generously put forward here, Canada will come out with a plan, a plan that would secure us for the next emergency, because it is a matter of when, not if an emergency strikes, but when.

I am very honoured to stand here on behalf of the good constituents of Edmonton Griesbach in this year, 2024, and I look forward to hearing my colleagues.

● (1945)

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have to agree with my colleague; we do want to find common ground with regard to food security and making sure that Canadians can afford healthy, nutritious food. The key word is “afford”.

While the member talked about record profits, one thing he did not talk about was the fact that there are record input costs for our farmers and producers in order to produce that food. There are record costs for our truckers, for their fuel to truck the food to the grocery stores.

I am just wondering if my colleague could comment on why the NDP does not want to support axing the carbon tax for our farmers and producers, so that we can actually bring down the cost of food in order for Canadians to see the cost of food go down at the grocery store.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Mr. Speaker, I am really happy that my hon. colleague mentioned this, because it is an important question that seems simple as to its facts but is actually quite complex in terms of how the supply chain truly works. I will say this: The costs that are being borne by our farmers, the costs that are being borne by cattle producers like my family, and the costs that are being borne by the truckers who are moving the food are all increasing. That is true, and I want to thank my hon. colleague for making that clear.

Orders of the Day

However, the part I hope she can hear clearly is that it is not Canadians who are benefiting from this. It is not even the government that is benefiting from this. It is the megacorporations that, at the time of input increase, increased not only the base cost of goods but also the profit margin of those goods. That is the definition of “profiteering”. We used to be a country that, in the face of profiteering, would clamp down on it. We only need to look at World War II to see how Canadians used competition to ensure a fair price. We used government apparatus to ensure consumer fairness.

My answer to my hon. colleague is that although I agree with the premise that, of course, these things are going up, the solution to remove the carbon tax, which is about four cents on one hundred dollars' worth of groceries, will not do the dramatic reduction of the cost of goods that we need. What we need is true competition in the megacorporations. We need to break them up and limit the profit motive at some reasonable degree. It cannot be infinite.

I do appreciate the question, and the solution, of course. If four cents is something that is valuable to the member, then sure, but I am more interested in ensuring that our system of economy produces a system that is fair, to guarantee consumer power, rather than ram it over.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague, with whom I sit on the public accounts committee, gave a passionate speech. He certainly brings more passion to public accounts than normally we see, and that is greatly appreciated.

Coming back to the report itself, the Auditor General and the committee itself, we heard testimony from different government departments and so on about the concerns that the Auditor General had about securing the food system around a comprehensive plan, as well as inconsistencies in data collection and measures. Of course, it is not just the federal government that is responsible here but also the provinces and territories. It even goes down to the municipal and community level.

I would like to hear my colleague comment on what we heard.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Mr. Speaker, it is true that both municipalities and provincial governments do bear responsibility. Actually, part of the report's critical recommendations was to look at ways the federal government could look at provincial partners in particular, but there were some municipal examples, for big cities in particular. Members may recall that there was a national emergency facing us during the same time as we were hearing this. That was the dramatic infrastructure devastation we saw in British Columbia brought on by floods as a result of climate change.

Floods, of course, produce extreme changes, not only in the existing water table that is present in British Columbia but also in the output costs of very good products we make there, like wine products and other agricultural goods in British Columbia. That is an example in which we see a solution in asking for a framework to work with provinces so that at a time of an emergency like that, we open up corridors of transport. That is one of the recommendations I agree with, to ensure that we actually get goods from one province to the other.

If members can bear with me, I will add this. It is a true fact that at the time of the huge floods in British Columbia, which I know many families are still bearing grief for, it was actually companies that came forward to redirect the supply of goods from the northern corridor that supplied access to Alberta. My home province would have been cut off without such goodwill from CN and the people who allowed us to do that.

We need to go further than that. We cannot just wait and bet on the goodwill of our neighbours and those actors in our country. We need to be more proactive. The solution found in this report is to look at our framework, to recommend to the provinces and the federal government that we come together on such a strategy, because it is true: We do not bear all of the jurisdictional powers at the federal level that would make possible the emergency levers to relieve a situation like a supply chain crunch.

• (1950)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to say that I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Lambton—Kent—Middlesex.

I am very honoured to rise today in the House to represent the people of my riding, Beauce, and also, more importantly, on the issue of Canada's food security and sovereignty.

After studying the 14th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, all of my thoughts on the matter have unfortunately been confirmed.

I will take a brief moment to read the conclusion of the report:

...there was no national emergency preparedness and response plan for Canada's food system and food security, despite the government having identified food as a critical infrastructure sector long before the COVID-19 pandemic began. And although AAFC had two emergency plans in place, it acknowledged that they were insufficient to deal with a crisis of this magnitude.

When I read the recommendations in this report, I see that these are watered down recommendations to mask the current government's failures. In every recommendation, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts asks the departments concerned for status reports. However, in my opinion, it does not really go far enough.

As Conservatives, we have been defending farmers and families from the beginning. We understand that food security starts on the farm and that our government needs to be there to support those who put food on our tables.

Under this Liberal government, the price of food has skyrocketed because of the carbon tax. Farmers are finding it harder and harder to make ends meet. Canadians, too, are finding it harder and harder to put food on the table, as we have seen from the record use of food banks in our communities.

Orders of the Day

We have also seen a decline in our relationships with many countries, since the government has failed many times in the negotiation of trade agreements. Some countries do not even want to reopen negotiations with us because of the government's incompetence. That is why it is so important to have a national food system that works and that we can depend on today and in the future.

It is very simple. With grocery prices the highest they have ever been in our country, it is up to this government to find a way to reduce the cost of food. The easiest place to start is on the farm.

A great way to start would be to pass the original Bill C-234 as soon as possible so as to exempt farmers from the carbon tax on propane and natural gas used to heat livestock buildings and dry grain.

I am appalled that the Prime Minister and his senators gutted this important bill in the Senate. The bill had the unanimous support of all parties in the House but one, the Liberal Party of Canada.

This legislation also had the backing of every ag sector stakeholder I talked to across the country. These farmers need relief from this crippling tax that is destroying their businesses and driving food prices sky-high. I talked to lots of farmers in my riding, and every one of them endorsed this bill. Winter is here, and they are very worried about how they are going to heat their henhouses and hog barns all winter long.

As the official opposition agriculture critic and as a member of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, I have personally attended every meeting since I was elected. We hear the same stories year after year.

Over the holidays, I volunteered at Moisson Beauce, a food bank in my riding. While preparing Christmas hampers for struggling families, about 2,500 in a single day, I learned that Moisson Beauce is now experiencing record usage and no longer receives enough donations to meet demand. That is not the Canada I remember. We are at a point where it is cheaper to import food than to produce it locally.

One comment I hear all too often from the Liberals and the Bloc Québécois is that the carbon tax does not apply in Quebec. That is absolutely false.

• (1955)

The carbon tax applies in Quebec directly and indirectly. I can show countless receipts from farmers for propane, for example, that include the federal price on pollution.

As I was saying, the carbon tax is also paid indirectly when we import goods from other provinces. Quebec is not self-sufficient; we import a lot of products from provinces that pay the entire carbon tax and that tax is passed on to us, the consumers, either through inflated prices or the cost of transportation.

Agriculture Carbon Alliance wrote to every federal member to express their full support for this bill. The alliance is 17 national agricultural groups representing more than 190,000 farms in Canada.

Canadian farmers are stewards of the land. They are very concerned about their animals and the environment. They work so hard

to feed our families and support our economy. The lack of support from the Liberal government is incredible.

I must mention the rural members of the Liberal caucus. I cannot believe that only three Liberals voted in favour of this legislation. I suppose that only three of them want to keep their seat in the next election. The polls speak for themselves.

Who could forget what the Minister of Rural Economic Development said? She said that, if Canadians want relief, they should elect more Liberal members. If those rural Liberal members think they will ever get the farm vote back, they are sorely mistaken.

Another looming problem that will impact Canada's food security and food sovereignty is the Liberal plan to outlaw single-use plastics, a plan that the courts recently struck down but that the government plans to appeal at taxpayers' expense.

A study by the Canadian Produce Marketing Association makes it clear that if this ban goes through, fruit and vegetable prices will rise by up to 34%. The report also indicates that the availability of Canadian products could be reduced by half. We will also see a 50% increase in food waste.

Conservatives will always stand up for farmers and, most importantly, for common sense. Canadians are suffering. Many of them are on the verge of bankruptcy. How can the government turn its back on them when all they want is to feed their families affordably?

If the government does not take action, our farm families will keep disappearing, our country will become even more dependent on food imports, and our food system will be even more vulnerable. Right now, a vegetable grown in Mexico costs less at the grocery store than one grown locally. Does that make sense? It is contrary to their entire climate change ideology.

Canadians can count on the Conservatives to change that situation, which makes no sense. Canadians do not need departmental progress reports. They need real action to avert a disaster in our national food system.

With out-of-control inflation and interest rates that are still very high, Canadians will continue to experience financial difficulties. This report sheds light on the situation and shows that it is extremely important that we learn from the pandemic and take the appropriate action.

The Prime Minister has increased the size of the public service by 40% since he has been in office, so how is it that these departments cannot manage to do their work properly? That is incompetence.

Orders of the Day

At the end of her speech, my colleague from Lambton—Kent—Middlesex will move a motion to get our national food system back on track in order to guarantee our food security and food sovereignty in the future.

I sincerely hope that my colleagues will take this issue seriously and that we can come together to do the right thing for all Canadians by voting in favour of this motion.

• (2000)

[*English*]

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I enjoy working with my colleague on the agriculture committee as Conservatives continue to stand up for our agriculture sector. My colleague is from Quebec, which is also another big area for growing produce. He talked in his speech about a plastics ban that the Liberal government has proposed. I am wondering whether my colleague could elaborate on how the single-use plastics ban would affect consumers at the grocery store if the ban were to go through on plastics for produce and meat in grocery stores.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Lehoux: Mr. Speaker, this new regulation on single-use plastics will indeed have a very significant and negative impact on Quebec consumers. We know that our produce growers need these products to preserve their produce, and God knows that our produce growers were very hard hit by flooding in the regions in 2023.

It is very important that we think about this issue, because right now, we do not have a solution to protect produce while still putting high-quality products on grocery shelves. We also owe that to consumers.

[*English*]

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the report from the public accounts committee entitled “Protecting Canada's Food System During the COVID-19 Pandemic”.

In this report, we learn that the NDP-Liberal government spent \$515 million, more than half a billion dollars, in various funding envelopes “increased risk of food insecurity”. This is the key question: How much food security did Canadians get for more than half a billion dollars? Well, the short answer is that Canadians got less, not more, food security. They are getting less, thanks to policies of the NDP-Liberal government, which continue to increase food production costs, food transportation costs, food spoilage and food prices and reduce food supply, food variety, food freshness and food security.

First, I ask members to cast their mind back to the pandemic. During the NDP-Liberal COVID lockdowns, despite Conservatives sending a warning, along with Canadian producers, processors and suppliers, the NDP-Liberal government failed miserably to plan ahead. It had no plan for getting temporary foreign workers nor seasonal agriculture workers in and out of Canada when and where they were needed. There was no plan for bringing workers into Canada for greenhouse producers starting in January 2021 nor for field producers throughout their planting and harvesting seasons. At the end of the season, some farmers were even faced with the chal-

lenges of workers who were not able to return to their home country, for example, Trinidad and Tobago, and there was little or no diplomatic help available for those Canadian producers. That was an epic fail thanks to the NDP-Liberal governing party. Sadly, it does not end there.

For the past two years or more, food prices have increased by 8%, 9% or more year over year. Vegetables are seeing the biggest price increases. As a result, Canadian families are cutting back on purchases of vegetables and other healthy foods for their children, and about 20% of Canadians are reporting skipping a meal each day. Food banks across the country are seeing record numbers of visits by Canadians to the tune of over two million families. This is the very definition of food insecurity.

The costly coalition of NDP-Liberals has been sleeping at the wheel as Canadian families pay more and more for the necessities of life. With the carbon tax one and carbon tax two combined by April Fool's Day 2030, the Prime Minister and his NDP-Liberal government want to charge Canadian farmers and truckers 61¢ for every litre of fuel they put in their farm implements and trucks in carbon tax. It is not rocket science. It is basic math that the NDP-Liberals just do not seem to get. If it costs more to grow food and it costs more to ship food, it is going to cost Canadian families more to buy food.

The Governor of the Bank of Canada, Tiff Macklem, said that the carbon tax announcements that have it going up, that increases inflation each year. The lead author of Canada's Food Price Report 2023, Dr. Sylvain Charlebois, has pointed out that the carbon tax has made business expenses go up. Up and down the food chain, Dr. Charlebois points to a “compounding effect” as the supply chain is exposed to increased costs from the carbon tax. Again, if it costs the farmer more to grow food and truckers more to ship food, it is going to cost Canadians more to buy food.

How do we solve the problem of rising food prices and this Prime Minister's costly coalition? Well, first things first, we need to axe the carbon tax.

The leader of the opposition and those of us on this side of the House want to offer Canadian families relief from the carbon tax. We want to put an end to possibly the most out-of-touch-with-reality, regressive, punitive and unfair tax Canadians have been asked to pay.

Orders of the Day

However, there is more. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change has added plastic to the list of toxic substances. Yes, members heard that right. Plastic is a toxic substance according to the environment minister. Although the courts recently struck down the NDP-Liberal government's single-use plastics ban, the environment minister has another evil trick up his sleeve.

Last August 1, the environment minister issued a notice for his proposed ban on primary plastic packaging, meaning the packaging for produce and meats that we see in the grocery stores. At meetings of the agriculture committee on December 7 and 11, 2023, I asked the chief executive officers of Walmart Canada, Loblaw and Metro what the impact would be for them and their customers if this ban were to be implemented. The CEOs of both Loblaw and Metro said that, if the NDP-Liberal government proceeded with a ban on primary food packaging, it would increase food costs by approximately \$6 billion a year, severely impair competition, threaten the availability of food and increase spoilage, meaning more food waste.

• (2005)

Primary plastic packaging serves as a hygienic barrier to contaminants; it delays spoilage, extends best before dates, reduces waste and optimizes perishables' nutritional value. Plastic packaging is lightweight, and it reduces the amount of fuel used in transport compared with other alternatives. What most consumers do not realize is that the job that plastic does for fresh fruit and vegetables is done long before it ever hits the grocery store shelves.

According to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, on average, Canadians spend about \$1 billion per month on fruit and vegetables. Only about 12.5% of the fruits and vegetables Canadians consume are produced in Canada. Canadians consume seven times as much imported fruit and vegetables as domestically produced fruit and vegetables. I am sure part of that is because of our weather patterns here.

Imported produce can take weeks to reach us by ship. Plastic packaging plays a crucial role in keeping food from overripening and spoiling before it gets to Canada.

At this time, there is no cost-effective alternative solution to plastic packaging that is available on a global scale. If the NDP-Liberal government were really and truly concerned about food costs and food security, one might think that it would conduct a regulatory impact analysis. However, one would be wrong.

At the agriculture committee on November 30, 2023, I asked the deputy agriculture minister if a regulatory impact analysis on a primary plastic packaging ban for produce had been done. She testified that it had not. This is irresponsible.

The Canadian Produce Marketing Association, or CPMA, did a regulatory impact analysis of the proposed primary plastic packaging ban. It found that the NDP-Liberal environment minister's ban on primary plastic packaging could increase the cost of fresh produce by 34%. It could also reduce the availability of fresh produce for Canadians by more than 50%, including the near total elimination of all value-added products, reducing market value by approximately \$5.6 billion.

The ban could increase fresh produce waste by more than 50%. Furthermore, it could increase the production and release of greenhouse gases from the produce supply chain by more than 50%. The environment minister should take note.

Another finding from the CPMA impact analysis suggests that increased fresh produce costs will lead to reduced availability and reduced consumption, therefore increasing health costs by over \$1 billion each year. Furthermore, the ban will have a disproportionate impact on the cost and availability of fresh produce in rural and remote regions of Canada.

When presented with the consequences of the NDP-Liberal environment minister's ban, almost two-thirds of Canadian consumers expressed concern.

Finally, the Canadian Produce Marketing Association's regulatory impact analysis reported that the proposed regulations will lead to an increased risk of food safety incidents and food-borne illnesses.

In short, the NDP-Liberal environment minister is painting a target on the back of every single Canadian with the threat posed to their health and well-being by his ill-advised, non-evidence-based, irresponsible ban on primary plastic packaging.

As I conclude, I want to move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following:

"the 14th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, presented on Tuesday, May 17, 2022, be not now concurred in, but that it be recommitted to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts for further consideration, with a view to recommend that the agriculture sector be exempt from any federal carbon tax in order to maintain food-security and preparedness for future emergencies."

It is always an honour to rise here on behalf of the people I represent in Lambton—Kent—Middlesex and the farmers and producers who produce the great-quality food that we feed Canadians. I want to thank them for what they do.

• (2010)

The Deputy Speaker: The amendment is in order.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Milton. I also want to wish the member a happy birthday today.

Orders of the Day

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, thank you for wishing me a happy birthday as I stand for the first time in the House in 2024.

I know my hon. colleague and friend on the other side has spent many years of her life feeding Canadians, so on behalf of Canadians who enjoy potatoes, I would like to say thanks. My family is from a similar region. The Dutch side of my family settled in south-western Ontario and farmed apples, among other things. As we have discussed, farming is close to my heart as well.

It is important as well to talk about some of the quotes that the member used. I am a bit concerned, occasionally, about the selective use of facts, but I think everybody in this House is guilty of reading the things we agree with more commonly than the things we disagree with.

However, Sylvain Charlebois is somebody I am familiar with. I follow him and I read what he writes, and in the most recent “Food Price Report”, he was actually a bit more ambiguous with respect to carbon pricing than the member let on. His exact quote was actually “Suggesting that carbon pricing has a direct, linear effect on retail food prices would be misleading.” He also went on to say that there are many factors, like climate change, that have a much larger impact on the price of food.

I would like to ask the hon. member, as a potato farmer, what impact climate change events like extreme weather, drought, floods and erratic precipitation are having on potato yields, because last year Canada's wheat yields were at an all-time low due to those climate change factors.

● (2015)

Ms. Lianne Rood: Mr. Speaker, I will take the opportunity to wish my colleague a happy birthday as well.

As my colleague said, yes, I have spent years of my life in food production. In fact, we heard from one of my colleagues on this side of the House today and from many farmers in my area this year that they have actually had a bumper crop. They have had higher yields than they have seen in years with some of their crops.

Yes, the carbon tax does affect the cost of food. As my colleague pointed out, we may agree to disagree with some of the references we hear, but on an overall scale, as a producer, I know first-hand that my input costs have gone up. If my input costs are going up, if the fuel is going up and everything is going up, I have to increase the price of the produce that I am selling to wholesalers. My costs increase, and therefore I have to pass those costs on to those who buy from me. As wholesalers, they have to make a profit as well, so they have to pass those costs on to the retailers that they sell their product to, and of course the retailers, because they are paying more now for the product, have to increase their prices to consumers. Therefore, I disagree with the premise that the carbon tax does not have an effect on the cost of food, because first-hand knowledge tells me that it absolutely does.

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to repeat the question that was just asked, because I did not hear an answer.

The question asked about the impact of the climate crisis on farmers, on the cost of food and on families.

Ms. Lianne Rood: Mr. Speaker, again, this year we have seen record yields. I can say that in our harvest in the last crop year, I have seen record yields.

In the 50 years that my father farmed, and my grandparents before my father, and in my 45 years of life, I have been through years when we have had droughts, when we have had floods, when we have had record crops and when we have had not so good crops. Farmers are the biggest risk-takers I have ever met in my life. It is a gamble every year. They put something in the ground and pray and hope that Mother Nature is going to bring good weather so they can have an abundant harvest to make a good living.

Unfortunately, all the costs that we see, including the carbon tax, are not making farmers profitable, and if farmers are not profitable, they are not going to stay in business. That is going to mean for Canadians that food security is going to be in jeopardy, and not just food security, but food sovereignty.

The Liberal government and my colleague with the NDP need to stop propping up the Liberal government and actually support farmers and support axing the carbon tax for our agricultural producers.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the carbon tax is driving inflation. The carbon tax hits the farmer who grows the food, the trucker who transports the food, the grocer who sells the food and the family who buys the food.

The member across the way gets it, because he has heard it so many times. He is chuckling and throwing it across the floor, but if the member for Kingston and the Islands knows so well that the carbon tax is hitting the farmer, the trucker, the grocer and the family, then why will he not change his position and vote with us to relieve struggling Canadian families and axe the tax?

● (2020)

Ms. Lianne Rood: Mr. Speaker, I will say to Canadians that Conservatives on this side of the House will vote to axe the tax.

We are calling on the House right now to send Bill C-234 back to the Senate in its original form so we can give producers and farmers a break on the carbon tax so their input costs go down and Canadian families can pay less at the grocery store.

The Deputy Speaker: There being no further members rising, pursuant to order made earlier today, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion are deemed put and recorded divisions are deemed requested.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 66, the recorded divisions stand deferred until Wednesday, January 31, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

*Adjournment Proceedings***ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS**

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

[*English*]

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP and the NDP leader have consistently betrayed workers. They came in here promising to stand up for Canadian workers and sold them down the river simply to please their Liberal coalition partners.

I am rising today to follow up on a question I asked about the disclosure of details on massive government subsidies relating to electric car battery subsidies. The government is spending \$40 billion on these subsidies. We are talking about roughly \$3,000 per Canadian family. Every single Canadian family is on the hook for thousands of dollars for these subsidies.

We have found out that a series of subsidies that were promised as creating opportunities for Canadian workers will actually be subsidizing foreign replacement workers. Foreign replacement workers will be brought in to work on these subsidized projects. Therefore, the \$40 billion in subsidies from Canadian taxpayers, roughly \$3,000 from every single Canadian family, to create jobs for Canadians are actually going to subsidize corporations paying foreign replacement workers.

After this information came to light, Conservatives had a modest proposal, which is that Canadians deserve to see the contracts that the NDP-Liberal government signed when offering these subsidies. Did it seek to include in those contracts protections for Canadian workers? Did it seek to guarantee a certain number of Canadian jobs? Did it seek to prevent foreign replacement workers from being brought in as part of these projects or did the contracts it negotiated allow for this kind of foreign replacement worker activity on these projects?

Whether one is for or against these subsidies, or for or against allowing foreign replacement workers, it seems reasonable to me that the people who actually paid for these projects, the taxpayers, should be able to see the contracts and know whether the government did an effective or ineffective job in negotiating for workers. We have an indication that it did not do an effective job because we know foreign replacement workers are being brought in as part of these heavily subsidized projects. Either way, Canadians should be able to see what is in these contracts.

We brought this issue to committee. Initially, the New Democrats said they sided with us. In fact, I think the leader of the NDP asked a question in the House requesting the release of these contracts. Then, after a mere two or three meetings of Liberal MP filibustering, the New Democrats flipped. They folded. They buckled under the Liberal pressure to continue a long line of situations of the NDP facilitating Liberal cover-ups. We would expect in a minority Parliament that we would be able to get the information we need, yet that has not happened. The NDP bailed on workers and chose its corrupt coalition cousins instead.

My question for the Liberals is this: What did they offer the NDP leader to get the NDP to betray workers once again and instead vote to hide these contracts? What did the Liberals offer the NDP, and why are they choosing secrecy over the protection of workers?

• (2025)

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, it is nice to be in the House this evening. I first would like to point out that it is great to see Conservatives stand up in the House, every once in a while, for workers' rights. It is rare, but on occasion it happens and it is wonderful. Over the last 30 years, Conservatives have been a bit of a thorn in the side of the labour movement in Canada, so to see Conservatives stand in the House and hear them advocate for labour rights in this country is movement in the right direction, we will call it. I am very proud to be part of a government and a party that are the first to table legislation in this country to ban replacement workers, so when the member opposite suggests that we are doing something to the contrary, I would just point out that is not accurate whatsoever.

I am very happy to respond to comments made by the member tonight, which were also made by the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, regarding the government's contracts with NextStar Energy to indeed expand our country's EV battery production capacity. I am a proud driver of an electric car and have been for almost two years. It is a fantastic vehicle, and I know that a more local production of that technology and innovations is going to spur on more electric vehicle use in our country and will lower our emissions, which is fantastic. It is exactly what we need in order to fight climate change.

Canada has taken the critical first steps to develop our EV battery supply chain, and that will stand to bring opportunities for other Canadian industries such as mining, EV assembly and car production. We must remember that the sector remains in its infancy here in Canada and around the world, and it is indeed a commonly used practice for firms to bring in experts when new equipment is to be purchased and installed, as is the case with NextStar. Given the size and complexity of the plant, as well as the fact that it is Canada's first plant of its kind, most of the specialized equipment is coming from overseas and must be installed by the suppliers.

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With respect to experts, we have heard the leader of the Conservative Party and his disdain for expertise. He thinks it is crazy that there are people who are specialized; he thinks it should be done by just any old person, but that is not possible. We need to hire experts in order to do this, and this must happen before Canadians who are hired to run the equipment can be trained to use the equipment. I cannot emphasize that enough. All foreign specialists coming to Canada are coming for short-term, temporary assignments in order to install specialized equipment. No Canadian jobs are being displaced.

Not only is this standard practice, but it can also be seen to continue to promote Canada as a destination of choice. Restricting foreign workers would limit Canada's ability to attract strategic foreign investment, which is something that is at an all-time high in this country thanks to the fact that the government and our party invest in workers and Canadian innovation. Let us not forget that NextStar is committed to hiring 2,300 Canadians during the construction and equipment installation phases of the project, with another 2,500 permanent jobs for Canadians once the facility is operational. This is a great-news story, but the Conservatives want to turn the dial down and say it is not so great and they could have done better, when, in fact, they would never have invested in this industry in the first place.

Batteries represent a significant percentage of the value of an EV, and these plants will be the foundation of Canada's automotive industry moving forward. Failing to compete with other jurisdictions would not only risk the jobs associated with this facility but would also challenge Canada's ability to attract vehicle mandates as auto makers switch over the EV assembly. Ultimately, that would risk the success of our automotive industry in this country.

For NextStar's battery manufacturing facility that will supply EV batteries to vehicles produced by Stellantis in Windsor, this is a good-news story. Battery investments are closely tied to current and future EV assembly investments and jobs, and electrification is the future of the automotive sector. Therefore, for the Conservatives to stand in the House and suggest that we are doing less for jobs and less for workers is absolutely the opposite of the truth. It is a good-news story for Windsor and a good-news story for St. Thomas, and it is a great-news story for the EV sector in Canada.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, there is a lot I could say in response to that comment, just about the disastrous economic management of the government, about the pain Canadians are experiencing, about the higher costs we are seeing, about the challenges in terms of job growth and opportunity and about the lack of homes being built, but the core point here is that the question was not answered.

The question was about whether the public could actually see the contracts. The parliamentary secretary says they are doing great work; it is incredible. He says they got a great deal here; everything is standard procedure and everything is sunlight and roses. Let them show us their work, then. If the member is so confident in what the government has done, then the contracts should be made public.

The fact is that the Liberals were filibustering at committee to try to hide the contracts from the public. The NDP leader joined in and

betrayed workers who want to see what is in the contracts, and the coalition stood together to try to bury the contracts. What is the government trying to hide?

• (2030)

Mr. Adam van Koevorden: Mr. Speaker, Canadian workers and the labour movement in Canada know they cannot trust Conservatives. They know that Conservatives have never had their backs and they are proud of this government, with our NDP colleagues, for producing Canada's first-ever replacement worker ban.

We are banning scabs. It is going to be impossible to replace, which is so important for the labour movement's ability to organize collectively and bargain collectively. These investments with NextStar are no different. They will have long-lasting, widespread and positive economic impacts, and they will help to ensure the high-value manufacturing activities, namely battery production in southwestern Ontario, will continue to occur in Canada.

These are investments that workers in the labour movement in Canada know would be impossible with a Conservative Party at the helm and that is why they are so grateful for these innovations and investments.

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by wishing the parliamentary secretary a very happy birthday.

In the past few years, Canadians have witnessed record-breaking temperatures, extreme weather events, forest fires and flooding. People have been evacuated from their homes and whole towns have been wiped out, yet under the Liberal government, big oil and gas are polluting more than ever.

A recent report shows how these oil giants are significantly under-reporting their emissions. In fact, emissions from the oil sands are potentially 6,300% higher than what is reported by the industry. Scientists have confirmed what indigenous communities from northern Alberta have been saying for decades. These massive corporations are threatening their health, threatening their livelihoods and poisoning their land. This is making people sick.

Oil and gas companies are pumping out carbon emissions at shockingly high rates, and the government can and should make these companies use some of their record-breaking profits to clean up their mess. Oil and gas CEOs are giving themselves raises, being rewarded with obscene bonuses, and making millions of dollars a year, while Canadians are struggling just to get by. They are worried about how they are going to pay rent and worried about how they are going to make their mortgage payments.

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At the same time, Canadians are facing record-breaking temperatures, the worst wildfire season on record and devastating weather events. We are in a climate emergency, so why does the Liberal government refuse to hold oil and gas giants accountable?

After dragging their feet and having to be pushed to finally deliver a cap on emissions for the oil and gas sector, the Liberals announced a watered-down cap, full of loopholes, that had oil and gas lobbyists' fingerprints all over it. The oil and gas sector makes up the biggest portion of Canada's emissions, and environmental experts have said that Canada must have a hard cap on oil and gas emissions if we have any hope of meeting our climate targets.

The Liberals have set a target of reducing Canada's overall emissions by 42%, but they are giving their friends in oil and gas a break. Not only did they give oil and gas a lower target, but they have included the option for companies to buy offsets and essentially buy their way out of the cap. They admit their plan will only reduce oil and gas emission by about 20%. This means every other sector and everyday Canadians will have to pick up the slack.

The Liberals are making life harder for people, workers and families. Can the member explain to me why they are making life easier for oil and gas CEOs?

Mr. Adam van Koevreden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague and friend for the well wishes on my birthday and for standing up for climate action at this time.

I cannot say enough or emphasize strongly enough how nice it is to stand up in the House of Commons and talk about how we fight climate change, not whether we fight climate change. With the Conservatives, day after day, asking the majority of the questions in this House, it is a challenge occasionally. The vast majority of Canadians I talk to, the vast majority of Canadians, full stop, demand climate action. They want to help lower our emissions. They want our government to take strong action, and one of those strong actions was indeed our oil and gas emissions cap.

It was just in December that our government, with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change at COP, announced a very ambitious plan to lower our emissions with an oil and gas emissions cap. It is the first of its kind in the world. We are the fourth-largest producer of oil and gas in the world, and we are the first-ever country to produce a cap on emissions from oil and gas production. It is going to lead the way on lowering emissions from this sector as we reduce our reliance on fossil fuels going forward.

Like I said, as the world's fourth-largest producer, it is a strong signal that we are sending internationally to the sector and to our colleagues in the G7 and G20. We are taking a leadership role in the energy transition. We are aiming to achieve net-zero emissions from the oil and gas sector by 2050, and the emissions cap will ensure that we get there.

The challenge, of course, is to reduce emissions while building a stronger, more resilient economy of the 21st century. That is why we are not doing this alone. It requires consultation with the sector to ensure that we are protecting jobs and recognizing that oil and gas still have a role to play in our economy and our society. Last

December, we published a proposed regulatory framework, and we look forward to hearing from stakeholders on the approach in this document in the months ahead.

On a more personal note, I am a member of the environment committee, and I am looking forward to working more closely with my colleague from Victoria on the environment committee. We had the CEO of Imperial Oil at committee, late in the last session. I had the opportunity to question that CEO, who earns, as the member mentioned, about \$17 million a year. He earns that money for taking something from the planet and leaving it in a worse place. The oil and gas sector and the oil sands, as the member rightly pointed out, are responsible for the largest proportion of Canada's emissions, but it is also the most carbon-intensive fuel in the world. It has been shown just recently, in an article that I think we both read, that it is up to 6,500% higher than reported. For some of those compounds, which are called organic compounds, the rate at which they are going into the atmosphere is upwards of 6,000% higher than had been indicated, which is absolutely atrocious.

The question I had for that CEO was about the Kearl spill with respect to effluent from tailings ponds. They insist that those tailings releases, as they call them, into a tailings pond have no effect on the environment and no effect on people's health, which is absolutely untrue. It is absolutely not accurate to suggest that there is no effect. It is having an impact on water quality. It is having an impact on cancer rates. It is having a deleterious impact on the environment and the health of first nations around the Athabasca watershed. It is an absolute travesty.

I could not agree with my colleague more that we need to do more to ensure that we are protecting the environment from the oil and gas sector, and the oil and gas emissions cap is one way that we are doing that.

● (2035)

Ms. Laurel Collins: Mr. Speaker, I believe the member is genuinely sincere in his desire to do more, and I agree that the Conservatives' climate denial is beyond disheartening, but Canadians do not want to have to choose between denial and delay. They do not want to have to choose between bad and worse. The reality is we are in a climate emergency. We do not have time for Liberal excuses. We do not have time for Liberal broken promises. We definitely do not have time for a government that caters to oil and gas interests. Our planet is burning.

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When will the government stop disappointing Canadians, stop giving breaks to its rich friends and stop listening to oil and gas CEOs who are raking in record profits and unreal bonuses while polluting our planet, and instead start treating this like the emergency that it is, close the loopholes and bring in a hard cap on emissions?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Mr. Speaker, once again I want to emphasize that the CEO of Imperial Oil, Brad Corson, is not my friend. He is no friend of the environment, this government or the planet. That company is destroying the planet. Those operations are having a negative impact on the health and the well-being of the natural environment and the people who live on those lands and have done so, in the case of the first nations at Kearsy, for millennia.

We will continue to hold oil and gas companies to account, and I will continue to demand better from oil and gas executives. However, our measures are working. We need to see the big picture on overall emissions. Overall, our emissions in Canada are on target, and they are coming down. In 2015, Canada was on a path for emissions in 2030 to be 9% higher than they were in 2005. Today, thanks to the work of so many Canadians, including that member, we are ahead of our initial 2030 target and firmly on track to meet the targets set out in our 2030 emissions reduction plan.

• (2040)

CARBON PRICING

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Liberal government, the cost of living is unaffordable in this country. Hard-working Canadians are struggling to put food on their tables and gas in their tanks, as well as to keep a roof over their heads. This is the devastating reality across the country; prices on food, home heating, gas and just about everything continue to go up.

The most recent food price report predicted that the amount of money spent by the average family on food increases would go up by another \$700 this year. That is on top of year-over-year increases.

Canada is in an affordability crisis, and it is a direct result of the incompetence and the failed policies of the Liberal government and, of course, its costly coalition. It is continuing to fuel this with its inflationary deficits and its costly and ineffective carbon taxes. The carbon tax scheme is making Canadian families choose among eating, heating and other necessities.

Food insecurity is soaring. In a country such as Canada and a province such as Saskatchewan, which has incredible, hard-working and innovative farmers and a wealth of agricultural opportunities, the reality that food insecurity is at a point of crisis in this country is truly unbelievable. However, this is the reality when we have a Prime Minister who is intent on punishing Canadians with his nonsensical and ideologically driven carbon tax policy.

In clinging to this disastrous policy, which has proven to do nothing for the environment, the Prime Minister has essentially told Canadians that it is more important for him to collect the carbon tax and to check a box than for a Canadian to earn a paycheque to be able to afford the basic necessities. In fact, the cost of his carbon tax is jeopardizing farm businesses; ultimately, this could further

impact food security not only in our country but also across the world.

This is why my Conservative colleague put forward a bill that would have removed the carbon tax that farmers pay on farm operations, for a cost savings of nearly a billion dollars by 2030. That is billion with a “b”. However, the Prime Minister leaned on the senators he appointed to gut that bill and to use every trick in the book to stop it.

This impacts more than our farmers, because when we tax the farmer who grows the food, the trucker who ships the food, the processing facilities and the stores that sell the food, it is only common sense that the cost for Canadians to buy food goes up. The carbon tax scheme does not even end here. The NDP-Liberal coalition intends to quadruple the carbon tax.

When I asked the Prime Minister to axe the carbon tax before it bankrupts all Canadians, his response demonstrated to Canadians how clearly out of touch the government is with reality. Its band-aid solutions to food security are useless when it is contributing much more significantly to the crisis at the same time. Its costly carbon tax is driving Canadians to food banks in record numbers. In fact, in just one month alone last year, Food Banks Canada reported two million visits.

Lower prices on groceries and other basic necessities will give Canadians much-needed relief and relieve pressure on the many incredible food banks and charities that are oversubscribed across this country.

The carbon tax-obsessed Prime Minister is simply not worth the cost. It is time to axe the carbon tax on everything permanently. In this way, we can lower prices for Canadians and start to address the affordability crisis in this country.

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, I hate to start this way, but unfortunately I need to correct the member opposite. The claims that the carbon price is increasing the cost of living are categorically false. There is not one economist in this country who is pointing to carbon pricing, carbon taxing, pollution pricing or any variation of our plan to lower emissions by putting a price on pollution as what is causing inflation or causing a rise in the cost of living in Canada.

Adjournment Proceedings

We must be targeted in our approach to providing relief to families, because there is absolutely no question that things cost too much, particularly groceries. However, one of the previous speakers tonight pointed to the work of Dr. Sylvain Charlebois, who said that it would be false to point to any one factor, including carbon pricing, as the leading cause, the number one cause or the primary cause of food inflation in Canada. I will repeat that claims that the carbon price are increasing the cost of living are false.

Most low- and medium-income households are actually far better off because of the way the system works. Our approach to carbon pricing is cost-neutral and sends cheques back to families four times a year, such that hundreds of dollars are back in the pockets of many families. The bulk of the proceeds from the price on carbon pollution go straight back into the pockets of Canadians in provinces where the fuel charge applies. That means that eight out of 10 households get more money back than they pay, on average. When Conservative members stand in the House and say to axe the tax, what they are actually saying is that we ought to take money out of the pockets of families that need it most.

It is not as though our opinions matter more than math in this situation. We are allowed to have our own opinions but not our own facts. In this situation, it is simply mathematics. Calgary-based economist Trevor Tombe has done the math for us, indicating that pricing carbon in this country is not a leading cause of inflation and not a leading cause of the challenges Canadians are facing at the grocery store.

I am committed to lowering grocery prices. I am committed to lowering inflation and to making sure that families can afford healthy food at the grocery store, and that is why I will say once again that eight out of 10 households get more money back than they pay. Conservatives have continually said that Liberals are obsessed with the carbon tax. We are not the ones asking questions about it every single day. We have done the math, and it works. Our emissions are coming down, and eight out of 10 families, including almost all of them on the bottom three quintiles of the income scale, are better off.

We are also not quadrupling the carbon price this year; that is just plain misinformation. The fuel charge is a slow, steady increase in the cost of pollution, and it is designed to increase by \$15 per tonne of pollution each year, which works out to about three cents on a litre of gas. Gas prices go up and down by 10%, 15% or 25% throughout the year, and we do not see that having an impact on groceries. When gas prices are up around \$1.50 or \$1.60, we see oil and gas companies profit as a result, and we do not see Conservatives stand in the House telling oil and gas companies to lower their prices because they are having an impact on the pocketbooks of Canadians. However, when we price carbon and send the money back to Canadian families, they are up in arms.

The Governor of the Bank of Canada has recognized that putting a price on pollution is contributing less than 0.2% to inflation each year. As I have said, because of our quarterly climate action incentive payments, the vast majority of low- and middle-income households are getting more back than they are paying in the carbon tax every single year. That is four times a year. Recently, at the beginning of January, families received their first cheque.

• (2045)

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Mr. Speaker, we know that the cost of everything is going up. I know that the parliamentary secretary said it is a slow and steady increase. It is a slow and steady increase on everything. Canadians pay the carbon tax on food, heat and fuel. These are basic necessities that Canadians need.

The Liberals have doubled down and promised to increase the tax. The parliamentary secretary even said so: slow and steady. They have promised to continue to make life more unaffordable for all Canadians: farmers, first nations, families, everybody.

Why is it that the member and his party are hell-bent on continuing to raise taxes, even if it may be slow and steady, to make life more and more unaffordable for Canadians?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden: Mr. Speaker, once again, the misinformation from the other side is concerning. Economists have confirmed over and over again that our climate plan is not responsible for recent inflation. It is math. It is not refutable. It is not as though my opinion matters more than facts. Facts matter.

It is also true that we are not bankrupting any part of our economy. These claims are concerning and straight up wrong. We know that there are ways to make life more affordable for Canadians that do not ignore the reality of climate change and ways that will lead to potentially devastating costs further down the road.

Our climate plan is working, emissions are coming down, and it is a very conservative approach to use a market-based instrument to lower emissions. I suspect that is probably why the Conservatives ran in their last campaign on a market-based instrument on pricing carbon. They did not win the last election. We did, so we were able to implement our plan. I am eager to hear what their climate action plan might be in the next election. I suspect it might be nothing.

• (2050)

[*Translation*]

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

(The House adjourned at 8:53 p.m.)

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