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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, February 14, 2024

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

• (1400)

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: It being Wednesday, we will now have the singing of the national anthem led by the hon. member for Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation.

[*Members sang the national anthem*]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

HEALTH CARE FUNDING IN ONTARIO

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share some exciting news. Last week the government announced \$3.1 billion in additional funding for the Province of Ontario to strengthen our health care system. This is in addition to the \$77 billion that will be transferred to the province as part of the Canada health transfer. The bilateral agreement is a testament to the co-operation of federal and provincial leadership in Ontario. This is a moment of celebration for our community as the agreement signifies a concrete commitment to advancing health care infrastructure, reducing wait times, ensuring access to family health teams and modernizing health records.

This is also a significant step forward in our pursuit for a Whitby hospital, a project close to the hearts of all residents in our town. Specifically, it gives Ontario the means to accelerate essential projects, notably the construction of a long-awaited hospital in Whitby. Our community has spoken, and we are looking forward to the province's getting moving.

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• (1405)

CONGENITAL HEART DISEASE AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, happy Valentine's Day.

Speaking of matters from the heart, every year there are more than 260,000 Canadian babies who are born with congenital heart

defect, the number one birth defect in Canada. This week is Congenital Heart Disease Awareness Week.

My wife and I have a personal connection. Eight years ago, we lost our son Teddy only 22 minutes after birth, to congenital heart defect. Most families have a similar story. Congenital heart defects occur in one out of every 100 babies born in Canada. Many families have stories that last a lifetime, thanks to the work of doctors and the Canadian Congenital Heart Alliance, which is celebrating its 20th year this year.

Sixty years ago, only about 20% of children with CHD survived to adulthood. That number has since increased to over 90%. Children who are born with CHD are some of the strongest kids; they are heart warriors and may endure multiple surgeries after birth and throughout their life.

This Valentine's Day, have a heart. Share the stories of congenital heart disease, and let us find a cure so Canadians can bring their babies home with a broken heart.

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MAYOR OF HALIFAX

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am rising to recognize and honour my good friend and former parliamentarian from Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, the three-term Mayor of Halifax, Mike Savage.

Mike is known as a leader who can work with any order of government, no matter the political stripe, to get things done. When I served with him as a municipal councillor and his deputy mayor, I appreciated how open and accessible he was. Whether as the chair of FCM's Big City Mayors' Caucus, or as co-chair of FCM's 2015 Syrian refugee resettlement task force, his strong sense of civic duty and drive to foster greater economic and social inclusion for everyone guides his path.

Mike is someone who deeply cares about people. Regardless of the challenge, the issue or even the jurisdiction, he works hard, advocating for folks across the municipality. After more than a decade as our mayor, Mike will not be seeking re-election. It is no secret that under his leadership our city has experienced record growth. Our next mayor has big shoes to fill.

Statements by Members

I want to thank Mayor Mike Savage and his entire team for their years of service and dedication to our municipality.

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[*Translation*]

SUZANNE BELLEFLEUR

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, February 24 will be a special day in the life of one my constituents. Suzanne Bellefleur will be celebrating her 100th birthday.

The Bellefleur family is indispensable to our community because they helped to shape the city of Saint-Constant. Saint-Constant was founded in 1744, but it has changed a lot over the generations of the Bellefleur family, from the first Bellefleur who settled there in 1762 to today's generation, including Ms. Bellefleur's father, Réal, who even served as mayor from 1943 to 1945.

Ms. Bellefleur married Camille Beauvais in 1943 and gave birth to five beautiful children. In addition to doing a fantastic job in her role as a mother, she was also involved in many organizations, such as Entraide Familiale, the seniors' club and the Canadian Cancer Society, all while helping her husband manage the family business.

Ms. Bellefleur has lived a very full life, and it is fair to say that she wears her 100 years with grace. I wish her a happy 100th birthday surrounded by loved ones. She deserves it. Happy birthday.

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TAIWAN STRAIT

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I want to draw attention to civil aviation safety issues over the Taiwan Strait. Since January 30, China's civil aviation administration has been in clear breach of International Civil Aviation Organization regulations.

China changed flight routes and revoked the 2015 cross-strait agreement without consulting Taiwan. Its actions seriously jeopardize safety, peace and stability in the region and undermine the status quo in the Taiwan Strait. This strait is vital to global trade, and any disruption would have a significant impact on the world.

Now, more than ever, it is important that we support global cohesion, the rule of law and compliance with bilateral treaties.

* * *

● (1410)

[*English*]

CARBON TAX

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Liberal-NDP government, Canadians know that the Prime Minister is not worth the cost. In this era of insane inflation, housing crisis and food prices that are through the roof, the Prime Minister is hiking the carbon tax again on April 1. The Liberals want to quadruple it to 61¢ a litre. Canadians are crying out for relief, but the government instead wants to keep digging deeper into our pockets to fund its corrupt overspending. The carbon tax makes food more expensive at every stage. When one taxes the farmer who grows the food and the trucker who transports the food, one taxes the people who buy the food.

The carbon tax does nothing to reduce emissions but forces Canadians into poverty and homelessness. The end result of the Liberals' failed carbon tax experiment is the two million Canadians who are now using food banks. This is unacceptable.

Conservatives will continue to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand in the House of Commons today and show my love for the Arctic and our love for Canada's sovereignty and security. I want to talk about the generational NORAD investments of nearly \$40 billion over 20 years that we are investing into the safety and security of the Canadian Armed Forces for all Canadians.

Under NORAD, we have designated three sites of forwarding operations in Inuvik, Yellowknife and Iqaluit, and one operating deployment air base in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. These four sites are critical to NORAD's operations in the Arctic and to Canada's sovereignty. We are investing to build six new navy ships, four of which we have delivered; 88 new aircraft; and nearly \$7 billion to modernize our surveillance system by installing over-the-horizon radar systems.

Unlike the Conservatives, who cut the budget for National Defence and Canada's security system, we are increasing the budget and spending the money that we need—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Eglinton—Lawrence.

* * *

JEWISH COMMUNITY

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 1913, Jews were prohibited from practising medicine in any hospital in Toronto, but four brave immigrant women from the Jewish community worked tirelessly and raised enough support to open the doors to an institution that is known today as Mount Sinai Hospital, a world leader in the delivery of health care in over 45 languages. Ironically, this sacred ground of healing has been the target of an anti-Semitic protest that has undermined the health and safety of the patients and medical professionals who work there.

The hatred must come to an end. The attacks against synagogues, schools, businesses and neighbourhoods must stop. However, the burden should not fall only to the Jewish community; we must all put our shoulder to the wheel. Strong allies like labour leader Victoria Mancinelli speak with moral clarity and set an example for others. Only if we stand together can we end anti-Semitism and live up to the vision of Mount Sinai that still motivates the inclusive and life-saving work that it does today.

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CARBON TAX

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the NDP-Liberals are not worth the cost. Guess what: The Alberta NDP agrees. NDP leadership contenders are abandoning the sinking carbon tax ship. Sarah Hoffman said they played dirty politics with it and picked winners and losers.

Do people know who else loses? All Canadians do. Twenty-three per cent is the whopping increase to their carbon tax on April 1. Two million Canadians are lined up at food banks across the nation. A family of four is paying \$700 more in groceries this year.

The Prime Minister is so radical that even his costly coalition partners in Alberta's NDP cannot defend his carbon tax. Let me be clear to NDP-Liberals in fellating each other and the costs on everything: Axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget, stop the crime and restore the promise.

* * *

• (1415)

AGE-RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION AWARENESS MONTH

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, February is Age-Related Macular Degeneration Awareness Month, and yesterday was AMD awareness day on the Hill. A number of stakeholders and specialists in eye care are here in Ottawa this week to meet with members of the House and of the other place to speak about vision care issues. We salute them and the work they do on behalf of all of us.

I also take this opportunity to thank all of my colleagues in the House for adopting unanimously my bill, Bill C-284, to establish a national eye care strategy in Canada. I ask my colleagues in the Senate to please pass the bill as soon as possible. It would be wonderful to celebrate the adoption of an eye care strategy during February, AMD Awareness Month.

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PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General lifted the veil on the government's corrupt arrive scam, revealing that the cost of the useless app, which should have been \$80,000, is \$60 million and counting. The two-person company GC Strategies, which did no IT work, was paid over \$19 million for arrive scam, charging over \$1,000 a day, which is 60% more than a government IT employee. With insider access, it dictated the requirements for a contract it won. Today, media are reporting that the company has received over \$250 mil-

Statements by Members

lion from the Liberal government since 2015. Whiskey tasting and extravagant dinners with government officials went unrecorded, documents went missing and taxpayers footed the bill.

The Prime Minister's failed arrive scam app, which wrongly sent thousands of Canadians into quarantine, was over-budget and not worth the cost. The RCMP must expand its investigation to figure out where the money is and how to get it back.

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ANTI-ASIAN RACISM

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as Asian Canadians welcome the year of the dragon, Richmond residents gathered to protest taxpayer-funded drug use in their community. A video from the protest has gone viral internationally. As citizens dared to speak up, they were shouted down by a vile left-wing racist screaming, "Go back to Hong Kong" and "Go back to where you came from." These comments were outrageous and have no place in our country.

It is shameful that the Prime Minister has allowed racism to fester among his political base. People from all over the world used to dream of a day when they could bring their families to Canada, afford a home in a safe community and be part of the Canadian story. We have been blessed by the contributions of Asian immigrants for generations.

After eight years of the Prime Minister's radical drug policies, our streets are filled with crime, chaos, drugs and disorder. Conservatives stand with all Canadians who want to raise their children in a drug-free community and will always defend their right to say so.

* * *

[Translation]

QUEBEC MAPLE SYRUP

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with the cold and snow of winter all around us, the warm weather seems a long way off. However, I have it on good authority that spring is on the way, which means it will soon be time for that delicious symbol of warmth and joy, Quebec-made maple syrup.

Yes, the time has come once again for families, friends and visitors to gather for the maple harvest, a ritual as sweet as the syrup it celebrates. It is a celebration of Quebec cuisine, where traditional dishes are combined with the taste of fresh maple syrup. It is part of the rich tapestry of Quebec's heritage and culture.

Statements by Members

[English]

Whether, whether they are drowning their French toast, their pancakes, their crepes, or pretty much anything their heart fancies, in fresh maple syrup at home, or visiting their local *cabane à sucre*, I invite all of Vaudreuil—Soulangois to enjoy the delicious gift of spring that the maple harvest brings.

* * *

MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND GIRLS

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on every Valentine's Day since 1992, led by indigenous matriarchs, 2SLGBTQ+ members and family members in the Downtown Eastside, the community takes to the streets to honour and grieve the loss of missing and murdered indigenous women, girls and the gender diverse. Each year as we march, the drumming unites our heartbeats and eagles circle in the sky. Their spirits live within us.

This act of remembrance is an expression of love, respect and solidarity for families and survivors. Our community stands united in the call for justice. We demand full implementation of all 231 calls for justice. We demand action, and not just empty words. We demand accountability and measurable progress. The CBC reported that, as of June 2023, only two of the 231 calls for justice had been completed, and more than half have not even been started. This is unconscionable.

In honour of—

● (1420)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Mirabel has the floor.

* * *

[Translation]

LOUISE LÉONARD

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on January 27, more than 200 people gathered at the Église de Sainte-Scholastique to pay their respects to Louise Léonard, who died at the age of 79. She was the wife of my friend Denis Lauzon, who founded the Centre de formation agricole de Mirabel.

Denis had a very special way of introducing himself to people. For nearly 60 years, he called himself “the most happily married man in Sainte-Scholastique”, and with good reason. He and Louise shared a wonderfully close bond. The love was palpable in their home, where I was welcomed as a son.

As a teacher, Louise Léonard touched the lives of hundreds of young people. She was a proud, accomplished and caring woman who was involved in her community and in the world around her. Like many seniors in the village, Louise was looking forward to growing old peacefully with her husband and loved ones at her side at the new seniors' residence in Sainte-Scholastique.

As we walk around the Hill today, we may run into Denis, and if we look up to the heavens, we might see Louise tenderly watching over him and all of us, as she always did.

I wish Louise a safe journey.

[English]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of a Liberal-NDP government, the RCMP is once again investigating a Liberal deal.

Two of the contractors involved in the creation of the ArriveCAN app are already being investigated for their potentially criminal acts to obtain contracts, but that investigation will not even scratch the surface of everything that was hidden from Canadians. GC Strategies, an IT firm of two people that did no actual IT work, was paid over \$19 million just to find people to build this \$60-million app. This is not to mention it's also rigging the bidding process for a \$25-million contract that only it could win, and it does not stop there.

Reports are out this morning revealing that this two-person head-hunting firm has gotten as much as 250 million taxpayer dollars since 2015. This RCMP investigation needs to be expanded to understand what really happened in the building of this app and who is responsible for this huge waste of taxpayer money.

* * *

UKRAINE

Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, February 24 will mark two years since the beginning of Russia's further brutal invasion of Ukraine. Our government has said that Canada will stand with the Ukrainian people until they win, and victory is the only option.

Victory is the only option because Ukraine's victory is vital to Canada's security. If Russia wins, it will not stop at Ukraine. If Russia wins, Europe, the U.S. and Canada will be next in defending ourselves against Russian aggression. Therefore, every Ukrainian soldier fighting today is one less Canadian who will have to fight in the future. Every dollar we spend today is millions of dollars less that we will have to spend in the future.

Our government understands this, and that is one of the reasons Canada has been a global leader in supporting Ukraine. Unfortunately, Conservatives continue to vote against support for Ukraine and against Canada's national security.

On this two-year anniversary, I urge MPs throughout the House vote in favour of the support needed to ensure Ukraine's victory because victory is the only option for our security, our economy and our freedom.

Slava Ukraini.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's arrive scam scandal continues to deepen. Today we learned from Joël-Denis Bellavance that a single arrive scam company received \$250 million. That company has four employees and is headquartered at a cottage. This so-called IT company admits it does not do IT work.

Come on. What a mess.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the pandemic, we did everything we could to try to protect Canadians and save lives, but even in an unprecedented situation, the rules must be followed. Anyone who did not follow the rules must face the consequences.

That is why we absolutely welcome the Auditor General's recommendations, and that is why the appropriate authorities are doing their job.

Yes, Canadians should know the truth, and we expect the investigators to do their job.

• (1425)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on its web site, GC Strategies boasts about being Ottawa's fastest-growing company. After eight years of this Prime Minister, this company is growing very fast indeed. It has four employees and does no IT work, yet it received a quarter of a billion dollars for IT.

The first contract for this company was signed three weeks after this Prime Minister came to power. Why?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like the Auditor General, Canadians have questions about whether the rules were followed and how such a company could get all these contracts. We expect the authorities to conduct the appropriate investigations to find out who exactly was involved, how these processes were uncovered and which rules were broken.

It is very important to ensure that taxpayer money is invested the right way. In this situation, we all have important questions that we want answered.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's arrive scam is now flailing out of control. Today there are revelations from Joël-Denis Bellavance that one arrive scam company received a quarter of a billion dollars in contracts.

Let us get this straight. This company with four employees, headquartered in the basement of a tiny cottage, got IT contracts even though they admit they do no IT work. It was a quarter of a billion dollars. WTF?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Oral Questions

The Speaker: We are dangerously close to crossing the line of what is considered parliamentary language. That is an abbreviation of language that is commonly understood to be not parliamentary.

I am going to ask the hon. opposition leader to please withdraw that comment and to use parliamentary language.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, "where's the funds"?

The Speaker: I appreciate that the Leader of the Opposition clarified his comment.

I will ask all members to not use that acronym because it, in the minds of Canadians, would clearly be considered unparliamentary language. I ask all members to use the full words.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the time of the pandemic, the government rightly did everything it could to keep Canadians safe and keep them protected, but of course, even in the most trying times, perhaps especially in the most trying times, all the rules need to be followed.

In this case, the Auditor General has highlighted some very concerning questions that need to be answered. That is why we are expecting and supporting all relevant authorities to follow up on this irregular contracting and perhaps breaking of the rules. This is an important issue, and that is why we are taking it seriously.

[Disturbance in gallery]

• (1430)

SITTING SUSPENDED

The Speaker: In light of the disruption we had, we are going to suspend for a couple of minutes to allow things to calm down.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 2:32 p.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 2:34 p.m.)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us recap. A company that had never before received contracts from the federal government started getting an avalanche of contracts just three weeks after the Prime Minister took office. The company, in fact, got a quarter of a billion dollars for IT, even though it admits it does not do IT. It has four employees and a headquarters in the basement of a cottage.

Can the Prime Minister explain why this suspicious company started getting these contracts exactly 21 days after he took office?

Oral Questions

• (1435)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is obviously an unacceptable situation, which is why the relevant authorities are fully investigating exactly what went on here, particularly highlighted by the Auditor General's recent report. This is an issue we need to continue to understand, and we need to make sure the rules are being followed and our procurement practices across government are respectful of taxpayer money.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is more proof the Prime Minister is not worth the cost or the corruption. After eight years of doubling housing costs, quadrupling the carbon tax and sending two million people to food banks, he somehow found a quarter of a billion dollars for this one company, which boasts on its website that it is now Ottawa's fastest-growing company. There is no doubt about that when its employees are having their faces stuffed with tax dollars by the Prime Minister.

Why is it that when Canadians are starving in food bank lines, the Prime Minister finds a quarter of a billion dollars for his friends?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously the relevant authorities need to follow up on this and get to the bottom of exactly how this unacceptable situation happened.

In the meantime, on this side of the House, we are going to continue to focus on making life more affordable for Canadians, for example by attracting thousands of health care workers by increasing by 50% student loan forgiveness for rural doctors and nurses, by fast-tracking the construction of more than 51,000 homes, and by finalizing the housing accelerator agreements with over 60 small and rural communities.

While the Conservative Party continues to block these initiatives, we are going to continue to step up for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there is one important piece of information that every citizen in Quebec and Canada needs to know. The government has a nasty habit of finding scapegoats to blame for all the mistakes it has racked up over the past eight years.

This time, my first question will be quite simple. Who is to blame for ArriveCAN? Whose fault is it?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the pandemic raged, our government tried to find as many ways as we could to help Canadians protect people's health and safety.

That said, there are clear and precise rules that must be followed when it comes to awarding contracts, even during a pandemic. We expect the investigators and appropriate authorities to do their work to find out exactly how this unacceptable situation came about.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, to be clear, I presume that, henceforth, the person responsible for all the corrective work to be done is the Prime Minister of Canada.

What sort of investigation has he launched, since this company had been receiving government contracts for a long time, since long before the Liberals came to power, but its contracts did not start to be suspended until November? What sort of investigation has he launched? How long will it take? Who will lead it? When will we get the results from this urgent internal investigation?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as soon as we became aware that there were irregularities or that rules had not been followed when this contract was awarded by the public service, internal public service processes were triggered within the different departments. We know that other authorities, including the police, have taken interest in this case as well.

We expect all of this work to be taken seriously to ensure that all the rules and consequences are applied if necessary and as needed.

[*English*]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have learned the ArriveCAN scandal goes even deeper. The Liberals gave \$250 million to GC Strategies. Let us talk about what that \$60 million for ArriveCAN could have bought: 125 affordable homes or 800 nurses hired. Instead, the Prime Minister spent this money on an app that does not work and that no one uses.

How does the Prime Minister look Canadians in the eyes with all this waste?

• (1440)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the pandemic, Canadians' lives were at risk and we, quite rightly, as a government, reached out to use all the possible tools to keep Canadians safe. Indeed, the pandemic was less deadly and less harmful to our economy in Canada than it was in most, if not all, of our peer countries.

At the same time, even as we were innovating and trying to do everything we could to keep Canadians safe, the rules needed to be followed. It is obvious that in this case the rules do not look like they were followed, and that is why there are investigations ongoing that need to get to the bottom of this.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the rules were flagrantly violated, and millions of dollars were wasted.

[*Translation*]

The Liberals gave \$250 million to GC Strategies and that includes \$60 million spent on an app that does not work. The government could have built 125 affordable housing units with that \$60 million.

How can the Prime Minister look Canadians in the eye after wasting so much money?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the pandemic, our government sought to keep Canadians safe and healthy in every way possible. That was our overarching goal, and we succeeded in doing better than most of our peer countries.

At the same time, when we were doing all this to protect Canadians, we expected all the rules to be followed. That is what we demanded. Clearly the rules were not followed. That is why we are making sure there is a follow-up, an investigation, and there will be consequences for anyone who has broken the law.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he did not answer the NDP leader's question. The question was, how can the Prime Minister waste millions of dollars on the arrive scam app when Canadians cannot afford to eat, heat or house themselves? The answer is because the NDP keeps the Prime Minister in power, that is how, and votes consistently in committee to cover up the scandal and shut down investigations.

This app was supposed to cost 80 grand, said the Prime Minister. Now it is at least \$60 million, but we do not know for sure because of missing documents. What is the full and final cost of the arrive scam app?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have addressed these questions, but I will highlight that some of the Conservatives' attacks on this situation are because they deeply deplore all the measures we put in to keep Canadians safe during the pandemic. We remember how they gave in to conspiracy theories, spreading anti-vaxxer conspiracies and standing against measures we needed to put forward to keep Canadians safe.

Yes, as we did all those things, we made sure rules were followed, and for any rules that were not followed, there are consequences and there are investigations ongoing. We will continue to keep Canadians safe—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what was the full and final cost of the app?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is among the questions. There are direct follow-ups. Investigations are ongoing right now, both internal and external, to ensure that, as rules were evidently broken, there are consequences and there is accountability for this.

There is no doubt that there are serious challenges around procurement and the public service that were evident at that time. We need to make sure that is fixed. We need to move forward in a way that takes better responsibility for the kinds of challenges we saw in this situation.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, how much?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during the pandemic we were there to invest, to protect Canadians and to keep their lives safe. Despite the objections and the conspiracy theories of the Conservative Party, we stepped up in many different ways.

Even as we did, we expected and we continue to expect that the rules around procurement will be followed by the public service. It is obvious that this was not the case here. That is why there are ongoing investigations. There will be consequences, and there will be changes made to the public service's systems.

• (1445)

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister said that the ArriveCAN app would cost \$80,000. According to the Auditor General, it cost at least \$60 million. That is 750 times more expensive. We do not know everything yet because some documents are missing. The Prime Minister has the power to request all documents from his government.

How much did the app cost?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, investigations are ongoing to find out exactly how this happened, who benefited and what the consequences will be. That is very important. At the same time, we must remember that everything we did at that time was to protect Canadians. Even during that terrible crisis, we expected the rules to be followed. Obviously, it appears that they were not followed. That is why investigations are ongoing to get to the bottom of this.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, how much did it cost?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, investigations are under way to find out exactly who is responsible, what rules were broken and what the consequences will be for the people involved.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the people involved are the taxpayers who are struggling to pay their bills. He leads the government. He has access to all the documents.

Does he expect us to believe that he does not know how much the arrive scam app cost?

[English]

Does he really expect us to believe that he does not know how much his own app cost? He has the power to call for any document he wants from the government. Either he is covering it up, or he is incompetent, or worse.

Which is it?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are ongoing investigations, both internal and external, that are following up on exactly how this unacceptable situation happened. We received the Auditor General's report last week.

Oral Questions

We are following up and we have been following up on this for months already. We are going to continue to make sure that anyone who broke the rules faces consequences and that systems and structures surrounding the public service and procurement are changed. This is something we are taking very seriously, as we must.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the pandemic is a convenient excuse for a lot of things, but it does not relieve the government of its obligations of sound management and accountability. We now know that the Prime Minister is responsible, and we know that he did not launch a specific investigation into the ArriveCAN app and the \$60 million.

Has the Prime Minister taken any steps to recover the money that was spent inappropriately and that must be returned to the public coffers, regardless of whose hands it ended up in?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in answer to a previous question, I mentioned that internal processes and investigations began months ago to look into this contract, which was improperly awarded and for which the rules were not followed.

This has been under way for several months and we have been taking this situation seriously. Although there was a pandemic and we had to react quickly and creatively, that does not excuse the fact that contracts were improperly awarded or the fact that the rules were not followed. That is why we are conducting investigations, and there will be consequences.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in a cagey and roundabout way, the Prime Minister is admitting that there was misappropriation and misuse of public funds at the Canada Border Services Agency.

Has he at least considered relieving the current administration of their duties and temporarily placing the agency under third-party management?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a result of internal investigations, there have already been consequences for some of the people involved. I am not going to say anything else because there are processes and investigations under way. However, I can reassure people by telling them that, yes, we have taken concrete action and there have been consequences, but there will be even more consequences as the authorities involved continue their work.

* * *

● (1450)

INFRASTRUCTURE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the common-sense Conservative Party is focused on cutting taxes, building housing, fixing the budget and stopping crime, this Prime Minister's radical Minister of Environment is launching a war on cars. He said that their government has decided to stop investing in new road infrastructure.

How does he think people in the regions are going to get to work? By bike?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister has clarified his remarks. The reality is that our approach to infrastructure has not changed. Since 2015, we have invested billions of dollars in infrastructure, be it bridges, ports or roads. We are going to continue to be there to invest in infrastructure across the country. Our approach has not changed.

It has to be said that the Conservative Party's approach has not changed either. The Conservatives vote against our investments in infrastructure, against our investments in bridges, in roads, in help for rural communities, as well as big cities. They consistently vote against it all.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the radical Minister of Environment did not clarify his remarks, he went even further, adding that the Liberal government is going to block projects such as the third link for the people in the greater Quebec City region. The people need a third link. People in the regions need their cars. This Prime Minister wants to prevent them from using them.

Why is he waging a war against cars instead of helping people get to work?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that Quebeckers will be pleased to hear that the Conservative Party is still in favour of this third link, which is no longer happening.

The reality is that our government's approach to investing in transportation systems and roads has not changed since 2015. There have been projects such as the new Samuel de Champlain Bridge or the Gordie Howe international bridge that is being built.

We will always be there to invest in infrastructure and, apparently, the Conservative Party will always be there to vote against our investments in infrastructure.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the crazy, carbon tax minister has done it again. This time he is saying that the federal government is not going to support any new road construction. I quote: "our government has made the decision to stop investing in new road infrastructure". He believes that people in Yukon, rural Alberta or rural Newfoundland will have to get to work riding a bicycle.

Why should those people have to pay taxes for infrastructure when they cannot possibly use the tramways and the bicycles he is funding?

The Speaker: A couple of months ago, the Chair made it clear to all members that we should not be using certain adjectives in regard to individual members of Parliament. The word "crazy" is not one that we should be using. It is one thing I have given direction to members on. I am going to ask members to please work within the boundaries of parliamentary language.

The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister has already clarified his remarks.

Our government's approach to investing in trade corridors and roads that Canadians rely on has not changed since 2015. We will continue to step up. We got projects like the Samuel de Champlain Bridge in Montreal across the finish line, and we are going to get others like the Gordie Howe bridge built. We are going to continue to invest in infrastructure.

What also has not changed is the Conservative Party's opposition to investments in roads, communities, bridges and ports right across the country, as we grow the economy, because all the Conservative leader is offering is cuts, cuts, cuts.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, first, the radical minister is bringing in a 61¢-a-litre carbon tax on people who are committing the crime of driving to work or operating their farms. Then, he wants to ban people from using vehicles that are necessary in our climate. Now, he says he is going to ban all federal funding for future roads: "Our government has made the decision to stop investing in new road infrastructure".

Will the Prime Minister condemn those crazy comments?

• (1455)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, the minister has clarified his remarks.

Our approach to infrastructure continues to be one of investing in the future for Canadians. Through the national trade corridors fund alone, we are building projects like a new bridge over the Yukon River in Dawson City, new interchanges on Highways 101 and 103 in Nova Scotia, and twinning the Trans-Canada Highway in parts of Newfoundland. We are also working with municipalities through the community building fund. Just in Ontario, this means almost 2,900 projects for local roads and bridges.

What has not changed, as well, is the Conservative Party's opposition to investing in the future and investing in—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Burnaby South.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Netanyahu's bombing of Rafah and potential ground incursion will be a slaughter. Thousands of innocent Palestinians will die. The Liberals act as if they are concerned, but authorized \$28.5 million in new military exports to Netanyahu. The Prime Minister has the power and the responsibility to protect civilians.

When will he stop selling arms to Netanyahu?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a military operation in Rafah would have catastrophic consequences. Over half of Gaza's population is taking refuge in the area, including many Canadians and their families. There is simply nowhere else for civilians to go. Protecting civilians is paramount. A sustainable ceasefire is urgently needed. Hamas must lay down its arms and release all hostages immediately.

The only possible path forward toward peace is a two-state solution. We have told this directly to Prime Minister Netanyahu and other regional partners. We have not permitted any new export permits since October 7.

Oral Questions

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has an obligation to back up his words with actions.

With kids going online, we know they risk being exposed to harmful content, sexual extortion and harassment. In the last election, the Prime Minister promised legislation to hold those platforms accountable and to protect kids within 100 days of being in office. It has been 814 days and, still, nothing has happened. Children are being hurt as the Prime Minister sits by.

When will he stop protecting web giants and start protecting kids?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the leader opposite knows well that we have been working very closely with communities, individuals and experts to move forward on online harms legislation that is going to do the right job of protecting our kids from all the range of harms they face online. This is something we have taken very seriously. It is also something we have listened to and have heard, particularly from minority or marginalized communities, that we need to get it exactly right. That is why we have taken the time. This is something that the leader knows full well.

We are going to continue to do the right work to protect our kids.

* * *

HEALTH

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, sexual and reproductive health touches all aspects of human health and well-being. It affects physical and mental health. It impacts social participation. It ensures healthy reproductive organs, family planning, pre- and post-natal care, the delivery of healthy babies and safe abortion.

There is a push globally to limit access to the full range of sexual and reproductive health care. This week, two female MPs were stopped from raising this issue in Parliament.

As it is SRHR week globally, can the Prime Minister reaffirm the government's position on this human rights issue?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Vancouver Centre for her tireless advocacy on women's issues.

Oral Questions

This week, I am proud to reaffirm our government's unwavering commitment to defending Canadians' reproductive rights through historic investments and through work with grassroots organizers. We have seen, just this week, over the past two days, that the threat to reproductive freedom is alive and well in Canada, even in this chamber. The shameful behaviour of Conservative MPs, shutting down women in the House, leaves Canadians wondering what that party is so afraid of. I call on Conservative MPs to stand up for women's rights.

* * *

● (1500)

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our common-sense plan axes the tax, builds the homes, fixes the budgets and stops the crime.

The Prime Minister cannot defend his policy, so he is changing the name. People hate the carbon tax because 60% pay more into it than they get back in his phony rebates. Today, he announced a costly rebranding of the hated carbon tax.

My questions for him are these: How much did he spend on consultants in order to come up with the new name, and was it GC Strategies that he hired?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition does not even understand the consequences of the cuts he is proposing left, right and centre. He proposes to take away the carbon price rebate, the Canada carbon rebate, from millions of Canadian families across the country. The Canada carbon rebate is going to be there to continue to deliver more money to eight out of 10 Canadian families, in four cheques, over the course of the year. That puts cash in their pockets while we fight climate change. We are seeing a reduction in emissions that Canada is leading on. We are also moving forward on growing the economy and supporting Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he could not even get the new name of the carbon tax right. It is only three words. The Prime Minister should learn that we cannot improve life by slogans alone. That is right. That is why we propose the facts. I have here a distributional analysis of the federal fuel charge by the Parliamentary Budget Officer, which shows that 60% of Canadians pay more in taxes than they get back in the Prime Minister's phony rebates.

Why will the Prime Minister not follow the facts and axe the tax?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition wants to talk about the facts. The Canada carbon rebate will deliver \$1,800 in Alberta to an average family of four; \$1,200 in Manitoba; \$1,120 in Ontario for a family of four; \$1,500 in Saskatchewan; \$760 in New Brunswick; \$824 in Nova Scotia; \$880 in P.E.I.; and, \$1,192 in Newfoundland and Labrador to a family of four. Eight out of 10 families across the country get more money out of the Canada carbon rebate—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

[Translation]

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is not worth the cost of housing, which has doubled since he took office. Today, we learned on Rentals.ca that rent reached a new high in January at \$2,196 a month. That is a 10% increase in one year.

When will he learn that funding bureaucracy instead of housing will not address the cost of housing?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition keeps showing that he does not even understand the programs that he intends to cut.

With our housing accelerator fund, we are investing in municipalities' capacity to build more houses faster by speeding up densification, making zoning changes, issuing permits and moving forward in a way that creates more opportunities to build more homes.

The Leader of the Opposition refuses to understand that, rather than making cuts, this is how we are going to resolve the housing crisis.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about that program. Since it was created two years ago, rent has increased by 20% across the country. At the Standing Committee on Finance yesterday, the Minister of Housing was asked how many homes have been built through the accelerator fund. The answer is zero.

The minister said the program does not build houses specifically. Those were his words.

If it costs \$4 billion to build no houses, how much would it cost to build one?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition just proved that he does not even understand the programs he is proposing to abolish.

Yes, we are investing \$4 billion in municipalities across the country to speed up densification and housing construction and cut red tape in order to build more homes faster. That is exactly what we are doing. We are creating opportunities. More than half a million homes will be built in the next few years. The Leader of the Opposition is proposing to abolish everything because he only cares about cuts.

• (1505)

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, contrary to common sense, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission has authorized a pit covering over a million square metres to store nuclear waste pretty much alongside the Ottawa River. Many people are concerned about this, including chiefs of the Anishinabek Nation, who are here with us today.

I would like the Prime Minister to tell me, does he consider nuclear waste to be dangerous?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, protecting the health and safety of Canadians and the environment is a top priority for this government.

This decision was made by the independent Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, which approves projects only if it determines they are safe for Canadians and the environment, and only after a thorough assessment based on evidence and consultations with indigenous and other affected communities. The Government of Canada and the Department of Energy and Natural Resources are not involved in the commission's decisions regarding—

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

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Anishinabek Nation has conclusively decided that it is not safe. The Quebec nation has conclusively decided that it is not safe.

Is the Prime Minister only listening to the nuclear lobby and to the steadily shrinking Liberal nation?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we know and as everyone knows, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission is an independent scientific body that conducts rigorous assessments to ensure the safety of nuclear facilities. It consults with the communities concerned and bases its activities on science to protect Canadians and the environment. This is not a political decision. On this side of the House, we trust our experts.

* * *

[English]

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the Prime Minister is not worth the cost of housing, which has doubled as he has built bureaucracies that block homes. In January, according data out today, rent was up 10% year over year to \$2,196, an astonishing increase in a very short time. In fact, it is up about 20% in the last two years alone, and it has been accelerating ever since he recently named his incompetent housing minister.

Will the Prime Minister follow our common-sense plan to cut the bureaucracy and build the homes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that cuts from the Conservative leader would not get more homes built. If he were really concerned about rents, he would line up behind us and support the removal of the GST on new apartment construction. That is something they actually voted against. We know that unlocking a greater supply of housing, in-

Oral Questions

cluding with purpose-built apartment buildings across the country, is a way of bringing down rents for people. That is a concrete solution we put forward that the Conservatives chose to vote against for political gain and for political reasons.

We are going to continue to be there to do the hard work of delivering for Canadians, while he relies on catchy slogans and misunderstanding of what it is he is choosing to cut.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we were the ones who proposed taking the tax off home building, the one good idea that he finally copied. However, the Prime Minister talks about slogans. One is the housing accelerator fund, the \$4-billion program that was supposed to speed up housing. We asked the housing minister yesterday in committee how many homes it had completed, and the answer is zero, nada and nothing. He said, "It doesn't actually lead to the construction of specific homes."

It cost \$4 billion to build zero homes. How much would it cost to build one?

• (1510)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, we have the clear proof that the Leader of the Opposition does not even understand the proposals that he is counting on cutting, that he is promising to cut, from Canadians.

The housing accelerator fund is about investing in municipalities across the country to change the frame around which they build homes faster. It involves eliminating red tape, increasing densification, changing zoning and making sure we can unlock far more house construction than any federal government could build on its own. This is the approach that we are taking, and it is working.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have seen \$4 billion, 35 photo ops, one minister and zero homes.

The minister not only says the program does not build homes, but he also says it does not lead to the construction of homes. He could not point to one development that had actually been completed.

The Liberals have been in power for eight years and they cannot get anything built. When will they get the bureaucracy and the taxes out of the way so we can build the homes?

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Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only tool that the Leader of the Conservative Party has put forward is cutting: cutting programs in order to somehow create more homes. What we are actually doing is investing, in partnership with municipalities, to eliminate red tape, to accelerate the construction of homes, to increase densification and to change zoning so that more houses can be built.

If he wants to talk about a number, half a million new homes are being facilitated by the housing accelerator fund right across the country. We have signed these over the past months. Construction is already under way across the country.

* * *

[Translation]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mrs. Sophie Chatel (Pontiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, communities across Canada are marching to remember missing and murdered women, girls and two-spirited people. Indigenous women are still afraid to leave their communities at night.

As this year marks the fifth anniversary of the national inquiry's final report on this issue, can the Prime Minister provide an update on efforts to implement the report's calls to action?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Pontiac for her question and her hard work.

The crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women, girls and two-spirited people continues in our country. Since 2015, we have launched a national inquiry—something the Conservatives refused to do—and we now have a clear plan of action that includes more help for people fleeing violence and a commitment to create the red dress alert to find missing indigenous people.

I would like to thank everyone who is participating in the walk in their communities.

* * *

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the Prime Minister is not worth the crime, chaos, drugs and disorder he has unleashed in our streets. He has signed on with the NDP government in B.C. to decriminalize crack, heroin and other hard drugs and has allowed for drug injection sites in Richmond. Courageous and patriotic Canadians of Chinese origin rose up to speak out to protect their kids and were treated to racial slurs by radical NDP activists telling them to go back to where they came from.

Will the Prime Minister reject this Liberal racism and ban hard drugs so we can stop the crime?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the impact of the toxic drug and overdose crisis on our communities is absolutely devastating. We are using every tool at our disposal to work with partners to end this national public health crisis. Unlike the opposition, we are following an evidence-based ap-

proach while working in partnership with stakeholders, experts and people with lived and living experience.

We take the safety of all Canadians seriously, which is why, from the beginning, we have approached this from both the public health and public safety perspectives, hand in hand with the B.C. government in this case.

* * *

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister would not condemn the racial slurs, but he did issue a vicious condemnation of his own record. I will read what he said about life in Canada after eight years of his prime ministership. He said, “Yeah, grocery bills suck. Rent sucks. Mortgage renegotiations, oh my God, how are we going to deal with it?”

This is life after eight years. What is his slogan going to be in the next election: “Vote for me and life will still suck”?

● (1515)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, did he just say “vote for me and life will suck”? I think that is what he said.

The reality is that we have put forward smart, responsible solutions to fight climate change and grow the economy, to lift over half a million kids out of poverty, and to invest in the economy of the future and good careers, whether in zero-emission vehicles, whether in mining or forestry or whether in advanced manufacturing. We will continue to bring more women into the workforce with initiatives such as child care. We are moving forward on dental care, which the Conservatives voted against, for seniors and young people. We are going to be there to invest in a better future for Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he actually spoke the truth, maybe by accident. He said that, after eight years, life sucks for the very middle class and those working hard to join it to whom he promised so much. He taxed their grocery bills with a quadrupling carbon tax. He doubled housing costs after promising to lower them. He unleashed a crime wave across the country. Now that he admits life sucks under his leadership, why will he not accept our common-sense plan to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians understand that these are complicated times and that governments need to step up with real solutions. Responsible leadership is about recognizing the challenges people are facing and putting forward solutions to fix them. Whether it is a housing accelerator that is getting half a million homes built over the coming years; whether it is child care that is saving thousands of dollars for families right across the country, as we help more women get into the workforce; whether it is fighting climate change in a way that puts more money into people's pockets and builds stronger careers for the future, we are putting forward solutions. He is doing nothing but attack—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Richmond Hill.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians want access to health care systems and services that allow them and their family and loved ones to get the care they need when they need it. While the Conservatives voted against payments through our Canada health transfer, our government signed a bilateral funding agreement with Ontario, investing more than \$3.1 billion over the next two years. Can the Prime Minister please update the House on the working together agreement and how it will help the health care system and impact the lives of Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's service to his constituents.

These specifically tailored agreements will address unique health care challenges faced by provinces and territories. Thanks to this federal funding, Ontario will add hundreds of new family physicians and nurse practitioners, expand health care education programs, remove barriers to foreign credential recognition and open five new youth wellness hubs to improve access to mental health services.

Unlike the Conservative Party, which is too busy fighting for a privatized health care system, we will keep making bold investments and will work with the provinces and territories to deliver real—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Victoria.

* * *

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are worried about the climate crisis. We know that coal is the dirtiest source of electricity, producing more emissions than any other fossil fuel does. The Liberals promised to ban thermal coal exports, but under the Liberals, exports have more than tripled. These are more broken promises.

The Liberals have no plan to phase coal out and no plan to support workers. Canadians across the country are facing extreme weather. Will the Prime Minister end thermal coal exports?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yes, phasing out coal from the electricity sector is the single most important climate action any country can take. We are committed to ending thermal coal exports by 2030, as well as ending

Oral Questions

coal-powered electricity generation. The Minister of Environment is actively working on achieving these targets, and we will have an update in due course.

* * *

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, after question period, every member will have the opportunity to rise to vote on the NDP's Bill C-273 to repeal section 43 of the Criminal Code, which allows an adult to use corporal punishment on a child for so-called educational purposes.

More than 65 countries in the world have done this and 27 others have initiated the process. It is what the UN committee on the protection of children has called for. Call to action 6 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada is calling for it, as is the Canadian Medical Association.

Can the Prime Minister confirm that his government will support this initiative to protect our children?

• (1520)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for the question. This is an issue we are all concerned about.

I can assure everyone that the government is unwavering in its commitment to ensuring the protection and physical safety of children across the country. We therefore support Bill C-273 and its important purpose of protecting our children against violence and abuse. We look forward to hearing the experts during study in committee of this important legislation that we will support in a few minutes.

* * *

[English]

ROMAN CATHOLIC EPISCOPAL CORPORATION OF OTTAWA-CORNWALL ACT

(Bill S-1001. On the Order: Government Orders:)

S-1001 — February 6, 2024 — Mr. Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge) — Second reading and reference to a legislative committee of Bill S-1001, An Act to amalgamate The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Ottawa and The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation for the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall, in Ontario, Canada.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I think you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion.

I move:

Government Orders

That, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House, Bill S-1001, An Act to amalgamate The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Ottawa and The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation for the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall, in Ontario, Canada, be deemed read a second time and referred to a committee of the whole, deemed considered in committee of the whole, deemed reported without amendment, deemed concurred in at report stage and deemed read a third time and passed.

The 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.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Bill read the second time, considered in committee of the whole, reported, concurred in, read the third time and passed)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from February 13 consideration of the motion that Bill C-62, An Act to amend An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying), No. 2, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

The Speaker: It being 3:23 p.m., pursuant to order made on Tuesday, February 13, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment of the member for Laurentides—Labelle.

Call in the members.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The question is as follows. Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of amendment to House]

• (1535)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 640*)

YEAS

Members

Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bergeron	Bérubé
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Boulerice	Brunelle-Duceppe
Chabot	Champoux
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Fortin
Garon	Gaudreau
Larouche	Lemire
Michaud	Normandin
Pauzé	Perron
Plamondon	Rayes
Savard-Tremblay	Simard
Sinclair-Desgagné	Ste-Marie

Thériault
Trudel
Villemure— 33

Therrien
Vignola

NAYS

Members

Aboultiaf	Aitchison
Albas	Aldag
Alghabra	Ali
Allison	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barron
Battiste	Beech
Berthold	Bezan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blaney
Block	Blois
Boissonnault	Bradford
Bragdon	Brassard
Brière	Brock
Calkins	Cannings
Caputo	Carr
Carrie	Casey
Chagger	Chahal
Chambers	Champagne
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Chong
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cooper	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Dalton	Damoff
Dancho	Davidson
Davies	Deltell
d'Entremont	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Ellis	Epp
Erskine-Smith	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferri	Fillmore
Findlay	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Gahey
Gallant	Garrison
Gazan	Généreux
Genius	Gerretsen
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gould
Gourde	Gray
Green	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hallan
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfiner	Hoback
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Jeneroux	Johns
Joly	Jones
Jowhari	Julian

Kayabaga
 Kelly
 Khanna
 Kitchen
 Koutrakis
 Kurek
 Kusmierczyk
 Lake
 Lambropoulos
 Lantsman
 Lattanzio
 Lawrence
 Leboutillier
 Leslie
 Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
 Lloyd
 Long
 Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
 MacDonald (Malpeque)
 MacKinnon (Gatineau)
 Majumdar
 Martel
 Masse
 May (Cambridge)
 Mazier
 McDonald (Avalon)
 McKay
 McLean
 McPherson
 Mendès
 Miao
 Moore
 Morrice
 Morrissey
 Murray
 Naqvi
 Ng
 O'Connell
 O'Regan
 Paul-Hus
 Petitpas Taylor
 Powlowski
 Redekopp
 Rempel Garner
 Roberts
 Rodriguez
 Romanado
 Rota
 Sahota
 Saks
 Sarai
 Scheer
 Schmale
 Serré
 Shanahan
 Shields
 Sidhu (Brampton East)
 Singh
 Sorbara
 Sousa
 Stewart
 Strahl
 Sudds
 Taylor Roy
 Thompson
 Tolmie
 Turnbull
 Valdez
 van Koeverden
 Vandal
 Vecchio
 Vien
 Virani
 Kelloway
 Khalid
 Khera
 Kmiec
 Kram
 Kusie
 Kwan
 Lalonde
 Lamoureux
 Lapointe
 Lauzon
 LeBlanc
 Lehoux
 Lewis (Essex)
 Lightbound
 Lobb
 Longfield
 MacAulay (Cardigan)
 MacGregor
 Maguire
 Maloney
 Martinez Ferrada
 Mathysen
 May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
 McCauley (Edmonton West)
 McGuinty
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
 McLeod
 Melillo
 Mendicino
 Miller
 Morantz
 Morrison
 Motz
 Muys
 Nater
 Noormohamed
 Oliphant
 Patzer
 Perkins
 Poilievre
 Qualtrough
 Reid
 Richards
 Robillard
 Rogers
 Rood
 Ruff
 Sajjan
 Samson
 Scarpaleggia
 Schiefke
 Seeback
 Sgro
 Sheehan
 Shipley
 Sidhu (Brampton South)
 Small
 Soroka
 Steinley
 St-Onge
 Stubbs
 Tassi
 Thomas
 Tochor
 Trudeau
 Uppal
 Van Bynen
 Van Popta
 Vandenbeld
 Vidal
 Viersen
 Vis

Government Orders

Vuong
 Warkentin
 Webber
 Williams
 Yip
 Zarrillo
 Zuberi— 291
 Wagantall
 Waugh
 Weiler
 Williamson
 Zahid
 Zimmer

PAIRED

Members

Blair

Liepert— 2

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I declare the amendment defeated.

[*Translation*]

The next question is on the main motion.

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

[*English*]

Hon. Ruby Sahota: Madam Speaker, we request a recorded division.

● (1550)

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

(*Division No. 641*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
 Albas
 Alghabra
 Allison
 Anandasangaree
 Arnold
 Arya
 Atwin
 Badawey
 Baker
 Barlow
 Barron
 Beech
 Bezan
 Bittle
 Blaney
 Blois
 Boulerice
 Bragdon
 Brière
 Calkins
 Caputo
 Carrie
 Chagger
 Chambers
 Chatel
 Chiang
 Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
 Cooper
 Coteau
 Dalton
 Dancho
 Davies
 d'Entremont
 Aitchison
 Aldag
 Ali
 Anand
 Angus
 Arseneault
 Ashton
 Bachrach
 Bains
 Baldinelli
 Barrett
 Battiste
 Berthold
 Bibeau
 Blaikie
 Block
 Boissonnault
 Bradford
 Brassard
 Brock
 Cannings
 Carr
 Casey
 Chahal
 Champagne
 Chen
 Chong
 Collins (Victoria)
 Cormier
 Dabrusin
 Damoff
 Davidson
 Deltell
 Desjarlais

[Translation]

Pursuant to order made on Tuesday, February 13, Bill C-62, An Act to amend An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying), No. 2, is deemed referred to a committee of the whole, deemed considered in committee of the whole, deemed reported without amendment and deemed concurred in at report stage.

(Bill read the second time, deemed referred to a committee of the whole, deemed reported without amendment and deemed concurred in at report stage)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

PARLIAMENT OF CANADA ACT

The House resumed from February 8 consideration of the motion that Bill S-202, An Act to amend the Parliament of Canada Act (Parliamentary Visual Artist Laureate), be read the third time and passed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill S-202 under Private Members' Business.

• (1600)

[English]

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

(Division No. 642)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bergeron	Bérubé
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings	Carr
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Champoux
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong

Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Gainey	Garon
Garrison	Gaudreau
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gill	Gould
Green	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Larouche	Lattanzio
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lemire
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	May (Saenich—Gulf Islands)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod	McPherson
Mendès	Mendicino
Miao	Michaud
Miller	Morrice
Morrissey	Murray
Naqvi	Ng
Noormohamed	Normandin
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Pauzé
Perron	Petitpas Taylor
Plamondon	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Rayes
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Rota	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sarai
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Sinclair-Desgagné	Singh
Sorbara	Sousa
Ste-Marie	St-Onge
Sudds	Tassi
Taylor Roy	Thériault
Therrien	Thompson
Trudeau	Trudeau
Turnbull	Valdez
Van Bynen	van Koevorden
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Vignola	Villemure

Private Members' Business

Private Members' Business

Virani Weiler
 Yip Zahid
 Zarrillo Zuberi — 210

(Bill read the third time and passed)

* * *

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Berthold	Bezan
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chambers
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	Deltell
d'Entremont	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Findlay
Gallant	Généreux
Genuis	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Khanna	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Lawrence	Lehoux
Leslie	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Lloyd
Lobb	Maguire
Majumdar	Martel
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Motz
Muys	Nater
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Perkins	Poilievre
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ruff	Scheer
Schmale	Seeback
Shipley	Small
Soroka	Steinley
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vis	Vuong
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Williams	Williamson
Zimmer — 115	

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL STRATEGY ON FLOOD AND DROUGHT FORECASTING ACT

The House resumed from February 12 consideration of the motion that Bill C-317, An Act to establish a national strategy respecting flood and drought forecasting, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-317 under Private Members' Business.

• (1615)

[*English*]

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

(*Division No. 643*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Aldag
Alghabra	Ali
Allison	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arnold	Arseneault
Arya	Ashton
Atwin	Bachrach
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barron	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
Block	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Bragdon
Brassard	Brière
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Cannings
Caputo	Carr
Carrie	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Chahal	Chambers
Champagne	Champoux
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Chong
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cooper	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Dalton	Damoff
Dancho	Davidson
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	d'Entremont
Desbiens	Desilets
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Doherty	Dong
Dowdall	Dreeshen

PAIRED

Members

Blair Liepert — 2

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I declare the motion carried.

Private Members' Business

Drouin	Dubourg	Paul-Hus	Pauzé
Duclos	Duguid	Perkins	Perron
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Dzerowicz	Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Ehsassi	El-Khoury	Poilievre	Powlowski
Ellis	Epp	Qualtrough	Rayes
Erskine-Smith	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Redekopp	Reid
Falk (Provencher)	Fast	Rempel Garner	Richards
Ferreri	Fillmore	Roberts	Robillard
Findlay	Fisher	Rodriguez	Rogers
Fonseca	Fortier	Romanado	Rood
Fortin	Fragiskatos	Rota	Ruff
Fraser	Freeland	Sahota	Sajjan
Fry	Gaheer	Saks	Samson
Gainey	Gallant	Sarai	Savard-Tremblay
Garon	Garrison	Scarpaleggia	Scheer
Gaudreau	Gazan	Schieffe	Schmale
Généreux	Genuis	Seeback	Serré
Gerretsen	Gill	Sgro	Shanahan
Gladu	Godin	Sheehan	Shields
Goodridge	Gould	ShIPLEY	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Gourde	Gray	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Green	Guilbeault	Sinclair-Desgagné	Singh
Hajdu	Hallan	Small	Sorbara
Hanley	Hardie	Soroka	Sousa
Hepfner	Hoback	Steinley	Ste-Marie
Holland	Housefather	Stewart	St-Onge
Hussen	Hutchings	Strahl	Stubbs
Iacono	Idlout	Sudds	Tassi
Ien	Jaczek	Taylor Roy	Thériault
Jeneroux	Johns	Therrien	Thomas
Joly	Jones	Thompson	Tochor
Jowhari	Julian	Tolmie	Trudeau
Kayabaga	Kelloway	Trudel	Turnbull
Kelly	Khalid	Valdez	Van Bynen
Khanna	Khera	van Koeverden	Van Popta
Kitchen	Kmiec	Vandal	Vandenbeld
Koutrakis	Kram	Vecchio	Vidal
Kurek	Kusie	Vien	Viersen
Kusmierczyk	Kwan	Vignola	Villemure
Lake	Lalonde	Virani	Vis
Lambropoulos	Lamoureux	Vuong	Wagantall
Lantsman	Lapointe	Warkentin	Waugh
Larouche	Lattanzio	Webber	Weiler
Lauzon	Lawrence	Williams	Williamson
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier	Yip	Zahid
Lehoux	Lemire	Zarrillo	Zimmer
Leslie	Lewis (Essex)	Zuberi— 325	
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Lightbound		
Lloyd	Lobb		
Long	Longfield		
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)		
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor		
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire		
Majumdar	Maloney		
Martel	Martinez Ferrada		
Masse	Mathysen		
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)		
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)		
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty		
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	Nil	
McLean	McLeod		
McPherson	Melillo		
Mendès	Mendicino		
Miao	Michaud		
Miller	Moore		
Morantz	Morrice	Blair	Liepert— 2
Morrison	Morrissey		
Motz	Murray		
Muys	Naqvi		
Nater	Ng		
Noormohamed	Normandin		
O'Connell	Oliphant		
O'Regan	Patzer		

NAYS

PAIRED

Members

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

Private Members' Business

[Translation]

CRIMINAL CODE

The House resumed from February 13 consideration of the motion that Bill C-273, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (Corinne's Quest and the protection of children), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at second reading stage of Bill C-273 under Private Members' Business.

● (1625)

[English]

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

*(Division No. 644)***YEAS**

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bergeron
Bérubé	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Chahal	Champagne
Champoux	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Desbiens	Desilets
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Dong	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fillmore
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Gainey	Garon
Garrison	Gaudreau
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gill	Gould
Green	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout

Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jones	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Larouche	Lattanzio
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lemire
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod	McPherson
Mendès	Mendicino
Miao	Michaud
Miller	Morrice
Morrissey	Murray
Naqvi	Ng
Noormohamed	Normandin
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Pauzé
Perron	Petitpas Taylor
Plamondon	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Rayes
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Rota	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sarai
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Sinclair-Desgagné	Singh
Sorbara	Sousa
Ste-Marie	St-Onge
Sudds	Tassi
Taylor Roy	Thériault
Therrien	Thompson
Trudel	Turnbull
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vignola
Villemure	Virani
Weiler	Yip
Zahid	Zarrillo
Zuberi — 209	

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Berthold	Bezan
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chambers
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	Deltell

d'Entremont	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Findlay
Gallant	Généreux
Genuis	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Khanna	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Lawrence	Lehoux
Leslie	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Lloyd
Lobb	Maguire
Majumdar	Martel
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Motz
Muys	Nater
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Perkins	Poilievre
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ruff	Scheer
Schmale	Seeback
Shields	Shipley
Small	Soroka
Steinley	Stewart
Strahl	Stubbs
Thomas	Tochor
Tolmie	Uppal
Van Popta	Vecchio
Vidal	Vien
Viersen	Vis
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Williams	Williamson
Zimmer— 115	

PAIRED

Members

Blair

Liepert— 2

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I declare the motion carried. Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

(Motion agreed to and bill referred to a committee)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 64 minutes.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Orders 104 and 114, I have the honour to present,

Routine Proceedings

in both official languages, the 59th 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 59th report later this day.

Happy Valentine's Day.

* * *

• (1630)

EXCISE TAX ACT

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-382, An Act to amend the Excise Tax Act and the Income Tax Act (extra-energy-efficient products).

He said: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to introduce this legislation, with thanks to the member for Nanaimo—Lady-smith for seconding it.

The bill would amend the Excise Tax Act to exempt extra-energy-efficient products from the GST and the HST, including heat pumps, household appliances, lighting fixtures, electric motors and electronics. It would also amend the Income Tax Act to provide a tax credit for the purchase of these products. This would put money back in people's pockets, reduce our energy consumption and encourage a shift towards more sustainable consumption.

The bill represents a key investment in our future. Its urgency is underscored by the premature exhaustion of funds from the federal greener homes grant program. I urge all members to support this important initiative for a greener, more sustainable and more affordable Canada for all Canadians.

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

* * *

PROHIBITING THE EXPORT OF THERMAL COAL ACT

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-383, An Act to prohibit the export of thermal coal from Canada.

She said: Madam Speaker, today I am pleased to be tabling a bill to ban the export of thermal coal from Canada. I want to thank the member for Edmonton Strathcona for seconding the bill, and Eco-justice for its advocacy, its support for the bill and its work to end the export of thermal coal.

The government has been painfully slow to move on its promise to ban thermal coal exports. Instead of being phased out under the Liberals, thermal coal exports have tripled.

The bill would not only start the work that the Liberals have failed to do but would also require that the government consult with trade unions and workers who would be affected by changes, before a ban were to happen.

Routine Proceedings

Canadians across the country have been living with the impacts of the climate crisis, and coal remains the largest contributor to climate change. Thermal coal has no place in a world serious about tackling the climate crisis, and emissions do not know borders. It is time to ban thermal coal exports.

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move that the 59th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, presented to the House earlier this day, be concurred in.

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

It is agreed.

[*English*]

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

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am tabling a petition from my constituents, asking for another non-confidence vote to be held. This is a petition I had out at my new year's levee earlier in January, and this is the earliest opportunity I have had to get it certified by Journals.

It is very simple: My constituents are asking for a vote of non-confidence to be held within 45 days, and, should the government lose the vote, for a federal election to be held.

UKRAINE

Mr. Churence Rogers (Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I present this petition on behalf of the residents in my riding of Bonavista—Burin—Trinity.

Petitioners say that Bill C-57 would be an important update to the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement that would assist Ukraine in rebuilding after it defeats the illegal invasion by Vladimir Putin. Furthermore, they point out that Ukraine's President Zelenskyy and the Ukrainian Canadian Congress have called on the Parliament of Canada to swiftly adopt the legislation, and that misinformation regarding Canada's carbon pricing scheme's having an effect on the agreement has been widely debunked.

Therefore the petitioners, who are citizens of Canada, call upon the House of Commons and all parliamentarians to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to Ukraine by swiftly adopting the updated Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement.

• (1635)

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, a source of deep concern from constituents in Saanich—Gulf Islands is the critical shortage of family doctors and health care practitioners. Statistics Canada states that approximately 4.8 million Canadians do not have what we think of as a family doctor, primary health care practitioner, nurse practitioner or others.

The concerned citizens and residents who signed this petition call on the House of Commons to work with provinces and territories to come to a holistic and fair solution to the critical and deeply concerning shortage of doctors.

FIRST RESPONDERS TAX CREDIT

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am presenting a petition on behalf of constituents and volunteer firefighters in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith, including those working at the Gabriola, Ladysmith and Lantzville extension; and East Wellington, North Oyster, North Cedar, Nanoose and Nanaimo fire stations.

Volunteer firefighters account for 71% of Canada's total firefighting essential first responders. In addition, approximately 8,000 essential search and rescue volunteers respond to thousands of incidents every year. These essential volunteers not only put their life on the line and give their time, training and efforts to Canadians, but also allow cities and municipalities to keep property taxes lower than if paid services were required. Increasing the tax credit would allow these essential volunteers to keep more of their hard-earned money, likely to be spent in the communities in which they live, and would help retain these volunteers in a time when volunteerism is decreasing.

For these reasons, those who have signed the petition are asking to increase the amount of the tax credit for volunteer firefighting and search and rescue volunteer services from \$3,000 to \$10,000.

PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to present a petition on behalf of constituents in my riding of Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte. These petitioners note that a significant proportion of the sexually explicit material accessed online is made available on the Internet for commercial purposes and is not protected by any effective age-verification method, and that the consumption of sexually explicit material by young persons is associated with a range of serious harms. Therefore, the petitioners call on the House of Commons to adopt Bill S-210, the protecting young persons from exposure to pornography act.

EYE CARE

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present two petitions that have been certified by the House that call on the government to support Bill C-284. Given the fact that over eight million people are suffering from eye diseases and 1.2 million live with vision loss or blindness, 75% of vision-loss cases, if diagnosed and treated early, are preventable.

Historically, the federal government has lacked any substantive framework on the matter of public eye health care, and the current structure has created huge gaps in access to care. Therefore, the undersigned citizens and residents of Canada call upon the House of Commons to adopt Bill C-284, an act to establish a national strategy for eye care as soon as possible.

I can report to the House that they have done that, and the House has supported Bill C-284.

HOUSING

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise to present a petition that, first of all, notes that housing is a human right.

The petitioners go on to note that both the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada have consistently failed to adequately fund social housing. They say that research, specific to the housing first model, notes housing formerly unsheltered folks consistently improves their health and quality of life, even to the point where these improved life outcomes lead to a reduction in costs in other areas of government. They also note a Scotiabank report found that even if Canada were to double its social housing stock, we would still be around the peer average for social housing in the OECD.

The petitioners go on to note that the lack of action by one level of government should not excuse the lack of action by another. As a result, the petitioners are calling on both the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario to work together to double the current social housing stock in Ontario.

• (1640)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to present a petition on behalf of constituents.

I rise for the 31st time on behalf of the people of Swan River, Manitoba, to present a petition on the rising rate of crime. The community of Swan River is consumed with unprecedented levels of crime because of the government's soft-on-crime laws, like Bill C-5 and Bill C-75. Bill C-5 allows criminals to serve their sentences from home, and Bill C-75 allows violent offenders to be in jail in the morning and back out on the street in the afternoon. The people of Swan River are calling for jail, not bail, for violent repeat offenders.

The people of Swan River demand that the Liberal government repeal its soft-on-crime policies that directly threaten their livelihoods and their community. I support the good people of Swan River.

Routine Proceedings

FLOAT HOMES

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions today.

The first is regarding float homes in Ontario and making sure they are classified the way they should be. I have presented similar petitions twice in the past. It is something that constituents within the riding of Waterloo and surrounding areas, depending on where they cottage and so forth, are very concerned with. It is a matter of great importance to them and if it matters to them, it clearly matters to me as the member of Parliament for Waterloo.

The petitioners look forward to a response from the Government of Canada on a way forward, and they are more than willing to work with the government to make this happen.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the second petition is with regard to the killing of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old woman. Many people are raising their voices within my community of Waterloo, as her death sparked nationwide “Woman, Life, Freedom” protests, calling for democracy and equal rights.

The petitioners are asking the Government of Canada to appeal to the UN Security Council. It is important that these conversations be had. It is important that their voices be heard and as their representative, I am committed to making sure that their voices are heard in this chamber. They look forward to a response from the Government of Canada.

PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

In the first petition, the petitioners are concerned about how easy it is for young people to access sexually explicit material online, including violent and degrading explicit material. They comment on how this access is an important public health and public safety concern. The petitioners note that a significant portion of commercially accessible sexually explicit material has no age verification software. Moreover, that age verification software can ascertain the age of users without breaching their privacy rights.

The petitioners note many serious harms associated with sexually explicit materials, including the development of addiction and attitudes favourable to sexual violence and harassment of women. As such, these petitioners call on the House of Commons to pass Bill S-210, the protecting young persons from exposure to pornography act.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Madam Speaker, I also want to present a petition on behalf on many Canadians who are concerned about human rights protections in Turkey, Pakistan and Bahrain.

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The petitioners say that Turkish, Pakistani and Bahraini officials committed gross human rights violations against thousands of Turks, including eight Turkish Canadians. Petitioners say that Turkish officials killed hundreds, including Gökhan Açikkollu. The petitioners say that the Turkish officials have wrongfully detained over 300,000 people without reason. The petitioners say that multiple international human rights groups have confirmed gross human rights violations in Turkey.

The petitioners ask that the government closely monitor human rights in Turkey, sanction the Turkish officials who committed gross human rights violations against eight Canadians and killed Gökhan, and call on Turkey's, Pakistan's and Bahrain's governments to end all human rights violations in their respective countries.

ELECTORAL REFORM

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, as always, it is an honour to be able to stand in this place to present a petition on behalf of the good people of Battle River—Crowfoot. Today, in particular I would like to present a petition that was presented to me, in person, by a group I met with in my constituency office, about concerns related to needing to have a conversation around electoral reform.

Although we certainly did not agree on everything, I value immensely the productive conversation I had with this group of constituents. On behalf of these constituents, I am proud to be able to stand on their behalf to present this petition that calls on the House of Commons to give voice to the subject of electoral reform and to make recommendations related to the motion that was brought forward. Although I did not vote it, again, there was productive conversation related to Motion No. 86.

As always, it is an honour to be able to stand on their behalf.

● (1645)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member knows full well he cannot indicate whether he supports a petition, so I would just ask members to please refrain from doing that. They should be reading what is in the petition and not giving their own personal point of view, saying how they are going to vote or how they voted.

Mr. Ben Carr: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. My apologies for interrupting the business of the House. I am in Winnipeg, and I had some technical issues, which prevented me from voting—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member knows he needs to wear a jacket and a tie in order to speak, so I can come back to him if he wishes to make sure he has the proper attire on to be recognized.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will try to do this as well as the member for Winnipeg North. I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I ask that all notices of motion for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Kitchener Centre, Foreign Affairs; the hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, Carbon Pricing; the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot, Carbon Pricing.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

CANADA EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE ACT

Hon. Jenna Sudds (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.) moved that the second reading of, and concurrence in, amendments made by the Senate to Bill C-35, An Act respecting early learning and child care in Canada.

She said: Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time today with the member for Sherbrooke.

I am honoured to rise today to speak to Bill C-35 as amended by our hon. colleagues in the other House—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member asked to split her time; therefore, she does need unanimous consent.

[*Translation*]

Does the hon. minister have unanimous consent to share her time?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. minister is splitting 20 minutes, which is no longer unlimited, and then there will be five minutes of questions and comments to the minister.

The hon. minister.

Government Orders

Hon. Jenna Sudds: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned, I am honoured today to rise to speak to Bill C-35 as amended by our hon. colleagues in the other House.

First, I would like to acknowledge the important work and the recommendations from the Senate as we look for ways to always improve on our policies and legislation to better the lives of families in Canada, and in this case, on such an important piece of legislation. In particular, I would like to recognize the Senate sponsor of Bill C-35, who worked tirelessly to ensure its passage, and also the government representative for the Senate for liaising with the senators throughout the bill and, finally, the senator from New Brunswick who put this amendment forward in the spirit of strong advocacy for his community and his region.

To better understand the amendment, it would be useful for me to recap for my hon. colleagues the important work that Bill C-35 would enshrine in law.

First, if passed, this historic legislation would cement the federal government's role as an enduring partner on early learning and child care. It would enshrine into law the federal vision and principles of a Canada-wide system, a system where families across Canada, no matter where they live, have access to affordable, inclusive and high-quality programs and services.

● (1650)

[*Translation*]

This is not to mention that, in this context, it would also represent a commitment to maintaining long-term federal funding for early learning and child care.

Second, this legislation would increase Parliament's accountability in terms of the progress being made in creating a Canada-wide early learning and child care system.

[*English*]

Finally, Bill C-35 would establish, in law, the national advisory council on early learning and child care.

This legislation is seeking to do a lot, so allow me to break it down. Let us go back to the key principles to be enshrined in the legislation: affordability, quality, access and inclusion. What does an enduring federal investment mean for each one?

On affordability, it means that we can continue to support our federal goal of making child care more affordable by reducing fees for regulated child care to an average of \$10 a day, by March 2026, and ensure that it stays affordable well into the future.

[*Translation*]

That means that parents, usually mothers, will be able to go back to work or school and achieve their full economic potential. This not only supports families, but it also contributes to building a strong economy and better gender equality. This means that children in every family, regardless of their income, can have the best possible start in life because they will be able to benefit from high-quality child care programs and services.

[*English*]

For high-quality child care, it means that federal investments in early learning and child care services foster the social, emotional, physical and cognitive development of young children. This leads to positive outcomes for children's future academic success and long-lasting and far-reaching positive outcomes throughout a person's life.

It means continued investment in the child care workforce. These highly-skilled educators are responsible for helping shape our future leaders. Providing better support and work conditions for early childhood educators means better outcomes for recruitment and retention.

On the principle of access to early learning and child care, it means continuity of the important partnerships with provincial, territorial and indigenous partners, and that means availability of child care services no matter where families live for generations to come.

That brings me to the last principle of inclusivity, because when we say, "all children," we truly mean all children, including those living in rural and remote communities; children from systematically marginalized groups, such as those from Black and racialized communities; children in lower-income families; and children with a disability or those needing enhanced or individualized supports.

[*Translation*]

Obviously, it also includes children from francophone and anglophone minority communities.

[*English*]

That is in addition to dedicated federal investments to support indigenous early learning and child care.

It is important to note that Bill C-35 acknowledges that first nations, Inuit and Métis families and children are best supported by early learning and child care services and programs led by indigenous people, and it reinforces the Government of Canada's commitment to work in collaboration with indigenous people to establish and maintain early learning and child care systems rooted in indigenous knowledge, culture and languages and guided by the codeveloped indigenous early learning and child care framework.

● (1655)

[*Translation*]

Here is another of this bill's major objectives: accountability. These are significant federal investments. Accountability and transparency are essential to ensure sound management of public funds.

That is why this bill requires the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development to report annually to Parliament on the progress being made on the Canada-wide early learning and child care system.

*Government Orders**[English]*

There is a long road ahead of us as we work with provincial, territorial and indigenous partners to build this Canada-wide system. There are and there will continue to be a range of issues and challenges facing families, operators and other stakeholders in the early learning and child care sector. That is why we have the National Advisory Council on Early Learning and Child Care, and it is so important. It serves as a key forum enabling us to hear from the sector as we implement this system, and its members provide expert advice needed to support continual improvement.

[Translation]

The Government of Canada acknowledges the successes of its provincial, territorial and indigenous partners. They are the ones responsible for designing and implementing child care services in their respective jurisdictions. They are in the best position to set their own priorities.

That said, provinces, territories and indigenous organizations clearly benefit from the greater predictability and assurance of a long-term federal commitment to early learning and child care.

[English]

Since we last examined this legislation, our hon. colleagues in the other chamber have amended clause 8 of the legislation. The legislation, as amended, and I am paraphrasing here, would acknowledge the government's commitment to providing long-term funding to early learning and child care programs and services across the country, including for indigenous people and for official language minority communities. The amended legislation continues to recognize that federal funding would be provided primarily through agreements with provinces, territories and indigenous governing bodies and other indigenous entities.

It is through the advocacy of our hon. colleagues in the other chamber that we have before us this amended legislation highlighting the commitment to long-term funding for early learning and child care programs and services, including for official language minority communities.

[Translation]

I would like to thank our hon. colleagues in the other place for their efforts to strengthen this legislation.

[English]

I would like to reiterate the government's commitment to supporting and maintaining Canada's linguistic duality. We will continue working with the provinces and territories to ensure that child care is fully inclusive of the needs of all children, including children of official language minority communities.

I recognize that my time is up. I look forward to questions.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, my first question would be about what we are seeing now, which are the stats coming out that more families with lower incomes are not accessing this program. It is actually inequitable.

Higher-income families are accessing this program. Lower-income families are not. What is my colleague doing to fix that, and why is it happening?

Hon. Jenna Sudds: Madam Speaker, as we moved forward in building this nationwide system, undoubtedly every province and territory came to the table and recognized our core vision and principles around inclusivity and access to high-quality and affordable child care.

As we move forward and as we are now about two years into our commitments with most of the provinces and territories, we see new spots being created across the country. Having said that, undoubtedly there is a lot of work to be done to ensure that new spaces are created where they are needed, and those conversations are ongoing with the provinces and territories. We are currently at the table with many of them, working on their action plans, which include those conversations and providing those details to make sure that early learning and child care is accessible throughout this country, regardless of where one lives.

• (1700)

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I congratulate the minister on her speech and on her fine efforts to speak French. We always appreciate that.

The Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of this bill despite the fact that we feel that the federal government is once again trying to interfere to some extent with Quebec's and the provinces' jurisdiction. For example, family policy is not a federal responsibility; it is a provincial responsibility. It would have been so much easier to give the tools, by which I mean the money, to Quebec and the provinces so that Quebec could improve its very effective system and the other provinces could develop a system similar to the one in place in Quebec.

The predecessor to this bill was Bill C-303. The previous bill included a provision, clause 4, that allowed Quebec to opt out of this agreement with full compensation. That is always a good way to ensure Quebec immediately accepts and supports federal government bills that encroach on the jurisdiction of the provinces and Quebec.

Can the minister guarantee that, despite the absence of that provision in Bill C-35, the government still intends to respect Quebec's jurisdiction and Quebec's right to opt out with full financial compensation?

[English]

Hon. Jenna Sudds: Madam Speaker, absolutely. Of course, as we have negotiated the agreements with the provinces and territories, there have been many conversations about the future of early learning and child care across the country and in Quebec.

If I may say so, Quebec has been held up, frankly, as a model and has done incredible work, decades ahead of the rest of Canada. We see that. We have seen the impact of that in Quebec and in women's participation in the labour force in Quebec.

Undoubtedly, I am happy to continue the work with Quebec and with my partner there. I have utmost respect for what they have been able to accomplish and are continuing to invest in and accomplish alongside us.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to work with my colleague across the way. One of the concerns that led to an NDP amendment in committee was to include the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples on decisions impacting their children. The Liberals voted against it.

We are in EI legislation and, once again, the Liberals are trying to throw out amendments that would make sure that Bill C-50 is consistent with UNDRIP.

The hon. member talks about inclusivity. I am wondering why her government continues to not uphold the rights of indigenous peoples in regard to their children.

Hon. Jenna Sudds: Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to work with the hon. member as well.

As we were negotiating across the country, we worked very well with indigenous governments and indigenous partners. We have been really focused on ensuring that early learning and child care is provided that is culturally appropriate and led by indigenous leaders. That is continuing to roll out across the country, and I believe those conversations and that work are ongoing.

Inclusivity is certainly key, front and centre as we continue that work.

• (1705)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today, while we are discussing the Senate amendment to Bill C-35, I would like to emphasize to my colleagues and, of course, to all Canadians that this bill is a significant and truly historic piece of legislation.

It follows through on the federal government's commitment to families across the country. It is a legislative measure that will enshrine in law all of the work that is being done to implement a Canada-wide early learning and child care system, a system that is affordable, accessible, inclusive and high quality, a system in which families across Canada, regardless of where they live, have access to affordable, inclusive, high-quality programs and services.

We did not get to where we are today by sheer coincidence. Over 50 years ago, the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada tabled its report in Parliament. At that time, the report was already calling for affordable and accessible child care services for those who need them.

It took the advocacy of two generations of women and allies to help make these recommendations a reality. Thanks to the re-

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silience of families and experts in the field, history has been made, and I am not just talking about child care.

We are seized with a Senate amendment that also touches on the issue of official language minority communities. This brings me back to the history of Canada's linguistic duality, as enshrined in the Official Languages Act, which is the product of the work of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism.

Language rights were enshrined in the Canadian Constitution in 1982, owing to efforts to raise awareness and additional demands. We have an even stronger bill before us thanks to the efforts of our hon. colleagues in the Senate. I would like to thank the hon. senator from New Brunswick, who proposed this amendment, as well as all our other colleagues in the other place for studying this important piece of legislation and trying to strengthen it.

The amendment before us today concerns clause 8, the funding clause. This clause provides for the following: "The Government of Canada commits to maintaining long-term funding for early learning and child care programs and services, including early learning and child care programs and services for Indigenous peoples" and, as amended, "for official language minority communities".

Next, the clause recognizes that funding will continue to be provided primarily through "agreements with the provincial governments and Indigenous governing bodies and other Indigenous entities that represent the interests of an Indigenous group and its members".

This amendment acknowledges the work already under way with our provincial, territorial and indigenous partners to build a high-quality, culturally appropriate early learning and child care system that is accessible to all children in Canada. We have reached agreements with every province and territory as part of the implementation of a Canada-wide system. This also includes Quebec, although it has an asymmetrical agreement, since it already introduced an affordable child care system a long time ago.

In each agreement, each government, with the exception of Quebec, undertakes to consider the needs of official language minority communities. Here are some examples of what that actually looks like.

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In the action plan under the agreement with British Columbia, the province agrees to continue partnering with B.C. Francophone Affairs and with representatives of the francophone community. Together, they have to meet the needs of young children from B.C.'s francophone families. They also have to ensure that workforce supports take the needs of francophone educators into account.

In the agreement with New Brunswick, the province underscores that francophone early childhood learning centres must follow the province's guidelines for language acquisition and cultural identity. The goal is to help protect and promote the francophone and Acadian language and culture.

• (1710)

In Yukon, the action plan prioritizes \$1 million over the first two years for the creation of spaces for first nations, French-language non-profit child care and other non-profit programs. The action plan also highlights Yukon's three French first-language programs, as well as its commitment to supporting the expansion of minority language child care spaces.

In a national child care system, culturally appropriate child care services are paramount. Children from all walks of life need to have access to these services. For indigenous communities, this can take many forms. For example, it may involve passing on traditional knowledge and teachings or preserving indigenous languages. It must be based on indigenous priorities.

Early learning and child care contribute to long-lasting and far-reaching positive outcomes throughout a person's life. This is especially true for indigenous children and families, whose access to indigenous-led and culturally relevant early learning and child care services is crucial to laying the foundation for a child's cultural identity, sense of worth and future success. For official language minority communities, it is about ensuring that children have access to child care in the official language of their choice. This promotes language transmission and identity building.

Now, I would be remiss if I did not mention that beyond the agreements, when it comes to early learning and child care, the Government of Canada is making significant investments in official languages. The action plan for official languages 2023-28 brings our total investment in official languages to \$4.1 billion over five years. This is the largest investment in official languages ever made by a Canadian government in the history of Canada. Again, this is historic.

The current action plan builds on past successes from the support for early childhood development program. This plan lays out new investments in early learning and child care. First, \$50 million is being invested to create a network of early childhood stakeholders that will support cross-sectoral coordination in the implementation of specific initiatives for francophone minority communities across Canada. Second, \$14.2 million is being invested to continue the development of ongoing and specialized training programs to address challenges facing the early childhood sector in official language minority communities and strengthen the skills of educators while supporting access to quality child care for children and their families in these communities.

I also want to point out that implementing this system will be no easy task. That is why the national advisory council on early learning and child care, which the bill will enshrine as a statutory body, is important. It will serve as a forum to hear from stakeholders in the sector, and its members will provide the expert advice needed for continuous improvement. Bill C-35 would make the council a statutory body, much like the National Advisory Council on Poverty and the National Housing Council. The council will reflect the diversity of Canadian society, including Canada's linguistic duality.

The Government of Canada is clearly working hard to support all communities and bilingualism in Canada. I think it is also very clear that Bill C-35 is crucial. I look forward to celebrating when this historic bill receives royal assent.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before we go to questions and comments, I believe the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre is rising on a point of order.

[*English*]

The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre.

Mr. Ben Carr: Madam Speaker, I am very sorry to interrupt the current affairs of the chamber. I am back again, this time with a tie and jacket on as per House rules. I tried to tell you before, when I was not dressed appropriately, that I had a technical issue on the last vote being held today, which was on Bill C-273, and my intention is to vote in favour.

Therefore, I am asking for unanimous consent from the House to register my vote in favour of Bill C-273, and I apologize for the delay that this has caused in House proceedings.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is there consent?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

• (1715)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Questions and comments. The hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier.

Government Orders

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Madam Speaker, we are redoing a debate we had last spring. On June 19, this bill was passed here in the House of Commons and sent to the other place. Today, the debate is on the amendment to add the language clause. I will quote the government representative in the Senate, the Hon. Marc Gold, who gave a statement following a speech by Senator Cormier. He said, “I have a prepared text that I am going to read. Let me begin by saying that what I will try to do is present the government's position. The government does not support this amendment”.

I just want to know what happened on the Liberal side. Why the about-face? Why did they change their minds again? This government is apparently going to support the amendment. We are wasting time, and that is not good for official language minority communities.

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière: Madam Speaker, my colleague's question is rather strange given the many years of experience he has as an MP. He is well aware that there can be many discussions between members of the House of Commons and senators during the amendment process. In this case, I think that the outcome has been very positive.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I commend the member for Sherbrooke for her speech. I know that she is concerned about social issues and that this is a cause that she cares a lot about.

As the minister pointed out earlier, Quebec has served as a wonderful example when it comes to child care and the day care network. This is something that Quebecers truly value. There is one woman who was really at the heart of this movement, which spread from Quebec to the rest of Canada. I am talking about Pauline Marois, who was the Quebec education minister at the time and who later became Quebec's first woman premier.

In my colleague's opinion, what impact has this great Quebec woman had on the outcome that we are seeing here today, in other words the fact that the rest of Canada is following the example of what was done in Quebec when it comes to early childhood centres?

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière: Madam Speaker, I sincerely thank my colleague for his question.

When Quebec implemented the day care program, it was a major societal change. I have three wonderful boys, and my children have benefited from these highly professional day care services that offer both incredible support and outstanding educational environments. This enables each child to start out on an equal footing, create friendships and take their first steps in learning.

In Quebec, this has given women the opportunity to return to work or school and ensure that they are self-sufficient and independent. Today, we can see the positive results of this great change that was brought about by Pauline Marois.

[*English*]

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am happy to see this bill come back with reasonable Senate amendments and to see it move forward. I want to ac-

knowledge the incredible work of my colleague, the MP for Winnipeg Centre, for all her work to get this moving forward.

The question I have is around the lack of a workforce strategy. Despite the ask of unions and workers across the country to address the shortage of workers and ensure they have the pensions, wages and benefits required to deliver child care in an effective way across the country, there was no follow-through. Could the member share why this was the case?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for this important question

Of course, a day care system like this cannot work if we do not have a qualified, professional workforce to provide the services. We know that these people work extremely hard.

I was in Edmonton recently, where I was able to meet people who work in the field and it was clear to us that this is a major challenge. We have agreements with all the provinces and territories to implement the system. We expect everyone to do their part to achieve very positive results.

● (1720)

[*English*]

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to rise and speak on behalf of the beautiful riding of Peterborough—Kawartha. Happy Valentine's Day to everybody watching. I hope everyone has someone in their life that they love, whether it be their parents, kids or somebody special.

I am the critic on this file. It is my job to really hone in on what is not being done. Today, we are talking about Bill C-35, which people at home may know as the infamous \$10-a-day child care bill. The Liberals have run a very big marketing campaign on it, promising the moon, the stars and the sun; unfortunately, they have not delivered any of that.

I listened to my colleague across the way, who is the minister for this file, and I want to start by reiterating that the purpose of this bill was to sell a real pipe dream to Canadians. As a mom, it is an easy pipe dream to buy: access to affordable, inclusive, quality child care.

However, what I am going to outline clearly today in this speech, and when we talk about the amendments that were sent back from the Senate, is what we actually have in reality.

I would request unanimous consent to share my time with the hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier.

[*Translation*]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

*Government Orders**[English]*

The hon. member no longer has unlimited time, as she is sharing her time. It is a 10-minute speech with five minutes for questions and comments.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, I look forward to my colleague's speech about this. I will get into that with the amendments.

Going back to what we have seen now that this program has been delivered, the Liberals love to say it is transformational. That is absolutely true. The numbers on child care wait-lists under this program have skyrocketed. Child care centres cannot grow to meet the demand. Child care centres cannot afford to operate. There is a bias against entrepreneur-run child care centres and an open call to phase them out, which would decrease access even more. The people who need affordable child care the most are not getting it. This program is not equitable. The child is not the priority of this agreement. Instead, it is the ideology.

Parents do not have a choice. Children with special needs, the numbers of which are going up as we see more neurodivergence, are not getting the support they need with this agreement. Access to child care has decreased, which means that, instead of empowering more women, it has taken away their choice and, yes, I have the statistics to back all of this up. This is setting the provinces up to take the blame when they were coerced into signing a flawed federal contract.

Let us break this all down. It is quite easy to break down because, really, what we need to do is pick up the phone and answer the calls that have been, I am sure, flooding into constituency offices across the country. We can start with just a few quick statistics of what has happened.

We know that 77% of high-income parents access child care versus 41% of low-income families. That is the statistic right now. How equitable is that? Should we not want to provide service where the people who need it the most can access it?

The labour force participation rate for women was 61.5% in September 2023 compared to a high of 61.7% in 2015. The number of women in the workforce is going down, not up. The employment rate of female youth is on a strong downward trend since February 2023, with a cumulative decline of 4.2% over that period. This is the lowest since May 2000, excluding the pandemic.

The number of children under the age of five in child care fell by 118,000 between 2019 and 2023, which is a decrease of 8.5% nationally. In 2023, 46.4% of parents reported difficulty finding child care, which is up from 36.4%. In Ontario, the proportion of children in child care was 48% in 2023 compared to 54% in 2019. Child care deserts are affecting nearly 50% of young children in Canada.

It goes on and on, and the numbers are there. The numbers are real, but when we start to listen to the stories, that is where we really have to pay attention. As I have said multiple times in the House, there are true human consequences to the incompetence and wasteful spending of the government.

We recently heard from Andrea Hannen. She oversees ADCO, which is the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario. She represents independent licensed child care centres, both commercial and not-for-profit. We are doing a study on economic empowerment for women in the status of women committee, where she said, "we have a sector of the economy that was largely created by women. It's essential to women's equality in the workforce. It's one of the only economic sectors in the country where women are fairly represented as owners and managers, and it's being not only undervalued by government but targeted for replacement by a government-run system."

What is even more disturbing about that testimony is that not one of the Liberal members in the committee disputed this. In fact, by their line of questioning, it was clear the Liberals were quite comfortable with the idea of arbitrarily eliminating small businesses. It seems now that this was their plan for child care. That is the reality of what we are talking about, and that is why this is an ideology-based system. They had the option multiple times to help these female-operated small business owners who are sitting at home and want to go back to work but who cannot leave their kid.

• (1725)

They think they are going to do two things: start their own business to be an entrepreneur and help the other women in their lives and the families they know. They are going to invite children into their homes, care for them and provide quality care. What I have heard repeatedly across the country is that these women-owned day care centres are being targeted, bleeding money and shutting down.

A woman wrote to me from Simcoe. I want to tell members that she told me that she, right now, is personally funding \$20,000 to \$30,000 per month just to pay bills so child care is available. She said that they are committing to helping their parents by being in this program. The program is called CWELCC, for the people at home, and it is an acronym for Canada-wide early learning and child care. She also told me that the reality is, by staying in the program, they will be bankrupt and they will lose 250 child care spaces. As well, 45 dedicated staff will be unemployed. This program will close the business that she worked so long and hard to build.

That is the reality of what this program is doing. Members need not just take my word for it. I am sure that people are sitting at home, saying that I am a critic who has nothing nice to say about the Liberals. I do not because they have a record of repeatedly showing us that they cannot manage taxpayer money. All week, the news has been about an arrive scam app that should have cost \$80,000, but \$60 million is the total we know of right now, and it is probably more. They spent \$1.36 billion on homelessness, and I do not know if anyone has been outside lately, but there seems to be a lot more tents.

Government Orders

The government is famous for making people dependent upon it and then taking away what they are dependent upon and destroying them. The government did it with the media, and it has done it with so many other industries. It is doing it now with our post-secondary education and immigration for students. The government has turned off the tap. Now these universities do not know what they are going to do.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I am just wondering what this has to do with child care right now. The member seems to be straying pretty far from what we were debating.

• (1730)

The Deputy Speaker: I know that this is part of debate, but I want to make sure everyone stays on the topic of the bill that is before us.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Mr. Speaker, I am so glad the Liberal members have to stand up to ask what this has to do with child care because it has everything to do with child care. That is the reality.

I will read the headlines to members. These are just from the last month: “As the Liberals’ universal daycare policy unravels, Conservatives could go on the offensive”; “Burlington child care centre leaves parents struggling with one week closing [time]”; “Daycares navigate financial struggles as province aims for \$10-a-day child care”; “Rolling closures highlight need for emergency actions to keep \$10 a day childcare viable”; “9,200 children waiting for child care in Waterloo Region”; “Alberta daycares brace for losses as [the Prime Minister’s] deal kicks in”; and “Parents have yet to get the child care they deserve”.

To the member opposite, this has everything to do with day care. People cannot go to work. That is what is happening. I will continue to list the headlines: “\$10 a day daycare is a great idea, but in Yellowknife it’s hard to find a spot”; and “My son’s daycare can’t afford to stay in the \$10-a-day program. Now, we’ll have to pay an extra \$800 a month”.

Liberal-paid media is telling us this: “As a London daycare’s waitlist quadruples, a desperate parent opens her own dayhome instead”; and “Child-care spaces remain tight on P.E.I. despite government initiatives”.

Shall I keep going? That is the reality of this failed program. That is what—

The Deputy Speaker: It is time for questions and comments.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member is clearly very well informed about this program.

I would say one thing: Yes, there is some ideology behind the program. We believe that women should have the choice to go back to their careers if they want to and be able to afford that, so in that respect, I agree with the member. However, with all of the criticism you have of the program, I am curious as to why you voted for it. Could you please explain that?

The Deputy Speaker: I will remind members to run their questions through the Chair. It is not about how I voted.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Mr. Speaker, what is ironic about the member’s question is that women do not have the choice to go to work. The stats are in. That is the reality of this program.

I talked to one day care operator and somebody had asked her why she did not opt out and why she opted into this program. She said to me that she absolutely wants to provide affordable, quality child care for people who need it, but this program was rigged from day one. She thought she was doing the right thing, but she was coerced into signing this agreement and they are taking money from her and taking away the choice for families.

That is what we wanted. We wanted to provide families with choice. We put forward the amendments in committee and the Liberals and the NDP voted down every single one.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I work with the hon. member on the status of women committee, and we have gotten some things done in that committee. I appreciate that very much.

My colleague mentioned Andrea Hannen, who I know has been very critical of the national child care program, but here is the thing: Provincial licensing requirements are a floor, not a ceiling.

We know that the research consensus is that non-profit and public child care delivers high-quality care and better outcomes for children than for-profit care. We know that through research. We also know that for-profit care centres, historically, have exploited workers more so than public and not-for-profit child care centres.

We know that one of the reasons why the national child care strategy is not getting off the ground is that the Liberal government did not put in place a worker strategy with livable wages, benefits and pensions. People are not wanting to join the field.

I have worked a lot with my hon. colleague. We have differences, though, on this. I am wondering why she thinks that public money should go toward centres that are not public and not not-for-profit. Why should we use public money for that?

• (1735)

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Mr. Speaker, I do work very well with my colleague across the way. We, as Conservatives, supported her amendment in committee to support indigenous people, for children and parents to have that right under UNDRIP, and the Liberals did not.

I think it is really insulting to these women-operated child care centres. Why are they not included? That there is research that they do not provide the quality has been said to me repeatedly. I have been to these centres. The quality of child care is deeply diminishing under this care because they do not have the money. They cannot charge more money. Their hands are tied. The quality in these not-for-profit centres is also dropping. Kids do not have access to food. Parents are getting nickelled and dimed.

Government Orders

To say that they do not have the quality of care, in a small, independent, female-owned-and-operated child care centre, is not fair. I encourage members to go to see them.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech and I think we can see the Conservative Party of Canada ideology behind it.

Now, she talked about the work done in committee. As part of that work, the Bloc Québécois proposed amendments, including one that would have given Quebec the opportunity to opt out completely from any federal program with financial compensation.

I know that all the other parties voted against that amendment. I am a little surprised by the Conservatives' position because they are always telling us that they respect the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. Why did they not stand with the Bloc Québécois in this case?

[*English*]

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Mr. Speaker, I do feel that we were allies with the Bloc, and we are allies in what has happened. The Bloc got this right from day one. Keep it in the province. Why did the feds wade into this water? Why did they do this?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Peterborough—Kawartha, who does excellent work on the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. It was a pleasure for me to work with her on the official languages section on this bill.

It is always a pleasure for me to rise in the House to debate important issues that affect Canadians.

People who know me know that I am a staunch defender of the French fact, so I am particularly enthusiastic about speaking on official languages, obviously in French.

That is a valid question. Why are official languages mentioned in the Canada Early Learning and Child Care Act? The answer is quite simple. The current Liberal government has once again forgotten francophone minority communities. That comes as no surprise.

However, as we have already seen when modernizing the Official Languages Act, the Liberal government claims to be the champion of official languages, but lacks courage when it comes time to take meaningful action. That is what the Liberals are: all talk and no action.

Because of the Liberal government's lack of vision and ambition, the elephant gave birth to a mouse, as I like to say when describing Bill C-13. It aims to modernize the Official Languages Act. It was the first official languages review process in over 30 years. The government turned a deaf ear to stakeholders across the country. This is yet another missed opportunity. That has often been our experience with this Liberal government, which has been in power for eight years.

There is no obligation to count the rights holders. The federal authorities' powers are diluted. There is no central agency. There is no accountability. That is how it is with the Liberals. No one is ever accountable. What about the Commissioner of Official Languages, who is still awaiting the order in council granting him his powers? It is written in the act, but who is going to table that order before the government? Is it the President of the Treasury Board? Is it the Minister of Canadian Heritage, who is one of the two ministers named in the legislation, but will not even appear before the Standing Committee on Official Languages? Is it the Minister of Official Languages? Is this the Minister of Justice? Who is it? No one knows and, in the meantime, the commissioner is waiting to take action. I would like to remind the House that French is in decline across Canada. The Liberals' approach to official languages is not serious, and it shows how little interest they have in this country's bilingualism.

Bill C-35 passed unanimously here in the House last June. Today, however, we are debating a Senate amendment put forward by Senator Cormier, an Acadian, who stood up for francophones. He wants to add the words "official language minority communities" to the first sentence of clause 8, after "including early learning and child care programs and services for Indigenous peoples"; and he divides clause 8 into two paragraphs. It is not complicated. However, we are still debating that today. Wow.

The first paragraph sets out the government's financial commitment. The second paragraph outlines the mechanisms that the federal government will use to provide the funding. Adding the words "official language minority communities" after the word "including" does not detract from any rights of any other minority or of indigenous peoples, but seeks to eliminate any ambiguity before the courts. The Liberals did a sloppy job, the Senate raised a red flag and made the necessary corrections. The Liberals always fly by the seat of their pants and leave things to the last minute. There is no discipline.

We are well aware of how much work and resources official language minority communities must put into defending their language rights. Let us talk about that. Even though the Federal Court of Appeal ruled in favour of the Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique in its case against Employment and Social Development Canada, the federation still has to fight with the Minister of Official Languages to have that ruling enforced. It is unbelievable. What a waste of time and money. However, as we saw again today, the Liberals think that money grows on trees.

Early childhood is a critical period for children when it comes to learning language skills and developing their identity. All too often, access to early childhood services in French is essential for francophone minority communities to pass on their language and culture.

Government Orders

• (1740)

These services are vectors for French learning, ensuring that children acquire the language skills they need to prepare them for an education in their own language, and facilitating their integration into francophone schools across Canada. This contributes to the implementation of the right to education, as enshrined in section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We believe that this amendment is relevant and necessary.

I would also like to point out that the references to official language minority communities already found in clause 7 and clause 11 are thanks to the Conservative Party of Canada. I was the one who introduced them. I had the support of the Bloc Québécois, but the NDP and the Liberals voted against some of the amendments we proposed. However, we were able to get some of them through. Unfortunately, some others were rejected, and we had to go through the Senate. The Conservative Party of Canada made sure that francophones across Canada were included in the bilateral agreements for early childhood services.

I would also like to take a moment to thank the folks at the Commission nationale des parents francophones and at the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada for their hard work on this file.

The Liberals are not in favour of this amendment because they had to go through the Senate. Even the Speaker of the Senate, the government representative, clearly indicated that he would not support Senator Cormier's amendment. That was the stance the Liberal government was taking. Again, the Liberals flip-flopped. Francophones are the ones who took a stand.

As I said, the Liberals were not in favour of this amendment. The government's position was that this amendment was not necessary or appropriate. However, today, out of the blue, the Liberals are saying that they are in favour of the amendment. What is the reason for that?

Every individual should have access to early child care services in the official language of their choice, and that is non-negotiable as long as our country, Canada, is a bilingual country. I want to emphasize the concept of French and English bilingualism, because it is important to remember that this government appointed a governor general who is bilingual, but who does not speak French. I would also like to add that only one province in Canada is bilingual. This government appointed a unilingual lieutenant governor who, obviously, does not speak French, because the Liberals are inconsistent. Their intentions and desires may go beyond what is set out in the laws, but, unfortunately, the Liberal government does not walk the talk.

The Liberals realized that they would lose support in francophone regions and decided to adopt the Conservative Party of Canada's common-sense position. Yes, it is common sense. As long as we are a bilingual country, we should be consistent and protect both official languages.

We saw the Liberals use this same tactic with the pause on the carbon tax in Atlantic Canada. It is so odd. The Liberals reacted blindly, in panic mode. They punished all other Canadians outside

the Atlantic provinces by denying them heat pumps. That was a problem. They were just reacting.

Then the Liberals changed their minds and said that Albertans and British Columbians might be able to use the credit. Again, they were improvising. It is unfortunate. This government is a disaster. It is shameful to try to score political points off our country's bilingual identity.

In closing, my message for francophones across the country is simple: Here in the House of Commons, the Conservative Party of Canada is the only party that can truly protect their interests. We will continue to take concrete action and stop the decline of French, which is a fact across Canada. We will also protect and promote our two official languages. We will not pit French against English. We intend to protect both official languages, French and English.

• (1745)

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank my colleague for his speech and, more importantly, for his hard work on Bill C-13.

All parties in the House worked together to support francophones outside Quebec and anglophones in Quebec, and it was a great victory. I always appreciate my colleague's work. However, I must point out that what he says and what his party says are two different things. The ideology of the party—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member is not wearing a tie.

Now that he is wearing his tie, the hon. member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook has the floor again.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, I would like to explain that it was during the nine years of the Harper government that we saw major cuts to the Translation Bureau. Court challenges that we brought—

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I would ask you to follow and enforce the Standing Orders. We know that male members cannot speak in the House if they are not wearing a tie.

The Deputy Speaker: I watched him put on his tie.

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, we agree that you would not normally have recognized the member in the first place since he was not wearing a tie. You did recognize him. We understand, but we are simply asking you to follow and enforce the Standing Orders next time.

The Deputy Speaker: I did not realize he was not wearing a tie. I will be more careful next time.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There is a well-established precedent that if a member does not have a tie, but then gets a tie and puts it on the Speakers have always allowed them to continue their speech.

Government Orders

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I say we let him go because the tie does not match the shirt. If he wants to stand in this place like that, then he should go ahead.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: Personally, I think this is taking too long.

The hon. member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook.

• (1750)

[*English*]

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, I am Canadian, and I am sure everyone is proud they are here today discussing important things for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

I will quickly finish my question.

I would like to acknowledge the work that has been done on this issue. I would like my colleague to talk about the importance of early child care in Canada. That is what is important here.

Francophones across Canada have missed out a lot of opportunities and have been assimilated. It is because they did not have the opportunity to receive preschool education in French.

I would like my colleague to say how happy we are today to be working together to make the major changes that needed to be made.

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell viewers at home that they do not need to adjust their video, even though the tie does not match. My colleague is a colourful character and I really appreciate his presence at the Standing Committee on Official Languages. As for the tie, I will give him some fashion advice this evening.

I just want to say to my colleague that today we are talking about the amendment that seeks to include the official languages clause in the bill on child care and early childhood services. I think it is important to focus on 2024 and stop living in the past of more than 10 years ago.

We need to look what the Liberal government has done in the past eight years. Recently, it prevented a committee from doing its work because it said that translating the documents would cost \$300 million. That is disgraceful. It is unacceptable. This is a parliamentary right. Every parliamentarian needs to receive information in both official languages. Who is in government right now? It is the Liberal government.

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier for his passionate speech.

I know that he is on a mission for the Francophonie. I am delighted to serve with him on the Assemblée des parlementaires de la Francophonie. I know he cares about this.

His speech earlier sounded more partisan than pro-francophone to me. I know that in the past, his party, which he loves to talk about, actually appointed an anglophone judge to the Supreme Court, which was a bit of a black mark against it.

I would like him to tell me if there is anything good in this bill, apart from the fact that the inspiration came from Quebec's brilliant example.

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Trois-Rivières. We also have the pleasure of working together on the international scene to defend the French fact.

I would like to remind my colleague that the Conservative Party did a lot to ensure that official languages were included in this bill. We worked very hard, with the collaboration of our colleague from La Pointe-de-l'Île, who worked with me to try to put more in Bill C-13.

I would like to remind my colleague that I myself was at the committee. I moved amendments. Official languages are in the bill thanks to the Conservative Party of Canada.

Also, I would like to remind the House that all the Conservative senators—because there is a Conservative caucus in the Senate—voted in favour of Senator Cormier's amendment. How many Liberals or Liberal-appointed independents voted against it?

That is the question we should be asking.

[*English*]

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, I want to share that I agree with many of the comments made by my colleague about the importance of Canadians having access to French-language child care and early learning.

The member was speaking about money not growing on trees and the importance of child care being effectively funded. I have frequently heard the Conservatives talk about privatized child care. We know that, when child care is public, it is increasingly accessible and available and that workers have livable wages, for example.

Could the member share his thoughts around using public tax money for privatized child care? What is the importance of funding public child care with public funds?

• (1755)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Nanaimo—Ladysmith, who recognizes that what I said in my speech is appreciated by a very large majority of people in the NDP. It is common sense. We need to put money in the right places so that our Canadian families, mothers and fathers, can go to work, create wealth and then benefit from social programs.

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Thérèse-De Blainville.

I am pleased to rise again to speak to Bill C-35, an act respecting early learning and child care in Canada.

Government Orders

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a happy Valentine's Day, especially my spouse, Marc, despite the distance separating us.

This bill has come back to the House with an amendment adopted by the Senate. In December, the Senate adopted an amendment to maintain long-term funding for child care services for official language minority communities, as well as child care services for indigenous peoples.

The amendment reads as follows:

That Bill C-35...be amended in clause 8, on page 6, by replacing lines 13 to 20 with the following:

“8 (1) The Government of Canada commits to maintaining long-term funding for early learning and child care programs and services, including early learning and child care programs and services for Indigenous peoples and for official language minority communities.

(2) The funding must be provided primarily through agreements with the provincial governments and Indigenous governing bodies and other Indigenous entities that represent the interests of an Indigenous group and its members.”.

On reading this amendment, it is clear that its purpose is to add the words “official language minority communities” to the bill. This amendment addresses the calls from the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada and the Commission nationale des parents francophones, who wanted to see long-term funding commitments, especially for francophones outside Quebec. Since Quebec already has its own agreement with Ottawa, this amendment should not apply to Quebec.

In its current form, Bill C-35 is not perfect from Quebec's perspective. I tried to improve it in committee, but all the amendments I proposed during the clause-by-clause study were rejected. In short, the demands of the Bloc Québécois and Quebec have not been heard or respected.

I want to provide a little background. Throughout the committee's study of the bill, we heard witnesses talk about how important affordable, quality child care is for early childhood development, for better work-school-life balance, for the emancipation of women and for return on investment in the economy. Throughout this study, Quebec was lauded as a model. On numerous occasions, the Quebec model was mentioned as one to draw inspiration from.

When it came time to include Quebec's expertise in the bill, however, I saw the other three parties dismiss that reality out of hand. The same thing happened with our amendments to include wording allowing Quebec to completely opt out of the federal program with full financial compensation. The only sign of any degree of openness was when a reference to Quebec's expertise was included in the preamble, the only place where these words ultimately have no real impact on the law.

Thus, Quebec does not have the option of completely withdrawing from this program with full compensation. The agreement concluded with the Quebec government spans a period of five years. Enshrining Quebec's full right to opt out of this program would help avoid another dispute between Quebec and Ottawa in case the federal government ever tries to interfere in Quebec's jurisdictions, as it does so well. Senior officials who worked on the bill also repeatedly stated, when questioned on the subject, that while nothing would prevent the federal government from imposing conditions as

part of a future agreement, the bill had always been designed with the asymmetry of Quebec's reality compared to Canada's provinces in mind.

The various members of the Liberal government who spoke on the bill also repeatedly said that the Liberals intended to continue working with Quebec on this issue. The current agreement also appealed to Quebec because it did not interfere in any area of jurisdiction and left the Quebec government free to spend the money wherever it wanted.

Given the current agreement between Ottawa and Quebec and the federal government's express desire to continue working in this direction, Canada does not seem to have any intention of lecturing Quebec when it comes to child care.

● (1800)

We therefore believe that another bilateral agreement would be possible, probable and necessary, since Quebec is the inspiration for the Canadian government.

Then, at report stage in the House, nothing substantive was added to the debate. The Conservatives continued to argue that this bill has major flaws, particularly regarding accessibility, since private child care is not covered by the subsidies provided for under this bill. Meanwhile, the NDP continued to ask the government to interfere even more in jurisdictions belonging to Quebec and the provinces.

It is also important to remember that for many years now, many Canadian families have been envious of Quebec's child care system, because child care often eats up a large portion of their household income. These families have long dreamed of having access to the same service that families in Quebec have been receiving for a very long time. It is high time that all Canadian families were able to access child care without breaking the bank.

For a number of years now, Quebec's child care policy has enabled Quebecers to benefit from a better work-life or school-life balance and more generous maternity and parental leave. It also extended family assistance programs to self-employed workers and workers with atypical work schedules. This model is a valuable program that the entire Quebec nation is proud of. Considering the popular support they enjoy, the child care centres rank among one of the greatest successes of the new social economy, being democratically managed using an approach that involves both parents and educators.

Government Orders

It is also important to remember that the mission of Quebec's early childhood education services is threefold: one, to ensure the well-being, health and safety of the children receiving care; two, to provide an environment that stimulates their development in every way, from birth to school age; and three, to prevent learning, behavioural and social integration problems from appearing later on.

In my opinion, a real family policy like the one in Quebec, which includes components such as family leave, income support and an accessible child care network, must be integrated into a coherent whole in order to be effective, so it should be overseen by just one level of government.

Despite the many the flaws and imperfections of Bill C-35's current wording, the Bloc Québécois will support the bill. It is high time that families outside Quebec also got to reap the benefits of an early learning and child care program. With prices rising across the board, Bill C-35's passage will certainly bring many families some welcome financial relief. Not only will it give Canadian families some financial breathing room, we know it will also allow more mothers to enter the job market.

Bill C-35 will strengthen the vitality of the French language outside Quebec and prevent assimilation into English. As Jean-Luc Racine of the Commission nationale des parents francophones said, his organization's "experience in the field clearly shows that as soon as [francophone] children enter an English school, it's all over, even in immersion....As soon as people switch to the English-speaking side, within a few years, they forget French." These are some of the major reasons I have decided to support Bill C-35.

[English]

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I had an excellent time working with my colleague on this bill.

I have two things. Number one, does the member think it was worthwhile for the federal government to interfere in provincial jurisdiction when this is a provincial matter?

Number two, the Liberals turned these amendments down. These are in the Charter of Rights. These are about official languages and encouraging funding for French and minority languages. Why does the member believe the Liberals did not want to support that, especially in committee, and are changing their minds now?

• (1805)

[Translation]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé: Mr. Speaker, first of all, the federal government must not interfere in provincial jurisdictions, especially when it comes to Quebec. Second, I think our child care policy is a model worth following. As for the amendment, of course we must also help francophones outside Quebec gain access to day care services.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be the first to admit that with a program like this, which was born out of Quebec and was inspired by Quebec's model, Quebec has shown the results. To my Conservative colleagues, if they are questioning whether or not more women get into the workforce as a result of a program like this, they should just look at

Quebec. Quebec has had a program like this in place for a number of years, and when we look at Quebec, we see that there are more women in the workforce there.

However, we are seeing a repeat of the Conservatives' position last time this was in the House. They talk it down the whole time they are here. They criticize it repeatedly, and then when it comes time to vote, they silently stand up and vote in favour of it.

Does my colleague think the Conservatives will do the same thing this time, just trash-talk it the whole time but then, when it comes time to vote, vote in favour of it?

[Translation]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé: Mr. Speaker, our model is the best one. In fact, the member is proof positive that it is, since Bill C-35 calls for another model.

As for the Conservatives, I have no idea how they will vote because they are impulsive. Unfortunately, I cannot say more than that.

[English]

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question for the member is actually building on what my colleague was just talking about, which is around the fact that we know that Quebec's system of affordable child care has been a model for the rest of the country.

I am wondering if the member can share with us the benefits they have seen in Quebec in terms of gender equity, of women and all parents accessing child care, and of the quality of the child care that children have been receiving.

[Translation]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé: Mr. Speaker, it is accessible in Quebec. It is affordable. It is flexible. It is inclusive, too. Children get help. Families also have help for children with different ranges of abilities. I think Quebec really is a model that other provinces could learn from. The government should do the same with Bill C-35.

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou for her passionate and moderate speech that puts things into perspective.

Let us not forget that, in 1997, Quebec brought forward such a plan. It was the work of Pauline Marois, whose courage allowed for great strides to be made.

I also remember that in 2006, my predecessor, Paule Brunelle, took part in the debate at first reading of Bill C-303.

I would like to ask my colleague if the current bill does Quebec justice or if, on the contrary, it distorts an idea that was the best.

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé: Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question.

I hope that the model in Bill C-35 will be a success. Quebec is truly an example when it comes to child care services, parental leave, family benefits, tax credits and bonuses. So it is a model that should not be overlooked.

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is truly a pleasure to be able to speak to Bill C-35. However, it would be hard for me to do it any more justice than my dear colleague, who did an excellent job of shepherding it through committee brilliantly, passionately and with commitment. I thank her.

Today is February 14. Some colleagues have decided to wish everyone they love a happy Valentine's Day. I have a lot of love for my country, Quebec.

The reason we have Bill C-35 before us, as it is, is because Quebec was a pioneer 27 years ago, in 1997, when it implemented a unique model not of child care services, but of early childhood education services. The initiative was spearheaded by the Minister of Education, Pauline Marois, who became the first woman to serve as Quebec's premier. All of civil society rallied around this legislation to create a strong and robust family policy, with the dual objective of achieving balance between family life and work. We saw the tremendous benefits that it opened up for women in the labour market, and for our little ones. It gives them equal opportunities.

Today, as part of Hooked on School Days, we see what a difference it makes to have an early childhood education services policy with a focus on education. We can chart the entire educational path for children aged zero to five years. That is really wonderful.

I also want to point out the commitment, dedication and passion that the educators and staff in our early child care centres have for our little ones. I want to commend them for that.

I would say that, in Quebec, we do more than that. When we implemented early childhood education services, the department at the time certified all of the women who provide child care in their homes. They were certified under the policy. They are part of the same mission, the same policy. It was a labour, social and feminist movement because we contributed to the right to organize and to collective bargaining. The policies that Quebec has implemented are really social policies, like a family policy for early childhood education services. We also have the parental insurance plan, proactive pay equity legislation that also dates back 25 years. I could give plenty of examples that show the choices that Quebec has made. Quebec has made societal choices. The social policies that we implemented make a difference for our nation, because they contribute economically and help to reduce social inequality. We are very proud of that.

When it comes to Bill C-35, I would say the government has drawn quite a lot, been quite inspired by what is being done in Quebec. I would hazard to say that it is wonderful for women and toddlers outside Quebec if the government can draw inspiration from our model. I have taken part in missions to the OECD where Quebec was represented. I have taken part in missions to United Nations Women, where I have long heard women from other provinces calling for child care policies in their provinces.

However, the success of this does not lie in the fact that the federal government has once again interfered in jurisdictions involving

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family policy and education. That takes a lot of nerve. Once again, the federal government is interfering in provincial jurisdictions. The success of this lies in the fact that Quebec has made a societal choice. Why should anyone count on Ottawa to ensure that other provinces make the same progress?

Eventually, the federal target is approximately 200,000 day care spots across Canada. In Quebec, we have about 250,000 day care spots. It depends on the choices being made. Ottawa cannot be expected to take the place of the provinces when they choose not to make certain choices. Quebec did not wait for Ottawa to set up its services.

• (1810)

That is why I am so disappointed. I am shocked, but considering that today is Valentine's Day, I will keep calm.

I could have mentioned other programs. I will get to that. In Quebec, we have a dental care plan. In Quebec, we have a government-funded pharmacare program. In Quebec, we have anti-scab legislation dating back to 1977. The federal government is going to keep using its spending power to introduce more policies that interfere in areas under Quebec's jurisdiction.

After all my time here, I am fed up. People here seem to forget that Canada is a federation and that each province has its own responsibilities and jurisdictions. Ottawa keeps writing cheques so it can slap its flag on them and look good, while abdicating its real responsibilities, its real social safety net and social security policies for Canadians.

I will give three examples.

The government is starving the provinces when it comes to health transfers, even though health care is a priority and a provincial jurisdiction. The government is deliberately imposing conditions when it transfers any funding. That is pretty serious. In the meantime, we do not have any real tools.

The same goes for anti-scab legislation. Under this fine agreement, an anti-scab bill is supposed to be introduced, but there has been no mention of it for 14 sitting days in the House, and the bill has not come back.

We can also talk about seniors. Old age security is a federal government program, but the feds decided to discriminate against seniors on the basis of age by increasing old age security by 10% for people 75 and over while giving nothing to seniors aged 65 to 74. It is in its platform.

We have also been waiting for eight years for legislation to completely overhaul employment insurance, which also falls under federal jurisdiction. Instead of interfering in provincial programs and jurisdictions when we are making our own choices, the federal government should focus on improving its own social programs. With all of its programs, Quebec makes a contribution that is unlike anywhere else in North America in many respects, and that is widely recognized.

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It is not perfect. We could do better, and the way to do better is to have our own power and be independent.

• (1815)

[English]

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I enjoy working with my colleague on the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. She is a very direct and honest person, and I enjoy her humour as well.

My question for her would be in regard to Bill C-35 and the \$10-a-day child care put forward by the Liberals and NDP. Does she think it makes sense for the federal government to intervene in provincial jurisdiction?

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Mr. Speaker, there will be agreements with the provinces. Now, there is Bill C-35. Some say that the provinces will not get there. It may not have been their choice. Child care services are \$10 a day. In Quebec, they cost less than \$10 a day.

When we brought in early childhood education services, the idea was to have a reduced contribution for parents. It was \$5. Now, I have lost track, it may be around \$9.

My colleague says it is \$9, \$10. It is the principle of indexing. It is the principle of a single rate, because no matter the parents' income, it is accessible for children. It is a public program. It is a public network of early childhood education services. Federal interference in provincial programs is not what will make this happen. It is going to take the will, at the provincial level, to push for and implement social policies.

[English]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have enjoyed working with the hon. member at the HUMA committee on many issues, including right now the OAS and the differentiation between seniors under age 75 and seniors over age 75. That too is a gender equality issue.

I have spoken in the House many times about how fortunate I was to live in Quebec in 1998 when my first child went through child care. It was \$5 a day at that time. For my second child it was \$7.50 a day. That allowed me to go back to school. I say that the reason I am standing in the House right now is that there was \$5-a-day child care in Quebec.

I also want to raise my hands to applaud the work that Quebec does around making sure that families have access to free swimming lessons, free diving lessons and free synchronized swimming lessons: all kinds of opportunities for kids. It is a great place to raise a family.

My question to my colleague is this. There are many provinces in this country that are not taking care of child care, are not allowing women like me to be in elected roles because they do not have access to child care. Does she believe that this is a gender equity issue, and what should provincial governments be doing to pick up the ball to make sure that women and people who look after children can have affordable child care?

• (1820)

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Mr. Speaker, it is also always a pleasure to work with my colleague on things that we have in common, such as gender equality for women, social justice and many other issues related to our social policies. She is welcome in Quebec any time.

I find it sad that other provinces have not made the same choices. Some provinces have gone further than others, but what I find sad is that we have to come to Ottawa to beg with respect to provincial jurisdictions. Quebec and each of the provinces must make their own choices about moving forward in a sensible way.

As I was saying, I hope that everyone can get to where Quebec is when it comes to gender equality for women and equal opportunities for children. Perhaps this is a start that will help the provinces follow Quebec's lead. I would tell them that they really have to stand behind their social policies to move forward.

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in support of the Senate amendment, which the Senate adopted to clarify that funding for official language minority child care would be delivered through bilateral agreements with provinces and indigenous governing bodies. We know, as I have learned from my meetings with different francophone groups, that there is a severe shortage of French-language child care serving francophone communities outside Quebec.

This is a potential charter issue. In fact, in section 23, minority-language education is a right. It is also an amendment that francophone organizations like the FCFA and the CNPF have been pushing for, and the government motion would concur with this amendment. Therefore, I am very pleased to rise in support of it.

Basically, the Senate amendment to Bill C-35 breaks down clause 8, on funding commitments, into two sections while adding an entitlement for official language minorities. It states that Bill C-35 be read a third time. With respect to clause 8(1), it states, "The Government of Canada commits to maintaining long-term funding for early learning and child care programs and services, including early learning and child care programs and services for Indigenous peoples [and adds] and for official language minority communities." Adding "and for official language minority communities" is a critical amendment, so I look forward to supporting the amendment in the House along with my NDP colleagues.

There is a national child care strategy. I have mentioned very often in the House that I am a very proud former early childhood educator. I can say that one of the reasons I left the field was that the respect this kind of noble profession deserves certainly was not given. In Canada in 2019, there were 300,000 individuals employed as child care workers. Child care workers are less likely than other workers to be unionized or covered by a collective agreement, and less likely to have a permanent job. They are 10 times more likely to be self-employed, and we know that the province of Quebec has the highest number of child care workers relative to its employed population. That is a very old statistic, but we can certainly say that Quebec is ahead of its time when it comes to providing early childhood education.

A third of child care workers right now are immigrants or non-permanent residents. We know that since COVID, the employment among child care workers fell 21% between February 2020 and February 2021, compared to only a 3% overall drop in other fields. Why is there a drop in the number of people wanting to become early childhood educators? We know that 82% of child care providers had difficulty hiring staff with the necessary qualifications. In Alberta, staff turnover was in fact 25%, and according to the ESDC data, the average wage for an ECE in Alberta was \$18.50 an hour in 2022. ECEs need higher wages, and benefits, personal leave and pensions.

The median wage is so low; it was \$21,000 a year in 2022, up from \$20,000 in 2021. It is unacceptable that we are trying to lift off a national child care plan, yet somehow early childhood educators are supposed to act as martyrs to the system that exploits and underpays them. I note that the majority, once again, come from BIPOC communities and are primarily immigrants and non-permanent residents.

• (1825)

I do not mean to age myself, but these are the same fights we were fighting over 30 years ago. When I saw the campaign in Manitoba fighting for \$21,000 a year, the level of exploitation that child care workers currently have to endure was very apparent to me. The Liberal government calls itself a feminist government, yet in a field that we know primarily employs women, immigrants and individuals with non-permanent residency, workers are not even being paid a living wage. This is not just a workers' issue; this is also a gender and equality issue. We know that in occupations that predominantly employ women, people generally get paid less. This is an equity issue. A third of the licensed child care workforce has no health benefits, zero.

I decided to leave my job as an ECE, a job that I loved. I loved the little ones. I had them all lined up for gym time. We would sing a song. We had a daily routine. I loved the two-and-a-half year olds, who took such pride in their accomplishments every single day. They were loving, tender and open. It was such an honour to work with minds that were not tarnished yet by the world. It was eye-opening and so inspiring to me.

However, I left the field. I decided to become trained as a teacher, and I will say why. By 21 years old, I knew that one day I wanted health care benefits. I knew that one day I wanted to earn more than minimum wage so I could afford my rent at the time, never

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mind with the housing crisis we are in now and the fact that rents are high. At the time, I could barely afford to pay my bills. The current salaries for early childhood educators are not a living wage. As a result, people are either discouraged from joining the field or they leave the field so they can live in dignity.

If the federal government is serious about making sure the national child care strategy gets off the ground, it needs to put in place a worker strategy that includes ensuring that funding is dependent on living wages, health care benefits and pensions for workers. Only then will we see a national child care strategy.

• (1830)

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I really enjoy working with my colleague on the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. Ideologically, sometimes we do not see eye to eye, but where we do is with respect to helping to empower women.

What the member is saying about ECEs is the exact same thing we are talking about when we say “women-owned child care facilities”. Women entrepreneurs are specifically being targeted by the language of the bill. A local woman talked about this recently in committee when we were studying economic empowerment. She said, “where women [have always been] fairly represented as owners and managers and it's not only being undervalued by government, but targeted for replacement by a government-run system.” That is a quote from Andrea Hannen from the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario.

Does the member support the Liberal \$10-a-day program's plan to eliminate women-owned child care businesses?

Ms. Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, like with any business, I certainly am not against a small business; I want to be very clear about that. However, I do believe that public monies need to be used for public, not-for-profit child care. If somebody wants to have a business, I totally support that, but if we are going to use public money, it needs to go into public institutions that are regulated. We know through research, especially when we look at a strategy for workers, that in public, not-for-profit care, workers are generally paid better than they are in private centres where the goal is to maximize profit. That is the reality of the business.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her powerful speech, yet again.

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My colleague talked about the importance of a strong workforce strategy. I wonder if she can share with us the benefits of a strong workforce strategy to the little ones that she was talking about, which she enjoyed working with so much.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, if this so-called feminist government wants to support women, then it has to do whatever it needs to do to make sure women can work. We need a workforce strategy to recruit people, which includes money for training, and it includes transfers that ensure livable wages are paid.

This is not just a gender issue in terms of people who are working. It is also a gender issue in terms of limiting women's abilities to return to the workforce. It is a top issue. If we want to talk about affordability, women need the resources so that they can go and work. We are limited by the current national strategy because of the failure of this government to put in place a proper workforce strategy.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

GREENHOUSE GAS POLLUTION PRICING ACT

The House resumed from February 6 consideration of the motion in relation to the amendments made by the Senate to Bill C-234, An Act to amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's hard-working farmers produce safe and nutritious foods that we depend on to feed our communities. They are vital to our food security. Not only do our farmers feed Canadian families, but also they help feed the world. However, the carbon tax-obsessed Prime Minister and his Liberal government do not value the work our farmers do day in and day out. If the Prime Minister did value their work, the Liberal government would not be hell-bent on imposing a costly and punishing carbon tax on our farmers, threatening the viability of their farm businesses.

My Conservative colleague, the member for Huron—Bruce, introduced what was a common-sense bill to remove the carbon tax from farm operations. The Parliamentary Budget Officer determined that the bill would save farmers \$1 billion by 2030. That is \$1 billion that the Liberals want to take from the bottom line of our farmers. Without the support of the Liberal government, Bill C-234 did pass through this chamber onto the Senate, but now we find ourselves, in the chamber, considering a gutted bill that would not provide the relief our farmers so desperately need.

It is absolutely shameful that the Prime Minister would use his appointed senators to delay and to gut Bill C-234. This carbon tax-obsessed Prime Minister and his environment minister browbeat senators to bend to their ideological will. That is not how good public policy is developed. The removal of barns and greenhouses from the carbon tax exemption, and the shortening of the sunset clause, stops well short of what this bill was trying to achieve.

To be clear, there was no outcry for any of these amendments from farmers or farm organizations representing them. In fact, it was quite the opposite. Farmers and farm groups from across the spectrum of commodities have been absolutely unified in their sup-

port for the quick passage of this bill in its original form, just as the premiers of Saskatchewan, Alberta and Ontario have also been doing. They all understand how punishing the Liberal carbon tax is on Canadians and on our Canadian farmers.

It is also worth noting that the Senate amendments are not even new proposals. The Senate amendments mirror proposals that were already put forward in the House of Commons agriculture and agri-food committee by Liberal members of Parliament. These amendments were rightly rejected. To reintroduce these rejected ideas through an unelected Senate undermines the will of the elected members in the House. The bill, in its original form, recognized the valuable contributions that farmers across Canada are already making to protect the environment.

Canada's farmers are deeply committed to being good stewards of the land. It has always been a cornerstone of farming practices, not only because their livelihoods depend on this, but also because it is in their DNA to care for the work they do. Canada's farmers are world leaders in sustainability and innovation. They are always looking to improve their productivity and to do more with less. Through technology and innovation, our farmers have already reduced their environmental impact, improved their efficiency, and are conserving water and soil.

• (1835)

There is so much to celebrate in Canadian agriculture. I would even argue the Canadian government should be championing our farmers. Instead, the Liberal government is punishing them. It is punishing Canadian farmers with its costly carbon tax that does nothing to protect the environment.

Saskatchewan grain farmers have calculated that grain farmers in Saskatchewan can expect to lose 8% of their total net income to the carbon tax. That is around \$8,000 to \$10,000 on a 5,000-acre farm.

The carbon tax bills of our farmers are also not small amounts, and they are certainly not offset by a rebate. They are paying thousands and tens of thousands of dollars to operate. Of course, we cannot forget the Liberal government is not satisfied with the current rate of the carbon tax; it wants to quadruple it, and that includes for our farmers and for all Canadians.

The government's activist-driven agenda ignores all the evidence that the carbon tax is fuelling the affordability crisis in our country and that it is hurting those who can afford it the least the most, all while doing absolutely nothing to bring emissions down.

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The April 1 carbon tax hike will squeeze Canadians even tighter, and it will be an even bigger hit to the bottom line for our farmers. When the operating costs of farm businesses outpace their profits, we absolutely cannot expect that our farm businesses will stay operational. That is a threat to food security in Canada, and frankly, no government should take that lightly.

The fact is that millions of Canadians are already going hungry in our country because they cannot afford the basics of groceries. That is shameful in a country like ours, with an abundance of natural resources, but that is the legacy of the Liberal government and its carbon tax.

While farmers do absorb a lot of costs, and we have heard this before in the House, the reality is that when one taxes the farmer who grows the food, one taxes the trucker who ships the food and one taxes the grocer who sells that food, it is only common sense that Canadians who buy that food are stuck with higher bills at the checkout.

It is disgusting that the Liberal government wants to increase the cost of groceries during an affordability crisis. When two million Canadians visited a food bank in a single month, just last year, the Liberal government's solution is to increase the cost of food. Its NDP coalition partners are fully in support of the April 1 tax hike, a carbon tax that disproportionately impacts our farmers and rural Canadians.

Without the passage of Bill C-234 in its original form, it is a carbon tax that will make it impossible for our farmers to adopt innovative practices when they become available.

• (1840)

At the end of the day, if the Liberal government wants to tax our farm businesses to death, there are no funds left for them to invest in new innovative and sustainable practices. The reality is that their farm operations still require the use of natural gas and propane. It does not make sense to punish them for their reliance on those energy sources when there is no practical or appropriate alternative.

Yesterday marked Canada's Agriculture Day. It was an opportunity to celebrate Canadian agriculture and to show our appreciation for our hard-working farmers and producers. Our farmers need more than platitudes and empty words from the Minister of Agriculture and the Liberal government. They need a government that recognizes and values the contributions our farmers make to our Canadian food security, to our global food security, to our economy and to the environment.

Bill C-234 is an opportunity for every member of the House to put their appreciation for Canadian farmers and farm families into practice. This bill, as amended by the Senate, would undermine the entire purpose, and we must reject the harmful Senate amendments put forward by the so-called "independent" senators and stand up for Canadian farmers and farm families.

I want to urge every farmer watching today to contact Liberal MPs and Bloc MPs, and tell them to reject this carbon tax assault on their farm families, farm businesses and farm operations.

• (1845)

Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I would like to wish my amazing wife, Cailey, and our beautiful daughter, Maeve, a happy Valentine's Day. I love them both, and I cannot wait to see them and celebrate.

I am going to speak from the heart a little on this one, it being Valentine's Day. It is something that is extremely close to my heart. I have been involved in the efforts to eliminate the carbon tax on natural gas and propane for grain drying for many years, going back to Bill C-206 in the previous Parliament. I worked for the Grain Growers of Canada prior to this.

This is a good piece of legislation. It should not be political. This is about fixing a policy that does not make sense and that simply punishes our farmers. Grain growers, when they have a wet year, have no choice but to store their grain at the appropriate moisture level. They do this by drying it, and the only sources to do that are propane and natural gas. In just the same way, our livestock producers are forced to use those fuels to heat and cool their livestock operations for the welfare of the animals.

This is a common-sense carve-out that would leave money in the pockets of farmers to reinvest in their own operations, to reinvest in their own communities and to lower the prices of food for Canadians. It amounts to \$1 billion; it was the intention of the bill to allow our farmers to maintain that in their pockets. The amended version of this bill removes about \$900 million of that, because the Senate gutted it.

Let us just go back through how we got to where we are. This was supported by parties across this chamber, and even some Liberal MPs. It was supported by the Conservatives, the NDP, the Bloc Québécois and even the Green Party members, recognizing the importance of this legislation to Canadian producers and to Canadian consumers. The members acknowledged that this carve-out made sense.

Things got political, though. When it got to the Senate, of all places, that so-called chamber of sober second thought had a whole bunch of political manipulation involved with it that caused absolute mayhem. The fact is that we are in no man's land here, with debate potentially never ending, thanks to the Liberal government and its intrusion into that so-called independent Senate.

The reality is that, after we got through the House, the bill went to the Senate. The senators tried to amend it at the senate committee with the exact same amendments that were tried in this chamber, but the Liberals could not find a dancing partner. All the other parties realized that this is good policy; only the Liberals stood in the way of it.

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However, in their back pocket, the Liberals had the so-called independent Liberal, not by name, senators that they could manipulate. In fact, the environment minister even admitted that he called six of them. At our environment committee, I asked for the names of the six senators. He promised to get back to me, and after 49 days, he came back with three names. I guess he forgot, and guessed up, how many senators he tried to corner into moving and passing amendments at the committee stage and at the broader Senate chamber to try to gut this bill.

The Prime Minister's Office and the radical environment minister did everything they and their government could to force the Senate to gut this bill. The environment minister just loves the carbon tax and put his entire credibility and career on the line, saying that he would resign if there was an additional carve-out for farmers. That is how we have arrived at where we are today.

This, from the Liberals, should not be surprising. They are fully committed to a policy that is failing Canadians from coast to coast. This carbon tax scam is raising the price of everything, making us all poorer, making us less competitive and driving down profits for our farmers.

It is not surprising, because this is the Liberal government that called all farmers and small business owners "tax cheats". The same government voted against a common-sense piece of legislation, Bill C-208, that would have aided in the transfer of farms from one generation of a family to the next. It came up with a crazy idea to reduce the amount of fertilizer we use in this country by 30%, following Europe's lead. Europe is a continent that went from being a net exporter to a net importer of food; it is reliant on other nations for its energy, in this case, terrible aggressors, namely Russia.

• (1850)

We are going down an awful path as it relates to our food and fuel in this country, so it should come as no surprise that the government stands opposed to such common-sense legislation. Frankly, the Liberal record on agriculture and rural issues is horrendous. It is appalling. That is part of the reason I went from being an advocate, working on behalf of farmers as a representative of the industry, to wanting to put my name on a ballot and come here. I thought I could do more from the inside to stand up for our rural communities and farmers. That is what I am proudly doing today and will do every day for the rest of my time in this place.

The government seems to think it can rebrand the carbon tax or the rebate cheques to people and that they will somehow change their minds about this. People know better. They know that the carbon tax is failing them in every facet of their life and simultaneously not reducing emissions. We went from being ranked 58th to 62nd in the world because of our environmental outcomes. We have become worse under this government, yet it stands by its failed policies, which are making us all poor.

I would encourage the Liberal MPs who do not have the opportunity to represent farmers and probably deny them meetings when asked to come and explain their situation, to pick up the phone and call a farmer. I will provide a few phone numbers if they want. It will be the best five minutes of their life when they get the chance to ask them what they think about the carbon tax, or better yet, when they ask them why they are paying a carbon tax on drying

their grain, why they are drying grain and why they need temperature-controlled barns. They should ask them what they think of the 5% GST they pay on the carbon tax specifically, the revenue-neutral carbon tax that has just collected an extra 5% for the government, which needs it here in Ottawa for its political pet projects more than Canadian farmers and Canadian consumers do, who are paying higher prices at the grocery store.

They would also be able to tell MPs stories about the innovations and strides that have been made by our producers across this country over the last number of decades. It is hard to recognize a farm from a few decades ago, from the improvements in seed and live-stock genetics to the vast improvements in equipment and machinery, the tractors and combines, the data collection and the focus on increased yields while reducing emissions. In fact, we have doubled our production in this country since 1997, while our emissions have stayed the same.

That is what we should be looking at. The emissions intensity of our production in this country is something we should be proud of. We are better than other countries around the world at growing food. It is something we should be standing up for. We should be taking down barriers and roadblocks. We should be enabling trade. We should be enabling our producers to sell their products around the world at a profit to reinvest in their own operations and communities. Instead, we focus on anti-competitive measures that push businesses south of the border and make it harder for farmers to make a living in this country.

Our farmers, of all types, are the true conservationists. They are the ones on the ground. They are the ones focused on making sure that their land is better off when they leave it than how they found it, because it makes sense. It is common sense for them to make sure they can maximize production on their land. This land is passed down from generation to generation. They are proud of it, and they want to protect it.

At the end of the day, there is no good reason to support this gutted bill. The farmers know that. Every member in the House absolutely should know that. It should not be about politics. It should not be about the Liberals deciding that 3% of Canadians should get a break on the carbon tax on their home heating oil while our farmers have to pay more because of the Liberals' political hides being on the line.

Private Members' Business

This is good legislation, as drafted and unamended, to save farmers \$1 billion. I urge my colleagues of all political stripes to listen to our farmers and the organizations that represent them, do the right thing, pass this bill without the Senate amendments and send it immediately back to the Senate, which should also do the right thing and pass this legislation as Parliament has asked it to.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as always, it is an honour to stand in this place and defend and work hard for the people of Battle River—Crowfoot and, specifically, tonight, the hard-working farmers from east central Alberta and coast to coast.

I would be remiss if I did not say a very happy Valentine's Day to my sweetheart Danielle. I am not sure if she is watching, but I love her and I hope that she and those three boys are able to enjoy Valentine's Day back in Alberta.

We are talking about Bill C-234, a common-sense Conservative bill that would eliminate the carbon tax for many of the essential aspects of the work that our hard-working farmers and ranchers from coast to coast pay for and that ultimately drives up the price of their operations.

What is really unfortunate, in this entire process, is that this is where the Liberals lose the plot.

I am honoured to be the fifth generation on my family farm in Alberta's special areas. I know so many classmates and people I have gotten to know across the country since getting elected.

I want to reference, specifically, a young lady named Mady from Saskatchewan. I believe she is 12 years old. She told this story recently in an interview in New York. Her story is an incredible one. She was asked a true-or-false question during a test in school about whether farming was bad for the environment. She knew that the teacher expected the answer to be true. She marked that but put a frowning face beside the answer.

As Mady describes, and I believe she was eight years old at the time, it was this that inspired her and her parents. I have chatted with Mady and her mom. She has had the opportunity to speak to the ministers, the previous minister of agriculture and, I believe, the current Minister of Agriculture, and to advocate for farmers across the country and now even around the world. She knew that it was essential to get the message out about the value, the ability and the solutions that Canadian agriculture brings.

Where the Liberals lose the plot is summed up in a bumper sticker. I know that the Liberals hate when we use slogans, but this is not something that I created. This is something that I have seen on bumper stickers and the back windows of many trucks, minivans and tractors across my constituency. It is: "No farmers. No food. Know farmers. Know food."

This is where the Liberals have lost the plot. They are blaming the very people and they are punishing the very people who are able to solve the problem that our country faces.

I received an email just the other day from a local food bank operator in Flagstaff County. Lynn told me I could share this story. She shared how tragic it was that there were a number of instances

where, when individuals come into the food bank, they are lying about the number of people in their homes and where they live.

One would say, "That is not good." It is never good to lie, right? We are taught that. One has to ask why they are lying. It is because they are hungry. These people, these families, are hungry. In some cases, they are so hungry that they have no choice but to go from food bank to food bank in order to be able to feed themselves.

Where the Liberals have lost the plot is that they blame farmers and believe that punishing them and all Canadians is the solution to somehow helping those individuals who are, in some cases, starving, as Lynn shared with me just the other day.

• (1855)

Instead, the solution is very simple, if one reduces costs for those who produce the food. Like I mentioned the other day, at every step of the food supply chain, one can reduce, ultimately, the price of food for Canadians. That is where we are. We have a simple, common-sense solution. We can get Bill C-234 across the finish line, as it was intended, and allow farmers to get to work, so they can reduce the price of food, and Canadians can afford to eat.

However, the problem is that we saw unprecedented political manipulation by the Prime Minister, the Liberals, and the criminal, socialist, activist of an excuse of an environment minister that we have. This was manipulation at an unprecedented scale, showcasing how the so-called independent Senate is anything but.

We saw the Liberals' carbon pricing scheme, which is now admittedly a failure. In fact, just today they announced they are re-branding it; it is so misunderstood. They do not even trace the emissions that it has reduced because they cannot see that it has even helped the environment in this country. Can members imagine an environmental platform that does not help the environment? What kind of absurdity is this?

We see that the Liberals saw that their carbon tax scheme was falling apart and that the scam was being seen for what it truly is: a scam. The Liberals put on the full-court press and pushed the Senate to pass a number of amendments that gutted the bill. It would have been common-sense relief to farmers. They could have worked at lowering the price of food for all Canadians, but instead, they played politics with the hungry stomachs of Canadians. That is the sad reality. As a result, we are seeing the consequences.

The simple fact of the matter is that if the coalition that is ruling this country would agree to pass Bill C-234, unamended, we could get to work and could see that amended.

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For all the farmers and producers watching, the question is simple. They should reach out to their Liberal, NDP or Bloc member of Parliament. Tell them that it is time to do the common-sense thing and to pass Bill C-234, unamended, so that we can provide that much-needed relief for farmers so that they can do what is truly required to ultimately lower the price of food for Canadians.

● (1900)

We have heard from all parties, I believe, this week about Canada's Agriculture Day. It is interesting that there is only one party in this country that truly stands for our hard-working farmers and ranchers, and that is the Conservative Party. Here is the offer I would make, as a farmer and a parliamentarian, as somebody who cares deeply about the agricultural sector and about the hunger crisis that has been caused by the Liberals, the failed carbon tax, the inflation and all the dynamics leading to that; let us get to work to pass Bill C-234. We can show Canadians this thing called "leadership".

My fear is that the Prime Minister, the Leader of the NDP who is just as weak and, it seems, just as corrupt because he is certainly propping up the corruption of the Liberals, and the members of the Bloc Québécois, seem clueless as to how they are impacted by this carbon tax, by the national mechanisms associated with it and by the national impact associated with it.

Let us pass Bill C-234 in its original form, and demonstrate to Canadians that common sense still exists in this country for the thousands of farmers I represent, who depend on common sense for their daily operations. I see a number of rural MPs. In fact, I think everybody who seems to be left in this debate represents at least part of a rural constituency.

Common sense rules on the farm. It rules in rural Canada, so let us see common sense rule in this place so that we can bring home lower food prices for Canadians. The question is simple: Will those other parties pass Bill C-234 to bring home lower prices and axe the tax?

● (1905)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Senate amendments to Bill C-234 have drastically changed the contents of the original bill that this House passed with support from multiple parties. It would basically have reduced the tax bill for farmers by about a billion dollars, savings that would have been passed on to my constituents whose greatest relationship with farmers is when they go to the grocery store to buy Canadian produce, Canadian goods that they need to eat. Now these things will not be cheaper because the government seems intent on making sure amendments that the government engineered on the so-called independent Liberal senators are now being reflected in a bill that would remove exemptions for barns and greenhouses, and changes the original sunset clause.

That is pretty typical of the government's actions. It does by stealth what should be done in public, transparently. The government should own the changes it is making to the legislation, but it does not want to do that. I would be embarrassed as well if I were trying to take food out of the mouths of people all over the country. Food banks have reported record-high numbers of Canadians using

them to feed their families. The bill before us was intended to lower the cost of groceries.

For all of those people in the riding of Calgary Shepard who are going to be watching this, I say that the bill would lower their bills. It would lower grocery bills. It would lower their Costco bill. People go to the East Hills Costco or the Heritage Costco. Many people in my riding go to the Okotoks Costco because it is actually closer than most of the other Costco stores and grocery stores in my area. However, the Liberals seem to be fully intent on making sure that the carbon tax has the maximum impact on the monthly budget of my constituents, for the worse, not for the better.

None of these farmers gets a rebate of any sort to offset some of the costs of their farm operations. That is the economic damage that the Parliamentary Budget Officer calculated. Even with the rebates, everybody in Alberta is going to be worse off, or is worse off as of now, because of the carbon tax.

The bill would not address that, but it would at least relieve some of the pain that farmers are feeling. Some of them have a thousand dollars or tens of thousands of dollars extra per month in bills; it depends on the particular farm operation. What we know is that the vast majority of farmers are supplying goods, produce and food, that people in Canada are going to eat, and they are going to be more expensive unless the bill passes without the terrible Senate amendments.

We have heard other members say that the environment minister made phone calls to senators. The Prime Minister, according to media reports, was reaching out to so-called independent Liberal senators to get them to amend the bill and force it back to the House, delaying it and therefore delaying lower grocery prices in our stores.

After eight long years, people in my riding just cannot afford this anymore. They cannot afford the Prime Minister's carbon tax. The rebate is not helping in any way, shape or form. We know from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, as I said, that bills are up; they are higher, and it is doing damage to the economy.

The Liberals seem to think that he who cannot pay should learn to pray, to paraphrase a Yiddish proverb. That is essentially what they are saying to everybody in my riding and to every single farmer out there who is now going to be struggling to figure out how they can make their farm operation profitable for another year. How can they keep it running to be able to pass it on to their kids for the next generation? Is it even worth it? Countless members of the House have given examples of farmers who are set to give up. They just do not see how they can make their farm operation work with crushing bills that continue to get higher.

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I hope everybody is learning how to pray, because that is essentially the message the Liberal government is sending to everyone. The Liberals just do not care. They are fine with putting a \$1-billion bill on the backs of farmers, expecting them to pass it on to consumers. Consumers will then do the logical thing when they cannot afford food: They are going to buy less food, and then they are going to go to the food bank to make up the difference, because they have to eat. It is a necessity, so that is what is going to happen. They seem to be fine with that on that side of the House.

I thought there had been consensus that the original version of Bill C-234 was the right bill and that this House had told the Senate that we wanted it in a particular format. On spending and tax matters, it is not up to the Senate to tell us, the representatives of the people, elected every four to five years depending when the federal elections are, that people do not get the credit, tax relief or spending measures we wanted.

● (1910)

That is not the Senate's job. Its job, when it comes to bills such as this on the reduction of costs, on taxes and on tax credits, and especially getting rid of the carbon tax, should be to get out of the way. This House should vote down these Senate amendments. We should go back to the original version of Bill C-234, and the Senate should pass it expeditiously.

I have not had a single constituent tell me that they think it is a great idea to keep paying high grocery bills. Nobody has told me that Bill C-234 should have serious amendments to eliminate things such as barn heating and greenhouses. They would also question, and many residents in my riding have, such things as why people with home heating oil in eastern Canada get a discount, but people in my riding who heat with natural gas do not get one on their natural gas bills or their really high carbon tax bills.

They see the politicization of this and the temporary nature of the heating oil suspension on the carbon tax, which is now very similar to what is going to happen with these Senate amendments in Bill C-234. In three years, it would go back up. Even if this passes, what happens then? There could be a federal election by then. This is essentially the same game the government is playing, but it is using its so-called independent Liberal senators to get through this difficult period. We see it in the polls.

I see the polls too. I do not pay attention to them very closely; the only ones that matter are those on voting day. However, I know the Liberals are probably panicking. They are about 16 or 19 points behind, depending on the poll one looks at. Farmers and people in my riding, and there is a great Yiddish word for it, are *farharghet*. It is a way to say exhausted and worn out. They are worn out by this debate on the carbon tax. It is obviously causing damage throughout the economy, and it has raised the prices of basic goods and necessities. They are *farharghet*; they are tired of having this debate continue when we know that people want the tax to be axed. They want the carbon tax to go away in full.

The Liberals refuse to do that. I invite them to call a federal election. Let us have one right now. We will call it the “axe-the-tax election”, and Canadians can make up their minds. They can decide which side is correct. Do they want high grocery prices or not? In the meantime, we should get rid of these Senate amendments, send

the bill back to the other place and have it pass the original bill. It is a tax-and-spend measure. Constitutionally, the Senate has no right to do this.

I have a lot of ranchers and farmers who actually choose to retire in my riding. It is an affordable place to live compared with some other places in Alberta and throughout Canada. A lot of the condos are actually filled with farmers who retired to be closer to their families. Their farm operations continue with their kids, but they have chosen to retire somewhere small. Their daughters and their sons continue the operations. They like to travel. They have earned it. After 30 or 40 years of farming or ranching, they have earned a bit of rest.

Everybody back home in my riding of Calgary Shepard, and throughout Calgary, should all start calling senators and members of Parliament. They do not have to call me; I am already convinced. I am good. I will vote the way my constituents want. However, they should be calling Liberal and NDP members of Parliament in Alberta, and they should let their views be known politely. They should tell their friends, co-workers and suppliers to call MPs and senators, telling them to pass this bill without the Senate amendments and return it to the original version.

Taxpayers, Canadian voters and farmers deserve a billion-dollar break on their bills, on their groceries, at the end of the month. Grocery prices will come down thanks to bills such as Bill C-234, and it has to happen. As I said, my constituents are *farharghet*. It is an exhausting debate to keep having to convince Liberal MPs and the others in the coalition, the NDP, that this will lead to lower grocery prices; the carbon tax has been punishing them for years now.

I hope members on the other side will see the righteousness of the cause, pray on it and vote down these Senate amendments.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is really unfortunate that we are here tonight debating what is effectively a gutted Bill C-234.

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Just to remind everyone at home, this bill would have provided a billion dollars' worth of relief to farmers in this country by exempting them on the carbon tax. In fact, members may recall that this bill passed through the House with all of the opposition parties voting for it. There were five Liberal members who voted for it, but the rest of the Liberal caucus voted against it, and it is unbelievable that they would actually vote against carbon tax relief for Canadian farmers and farm families who produce and create so much food security in this country. I think it was frankly an embarrassment to see this go on during that time.

However, the worst part about it was that it went through the House, as I mentioned, and it passed, so it went to committee. The Liberal members of that committee tried to move amendments in committee that were rejected by the majority of the opposition parties, and the bill ended up at the Senate. The Senate then, as a result of coercion and what some would say were bullying tactics by the radical, extremist environment minister and the Prime Minister, who by media accounts really strong-armed so-called "independent" senators who had been appointed by the Prime Minister, reintroduced those amendments back into the bill, and this is what we are dealing with today.

A billion dollars' worth of relief has been lost for Canadian farmers. I know members have heard this many times, but when we tax the farmer who grows the food and tax the transporter who transports the food, it is eventually the end consumer who ends up paying the cost, and that is what is happening in this case.

Let me tell members about Barrie—Innisfil. I am so fortunate to represent a riding that is a mix of urban and rural, and I would argue that that split is probably about 60-40, but we have farmers in Innisfil who are some of the best environmentally sustainable farmers, if not just across the country, then around the world.

Horodinsky Farms is the largest onion farmer in the country. Boris Horodinsky, who is of Ukrainian decent, uses the most influential technology we can find, drone technology, to make sure his land is sustainable. Kell Farms is one of the largest privately held farms in all of Ontario. We have Wardlaw's Poultry Farm, Barrie Hill Farms and Hewitt Creek Farm. We have some other producers who are greenhouse producers, such as Lakeview Gardens and Bradford Greenhouses. Every single one of those farms I represent in Barrie—Innisfil would be paying more because of what the Senate has done to this bill, complicit with the government.

It is a shame because one of the things we need to focus on, coming out of COVID, and it should be the number one priority in this country, in addition to energy security, is food security. We need to make sure that our producers are producing enough food so that we are not dependent on other aspects of the world, other despot nations or other big countries, bigger countries than Canada, for food.

This food security is being threatened. Those farms I described before, along with Eisses Poultry Farm, which is a chicken farm in my riding, are multi-generational farms, and the more these costs increase for these farms and farm families, the more at risk they are going to be in providing that food security for our nation.

The risk will come from industrialized farms, the big conglomerates. We have a couple of them here in Canada, but there are those

farms globally. What happens when these farms no longer exist in this country? What happens when these farm families are put at risk as the result of an ideological attack by the government with its imposing and implementing the carbon tax? It puts all of our food security at risk. This is not to mention the fact that it increases costs, and I know many of the speakers before me have talked about that.

I will give an example. I was thinking about this as I was preparing for this discussion tonight. Earlier today, I had what every Canadian has had. Many members probably had it for lunch today. I had a clubhouse sandwich, and I looked at the ingredients of that clubhouse sandwich. I looked at the whole wheat bread, as I am trying to eat healthy, the tomatoes and the bacon, which came from pigs in those heated barns and is now going to cost more. I also looked at the lettuce, which is grown in those greenhouses and is now going to cost more as a result of paying to heat those greenhouses.

● (1915)

All of those costs are going to be added on. It will be an extra \$910 million cost to the farmers as a result of the Senate amendments that have come back to this place. It is going to cost every Canadian family more, at a time when food insecurity is at its greatest. We are hearing that two million people are going to the food bank every month in this country because they cannot afford the cost of groceries, and seniors are walking into the Stroud I.G.A. or the Zehrs at Big Bay Point, looking at the food and at the price, and then putting the food back because they cannot afford it.

The government and its complicit senators are putting at risk that food security. They are putting at risk the ability of Canadians to be able to afford food.

As I said at the outset, this is not a controversial bill. In Atlantic Canada, we have seen a carve-out, because it was politically expedient for the Liberal government to carve out the carbon tax and allow an exemption because they were feeling the political heat of the cost of the carbon tax in Atlantic Canada.

What the member for Huron—Bruce did by proposing this bill was to provide that relief for those farmers who are producing our food and are producing food security. I do not think it is too much to ask. This is why we are here tonight, to talk to the government and the other opposition parties, and to tell them to support the bill in its original form, particularly the opposition parties, because they did, when it was brought to this place. When it went to committee, they voted against those amendments. That is all we are asking for, to be able to provide that relief to Canadian farmers and Canadian farm families.

The other aspect of this is really concerning. I have a restaurant in my riding and I recently spoke to the owner. I was sent their gas bill, and the federal carbon charge was noted on that gas bill. Without giving the name, they sell chickens, they sell a lot of chickens. The federal carbon charge on that bill was \$1,413 for one month. Let us assume they work off 10% margins. They would have to sell another \$14,000 worth of chicken, plus HST, as I am reminded by our agricultural critic, just to pay the carbon tax.

● (1920)

Now, as I mentioned before, we have Eisses Farm, chicken farms, a large chicken operation, in southwestern Ontario. Every single one of those producers will be paying the carbon tax as a result of the fact that this bill has been gutted in the Senate.

That is going to increase costs, not just for those restaurants, but for every single family in this country who is thinking about buying chicken, fruit, vegetables or anything grown or heated in this country. That is all the member for Huron—Bruce was trying to avoid in this bill. It was to give some relief to the farmers so that the consumers could get some relief at a time when we need relief.

This is not going to stop. This is a radical, ideologically left-leaning, activist government that believes that the carbon tax is the solution to fighting climate change. It is going to go up four times by the time it is done. People are going to be paying four times more. Producers are going to be paying four times more.

I stand here tonight, not just for those farms and farm families, but for every single person that I represent in Barrie—Innisfil, to fight to make life more affordable for them.

Before I stop, I do want to wish my wife, Liane a very happy Valentine's Day.

● (1925)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will do it right at the outset. I want to take this opportunity to wish a happy Valentine's Day to my wife, Ginette, and to my children, including my eldest, Geneviève, who is celebrating her birthday today.

It is always a pleasure to rise in this House. I want to thank the people of Beauce for giving me the privilege of representing them here. It has been over four years already.

Tonight's subject is very simple. As previous speakers so expertly explained, Bill C-234, which was passed by a majority of members of this House, was sent to the Senate and returned to us with an amendment that effectively gutted it.

For farmers—I was a farmer for over 50 years, which dates me somewhat, but I wanted to mention it anyway—heating farm buildings is very important. Just last weekend, I was speaking with some old acquaintances in the pork industry about how barn heating is a major issue, especially in my region. We all know what happened last year in Beauce. In December 2023, the Olymel pork processing plant closed down, putting 992 people out of work. There are very serious consequences.

Independent pork and chicken farmers back home are strongly impacted by everything related to Bill C-234 and the barn heating

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exemption. My Bloc Québécois colleagues will say that I am wrong, but I would suggest that they go talk to pork, chicken and egg farmers in their ridings and see for themselves that there is actually a tax charged on their bills. This tax is for heating their buildings with propane. Quebec does not produce any propane; it has to come from outside the province. This has consequences for people.

Under this Liberal government, production costs have skyrocketed because of the infamous carbon tax that we have been talking about for months. Members opposite do not seem to grasp the consequences that this can have for agriculture and particularly for farmers. Farmers are having a really hard time making ends meet. They are struggling with supply chains. Everything costs more. We can talk about input costs, including the tax on fertilizers that was introduced just over a year and a half ago and that affects every farmer. Their burden keeps growing all the time.

I find it hard to understand how people here in the House can fail to see that farmers feed us. They are not out to destroy the planet. I was a farmer by trade. I was a fourth-generation farmer. Right now, the fifth generation is running the family farm. When I think back on my grandfather and my great-grandfather, I am sure that they were not farming because they wanted to destroy the planet. They farmed to produce food and feed a growing population. We have fewer and fewer farmers. Maybe it is high time that this Parliament thought long and hard about its actions and provided a lot more support to our farmers.

Farmers have to cope with factors beyond their control. In this case, however, we do have some control over taxes. All we are asking for is an exemption from the carbon tax for the propane and natural gas used to heat buildings. We are talking about heating buildings, but we are also talking about greenhouses, which also use propane gas. We are talking about vegetables, pork and chicken, things we eat on a very regular basis. Just today, I was looking at the lunch menu. Chicken is on a lot of menus.

● (1930)

With that in mind, it is really important that we think about supporting our farmers. They feed the planet, and Canada first and foremost. As I have said many times in committee, agriculture is a very important economic driver, but unfortunately, it is underestimated and overlooked on a regular basis. We should make the most of the wealth that Canada can contribute through its agriculture and diversity. From Atlantic Canada, Quebec and Ontario to the western provinces and British Columbia, every farm makes an important contribution to our food supply.

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I am also saddened to see a significant increase in input costs, as I mentioned earlier. In my region, Beauce, food bank use has increased by over 30% in the last six months. Is this acceptable? Of course not. If we want to support our citizens, we have to provide them with affordable food. One of the quickest ways to make prices more affordable is to help producers, our farmers who produce this food. That is really important.

I would like to send a very clear message to all my colleagues in the House of Commons. Yes, the Senate sent us an amendment. What we are asking the House to do, given that Bill C-234 was previously passed, is to return to the full version, which includes heating for buildings, greenhouses and grain drying.

This is what I am asking of my colleagues, and I implore them to grant my request. I urged farmers from across Canada to contact their MPs to really make them aware of the importance of restoring this bill to its original form, with the provision removing the carbon tax from heating and grain drying.

This bill also included a review in eight years' time. The amendment reduces that to three years. At present, there is no alternative after the changes have been made. We will still have to debate it in the House three years from now. Let us at least restore this bill to its original form and suspend the tax on propane and natural gas for at least the next eight years.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support Canadian agriculture. We just celebrated agriculture day, which shows how important it is. We could take care of this very easily here in the House by voting for the amendment proposed by my colleagues so that we can pass Bill C-234 in its original form as soon as possible, because we experience groundhog day on a regular basis. We send Bill C-234 to the Senate, we think it will be passed, but it comes back to the House with more than half of its capacity cut out, and they think that is going to help our agriculture industry.

In closing, I urge my colleagues from all parties to think about agriculture and our farmers who work hard every day.

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

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago I rose to press the Prime Minister on placing an embargo on military exports to Israel, and tonight I rise again, as the situation has only become more dire.

Let me restate where we are. Since October 7, over 28,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza, including at least 10,000 children. As the siege has continued, back in January the International Court of Justice published a decision calling on the state of Israel to take

six steps to prevent genocide in its siege on Gaza. Canada is a signatory to the genocide convention, so we are bound by this ICJ decision. In the meantime, Canada has continued to export military equipment to the state of Israel.

When I first asked the question, I shared that in the most recent year we have records for, 2022, Canada permitted sales of more than \$20 million of military equipment to Israel, which followed a record high of \$26 million in 2021. In the time since, an access to information and privacy request by The Maple to Global Affairs has revealed that the government authorized at least \$28.5 million of new permits for military exports to Israel during the first two months of this siege on Gaza.

Various ministers have denied in the media that this is the case, so I wonder if it might be the wording they are speaking about. As an example, Israel has used F-35 fighter jets in its bombing of Gaza, and Project Ploughshares, on January 18, warned that some Canadian-made military components, including those found in F-35s, are first shipped to the U.S. and then ultimately supplied to the Israeli military. They are destined for Israel all the same, even if it is through other countries.

Now, we have our own laws that forbid these permits. Section 7.3 of our own Export and Import Permits Act forbids these sales if there is a substantial risk they could be used to violate international humanitarian or human rights law, or for serious acts of violence against women and children.

In light of this, last month a coalition of legal advocates warned that it may bring a legal challenge against the federal government if it fails to halt military sales to Israel. Last week, a coalition of civil society organizations, including Human Rights Watch, Independent Jewish Voices Canada, Mennonite Central Committee Canada and The United Church of Canada, called on the government to stop military exports to Israel, warning, "There is substantial concern that some of these weapons could be enabling Israel's operation in Gaza."

As we speak tonight, Netanyahu has vowed an offensive in Rafah, the last refuge for displaced Palestinians in southern Gaza. A WHO representative for Gaza and the West Bank said an assault on Rafah would be "an unfathomable catastrophe...and would even further expand the humanitarian disaster beyond imagination".

In the midst of all this, Canada must be clear. Greens have called for the government to unequivocally call for a lasting ceasefire, for a release of all hostages, for funding to be renewed to UNRWA and for an end to all permitting of military equipment destined for Israel.

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I ask again tonight, at a time when we know Canada has permitted more than \$28 million of military equipment destined for Israel in recent months, when the ICJ has ordered Israel to take steps to prevent genocide and when our own laws forbids these sales if the equipment could be used to break international law, will the government put in place an embargo on military exports destined for Israel?

• (1935)

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the violence must stop. We share an immense grief for the tragic loss of civilian life. The horrific attacks by Hamas against Israeli civilians still shock us all. Canada unequivocally condemns its terrorist actions.

What has been happening in Gaza is absolutely dire. The images we are now seeing from Rafah are deeply concerning, and a military operation in Rafah is devastating for Palestinian civilians, as well as foreign nationals, who are seeking refuge. They have nowhere else to go and, as the minister has said, asking them to move again is unacceptable. We have also said that the price of defeating Hamas cannot be the continued suffering of all Palestinian civilians.

We continue to support the urgent efforts for a sustainable ceasefire. This cannot be one-sided. Hamas must release all hostages and lay down its arms, and humanitarian access must urgently be increased and sustained. I also want to reassure all Canadians that we are in regular and close contact with our allies and partners in the region, including Israel, Egypt and Qatar. In fact, today Canada welcomes His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan. During the visit, peace and security in the Middle East will be an important topic of discussion, including the urgent delivery of rapid, unimpeded humanitarian relief for civilians in Gaza, support for a sustainable ceasefire and the path toward lasting peace in the region.

Canada continues to believe in a two-state solution where Israelis and Palestinians can live side by side in peace and security. When it comes to the ICJ, Canada was a founding voice, and it remains a strong proponent of the court's independence. We support its critical role in the peaceful settlement of disputes and its work in upholding the international rules-based order. Orders of the ICJ are binding on all parties, and they must comply with them. It is for the ICJ to make the final decision on the case, and we continue to follow the case very closely.

As for export permits to Israel, it is important to understand what we are talking about here. There is a wide range of items that require an export permit. These include items such as telecom equipment, decontamination equipment, protective equipment and imaging equipment, military parts and components. There is also a wide range of end-users, including academic institutions and small businesses.

When we look at permits for export to Israel in particular, in recent years, our government has not received and, therefore, has not approved any export permits for weapons: no permits for bombs, rockets, missiles or explosive devices. The permits issued since October 7 and, in fact, all permits that are currently open are for non-

lethal equipment. I will reiterate that there are no current permits to export weapons or ammunition.

Canada has a very robust export control system. We are a state party to the UN Arms Trade Treaty and take that responsibility very seriously. The government has been consistent and diligent in the way decisions have been made on export permits, and we will continue to be. That policy has not changed.

• (1940)

Mr. Mike Morrice: Mr. Speaker, as the parliamentary secretary knows, there is no agreed-upon definition of the term “non-lethal equipment”. However, I can share what Global Affairs shared with The Maple on its ATIP request during the first two months of the war in Gaza. GAC issued permits worth a total of \$18.4 million that covered military items categorized as electronic equipment, \$9.2 million more for aircraft, lighter-than-air aircraft. The list goes on and on.

If we can have a reasonable conversation to be clear that these are the permits that GAC has made clear have been issued, if that is the case, and it is the case, in light of the ICJ decision, in light of our own Export and Import Permits Act, when will the Liberal government, along with other important calls that it has made, as has been shared this evening, end all permits for military equipment to the State of Israel?

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, maintaining international peace and security are priority objectives of Canada's foreign policy. Civilians must be protected, and international law must be respected. Canada has one of the most rigorous export control systems in the world, and it is harmonized with those of our allies and partners.

When we look at permits for Israel in particular, let us be clear. In recent years, our government has not received and, therefore, not approved any export permits for weapons. The permits issued since October 7 and, in fact, all permits that are currently open are for non-lethal weapons.

I will repeat our calls for a sustainable ceasefire, for more aid to get into Gaza and for all hostages to be released. We remain committed to a two-state solution, with a Palestinian state living side by side with Israel. We firmly stand with the Israeli and Palestinian people in their right to live in peace, security, dignity and without fear.

Adjournment Proceedings

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the environment minister stated that the Liberal government does not measure the annual emissions directly reduced by the carbon tax. Then the minister said that the government does measure this. It cannot be both. How many emissions were directly reduced by the carbon tax in 2023? That is, not the projection, not the estimate, but just the result.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that climate change is an urgent threat that requires significant, decisive action. In recent years, climate change has had unprecedented effects on Canadians and people globally. Impacts from climate change are wide-ranging, affecting our homes, cost of living, infrastructure, health and safety, and economic activity in communities across Canada and around the world.

The federal approach to carbon pricing is designed with affordability in mind. We know it is not enough to create a cleaner economy; we have to make sure Canadians can afford it. Where federal fuel charge proceeds are returned directly to households, eight out of 10 families actually get more back through the Canada carbon rebate than they pay, meaning that this system is helping with the cost of living for a majority of Canadian families.

Let us not be nearsighted. Climate change is a global challenge, and the costs of inaction are high. As the IPCC made clear last year, climate change is an urgent threat that requires significant, decisive actions. Canadians want climate action, and the government owes it to them to be responsible and use policies that we know are the most efficient and cost-effective. Our approach ensures that Canadians are well placed to benefit from the opportunities created by the global transition under way.

• (1945)

Mr. Dan Mazier: Mr. Speaker, the government did not answer my question. I am not asking about projections. I did not mention anything about percentages. I am not asking about estimates. The parliamentary secretary totally did not even answer my question. I am asking about results. My question is very simple: How many emissions were reduced directly from the carbon tax in 2023?

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, carbon pricing is an effective and essential part of any serious response to the global challenge of climate change. Carbon pricing works by putting a cost on the thing we do not want, which is greenhouse gas emissions, and adding value to the things we do want: clean air; reliable, affordable, clean energy; and sustainable jobs.

The federal approach to pricing carbon pollution is designed with a focus on affordability. Its goal is to reduce pollution, not raise revenues. Our approach puts money back in the pockets of Canadians. In fact, eight out of 10 households get back more in the Canada carbon rebate payments than they pay as a result of the federal carbon pricing system. This has been confirmed repeatedly in independent studies, including by the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

Evidence confirms that putting a price on carbon works. It spurs clean growth, supports jobs and cuts the pollution causing climate change.

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when I asked the question of the Prime Minister in November, it was very specific to the impact the carbon tax is having on the price of food.

The parliamentary secretary just let something slip that runs completely contrary to the narrative the Liberals propagate on a daily basis and even the announcement they made today with their so-called carbon tax rebrand, which is this: She said that it is a feature of the carbon tax to raise prices on the things the government does not want. What does that translate to? It translates to higher costs for Canadians to be able to afford such things as groceries and other essentials at the grocery store. This relates to higher costs on the transportation of the goods we need, which are essential to our economy. It translates to higher costs for farmers and producers. The problem with the Liberal narrative on the carbon tax is that it is doing what it was designed to do, which is to raise prices; however, it does not lower emissions. That has been proven very clearly.

Earlier today, I referred to a tragic example I had heard of a food bank in Flagstaff County. Lynn sent me an email. I know Lynn, and I appreciate her community volunteerism and activism. She talked about how food bank clients are lying about where they live and how many people are in their home. Why would this happen? One would think that lying is a bad thing, but they are lying out of desperation, because they are hungry. In this small-town food bank in a rural county in Alberta, because of the price of food, there are Canadians who are forced into a position where they are lying. They know that it could mean that they would be banned from the very food bank they need. It is a tragic consequence of the policies of the member, the ministers and the Prime Minister. Of course, we should not leave out of the conversation the lackeys in the NDP who are propping up the corruption, the high prices, the inflation and the carbon tax.

There is a part of this conversation in addition to higher prices being a feature, not a flaw, of the carbon tax: the fact that emissions are not a part of the conversation, even though they claim, time and time again, it is, when their own numbers say that it is not. It is this: How high is it going to go?

Adjournment Proceedings

In 2015, the Liberals, the Prime Minister and many of those who were elected, ran on a platform promising that the price of the carbon tax would never be more than \$50 a tonne. They said that was the maximum; it would never be any higher, and we could take that to the bank. That ended up to be the furthest thing from the truth. It was revealed not four years later that their actual plan was \$170 a tonne, and they covered it up. They were not honest with Canadians.

Here is the very clear question I would ask in a follow-up to the cost of living crisis that so many Canadians are facing. For more than half of Canadians, the indirect and direct costs of the carbon tax are leaving them with less money in their pockets, because the government is taking it away from them. I hope the parliamentary secretary listens and responds directly: Will the government follow the direction of certain international entities and activists that are calling on it to raise the carbon tax even higher? We hear that it could be as high as \$1,000 a tonne.

Do the Liberals plan for that carbon tax to go higher, which will raise the cost on everything? I would like a clear answer, please.

● (1950)

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the hon. member does not understand how a price on pollution works or why it is necessary.

Canadians expect their elected representatives to pursue tangible solutions to address issues like affordability and climate change. In the past year alone, Canadians have endured severe climate-related events, including wildfires, droughts, heavy snowfall, torrential rain and tornadoes, marking some of the worst in our nation's history. These severe climate events are having a direct impact on food prices. Climate action is an economic necessity, and the government has a plan.

We know that a price on pollution is the most effective and least costly way of reducing greenhouse gas emissions while putting money back into the pockets of most Canadians. In provinces where the federal fuel charge applies, the proceeds generated from the price on pollution are returned to Canadians. In fact, eight out of 10 households in these provinces receive more money back through quarterly carbon rebates than they pay. For example, a family of four residing in Alberta can receive up to \$1,800.

Canadians are understandably worried as elevated global inflation and high interest rates continue to squeeze their finances. The economic environment has driven up the cost of far too many necessities, everything from housing to groceries. While Conservatives would have us think that carbon pricing is the main culprit, research from the University of Calgary reveals that the price on pollution adds less than a penny for every dollar spent on major expenses by Canadians.

The government is actively tackling affordability issues by introducing new measures to alleviate the financial strain on Canadians. In the fall economic statement, we unveiled a comprehensive plan

to bolster affordability and support Canadian households facing financial strain. The government has made significant amendments to the Competition Act, aimed at fostering greater competition within the grocery sector to lower costs and expand choices for Canadian consumers. The government is also cracking down on junk fees like international roaming charges and overdraft charges from banks that are costing Canadians. We are protecting homeowners with new mortgage relief measures.

The government is moving forward with meaningful actions to make life more affordable in this country, all while fighting climate change.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that I gave the member the opportunity to deny, very clearly, that their plan was to raise the carbon tax to \$1,000 a tonne. She refused to do so.

The Minister of the Environment, the criminal socialist activist who serves as environment minister of this country, has made it very clear that it is—

The Deputy Speaker: I will remind the hon. member that we cannot call someone a criminal; let us back that rhetoric up just a little bit.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, the formerly convicted activist, who faced criminal charges, has said, even the other day, that the government had decided not to build any more roads and that Canadians should simply take a walk. Here is my suggestion: I would hope that the member would support the many Canadians who have reached out to me from across the country, from coast to coast to coast, saying that the environment minister, the Prime Minister and the leader of the NDP are the ones who need to take a walk.

Maybe instead of rebranding the carbon tax that is driving up the price of everything, let us rebrand the prime minister of the country and elect the member for Carleton as prime minister, to bring common sense and to bring home a government that actually works for Canadians.

● (1955)

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, I was saying to someone just today that the ability to have respectful dialogue with each other and to disagree in an agreeable way is disappearing. I am really disappointed with the way the hon. member conducted himself during that rebuttal. It does not add to productive dialogue on issues, and it is unfortunate we cannot have conversations in a meaningful way.

It is really unfortunate that the Leader of the Opposition and his party do not have a plan to tackle climate change, and nor do they have any desire to have a respectful conversation on this issue or any other issue.

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 7:56 p.m.)

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