HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

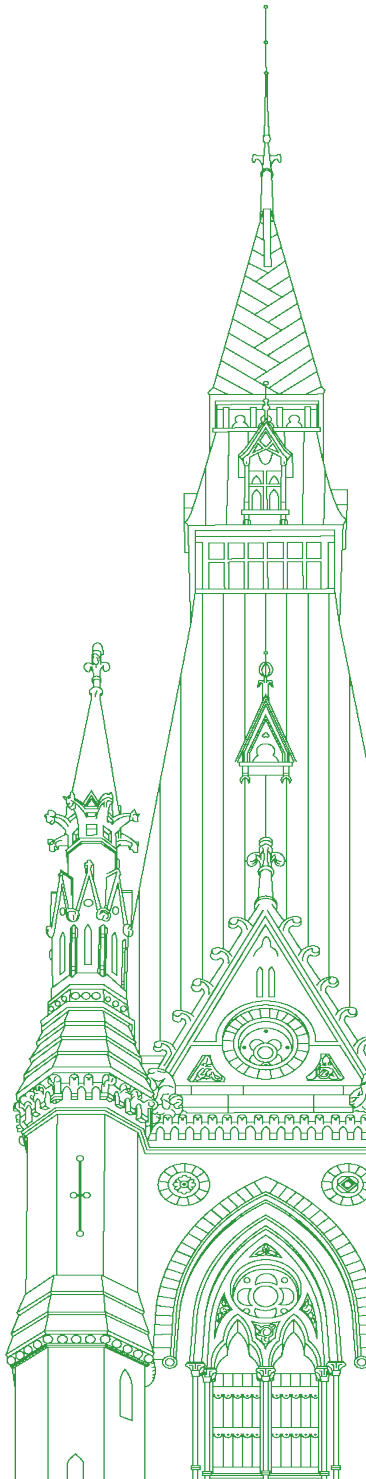
House of Commons Debates

Official Report

(Hansard)

Volume 151 No. 297

Wednesday, April 10, 2024



Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, April 10, 2024

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

● (1405)

[*English*]

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*]

GREEN BOWL FOODS

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, I visited Green Bowl Foods, a healthy, sustainably focused, trail-blazing company in Barrie, Ontario, that prepares plant-based ready-to-eat meals. The company is led by Max Jamshidian and Behnoush Maherani, two brilliant food scientists from my riding of Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill who share a passion for transforming our food landscape while caring for the planet.

Green Bowl Foods is paving the way for the future of sustainable diets while tackling major global problems, such as food waste. Their facility is equipped with a state-of-the-art, quality system, which was supported by a grant from our government, including revolutionizing thermal sterilization to enhance food preservation.

Tapping into the plant-based protein sector is a major economic growth opportunity for Canada, with an estimated contribution of $25 billion to our GDP by 2035. We have the plant-based protein supercluster, which has done a great job out west.

Congratulations to Green Bowl. I encourage everyone to look for their high-protein, high-fibre products online or in stores.

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JABER ALI ABOULTAIF

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a year ago, I was on an official visit to Scandinavia when my father died unexpectedly. It was not possible to return to Lebanon to mourn with my family.

My father taught me that humans are more alike than they are different. He taught me to respect those of different races and those who have different thoughts and viewpoints. It was not just words. That was the way he lived. He believed in bringing people together, not pushing them apart. He wanted to build people up, not tear them down. He taught me to put the needs of others first.

I remember his wisdom every day and try to follow his example. On the first anniversary of his death, I rise to remember and to pay tribute to Jaber Ali Aboultaif. He taught me compassion and service. Words of thanks do not seem to be enough.

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FIRST RESPONDERS TAX CREDIT

Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has over 90,000 volunteer firefighters, who put their lives on the line for us every day. We depend on them as the first line of defence in many types of emergencies; they provide essential fire and emergency services to our communities. Their dedication deserves our continued support.

This is why I advocated for an increase in the tax credits for volunteer firefighters and search and rescue volunteers in the 2024 federal budget. I am proud of today's announcement of the increased tax credit and added supports to recognize volunteer firefighters' commitment to public service.

With my colleagues, the parliamentary secretaries from Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne and Cambridge, we hosted a round table discussion with rural fire chiefs from Waterloo region to learn how we can best support those who keep us safe. Such supports include helping with recruitment and retention, helping with equipment costs, providing health and wellness supports and increasing tax credits for volunteers.

I will continue to advocate on their behalf as they continue to protect us all.

To our firefighters, I say thanks.

[*Translation*]

ORGANISATION QUÉBÉCOISE DES PERSONNES ATTEINTES DU CANCER

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for 40 years, the Organisation québécoise des personnes atteintes du cancer, or OQPAC, has been helping people in the Quebec City area and their loved ones cope with this terrible disease.

OQPAC is a welcoming place dedicated to supporting, listening to and providing emotional relief to people who are too often left to fend for themselves as they deal with cancer and the distress it causes. Very few organizations focus their activities and services on the specific needs of cancer patients and their loved ones. OQPAC does it magnificently.

In 2022 and 2023, OQPAC helped more than 3,000 people. Imagine how many people have received its help over the past 40 years through a range of activities and programs, as well as group and one-on-one therapy.

I would like to congratulate the dedicated members of the board of directors, the volunteers and executive director Francis Lemieux. Long live OQPAC.

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[*English*]

RWANDA

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we commemorate the 30th year since the genocide against the Tutsis in 1994, I reflect on the journey of reconciliation, which is a never-ending road. I cannot help but notice that those who have reconciled and live side by side did it because justice prevailed.

Today, on behalf of my constituents and survivors who are still grappling with what happened in April 1994, I ask for two things: one, that Canada, as a home to many survivors and families of survivors, designate the FDLR as a terrorist organization, as it continues to kill many Tutsis in the region, and two, that we commit to bringing the genocide participants to justice.

Roméo Dallaire recently pointed to the many who have made Canada their home and live free, without consequences. Last week, I saw first-hand how transformative it is when perpetrators ask for forgiveness and victims are able to provide it.

There is no healing for the many grieving hearts who relive the genocide over and over again every April. In addition, there is no justice if we leave room for denialism, revisionism and debates that perpetrate anti-Tutsi hate.

* * *

JIM FLAHERTY

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today marks the 10th anniversary of the passing of the late Jim Flaherty, former finance minister of Canada. At the time, the news of his passing was a shock to many colleagues in this place. Sometimes the stark recognition of our own mortality puts our minor differences in perspective.

His career was dedicated to public service. In fact, his favourite speech was entitled "Public service is good for you". In it, he challenged young people to enter careers in public service for its rewarding and fulfilling nature. Many of his accomplishments will withstand the test of time: the registered disability savings plan, the working income tax benefit, and the start of the ready, willing and able program.

While Jim would have strong opinions on the challenges facing the country today and the budget, I suspect what would matter most are the many accomplishments of Christine and the pride he would have in his three boys. Quinn recently welcomed a child, Galen will marry this summer, and John works at the Abilities Centre.

Let us remember Jim fondly and let us extol the virtues of public service and encourage others to rise to the challenge to serve the public good.

* * *

● (1410)

ANNE INNIS DAGG

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Dr. Anne Innis Dagg, the woman who loved giraffes, was a pioneering zoologist, groundbreaking biologist, animal rights activist, feminist and professor. She earned worldwide recognition for her studies of giraffes in the wild in 1956, wrote the bible of giraffes still used by scientists to this day and authored dozens of articles and books, on giraffes of course, as well as on gender equality in academia. Anne was appointed to the Order of Canada by the Governor General in 2019, and I do not have the time to list off her many well-earned awards and honours.

On a personal note, let me say that she was also very kind with her time. If people have not seen Ali Reid's documentary about Anne, *The Woman Who Loves Giraffes*, they should. Anne took the time to join us and patiently answer questions at a screening of the film some five years ago. She left an impression on all of us that night, just as she now leaves a legacy for all of us in the Anne Innis Dagg Foundation, which is dedicated to promoting the harmonious coexistence of humans and wildlife and is built on Anne's belief that we should treat people, animals and their surroundings with the same respect.

ORAL HEALTH MONTH

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that April is Oral Health Month, featuring National Dental Hygienists Week from April 4 to April 10. This annual event is sponsored by the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association and focuses on the importance of maintaining good oral health practices and helping Canadians understand the role of the dental hygiene profession in preventing and addressing oral health issues. Over 31,000 dental hygienists nationwide celebrate this week under the theme "Oral Health for Total Health", highlighting that taking care of our mouths, teeth and gums has a positive impact on other aspects of our lives.

As the federal government rolls out the new Canadian dental care plan, which has a focus on preventative care, dental hygienists will play a front and centre role to help improve oral health outcomes for all Canadians. This April, let us help everyone in Canada learn about oral health for total health.

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FINANCE

Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has added more to the national debt than all previous prime ministers combined. The costly coalition's out-of-control spending has resulted in Canada spending $46 billion just to service its debt. That is more money than the federal government sends to the provinces for health care. The deficits are fuelling inflation and have driven up interest rates.

It is not just Conservatives pointing this out. Both the Bank of Canada and former Liberal finance minister John Manley told the Prime Minister that he was pressing on the inflationary gas pedal. Now, a leading economist says interest rate cuts may be delayed because of high government spending.

However, Conservatives have a plan to fix the budget. In next week's budget, the Liberals need to cap the spending with a dollar-for-dollar rule to bring down interest rates and inflation. They must find a dollar in savings for every new dollar in spending. It is just common sense. My three-month-old daughter Maeve and her generation should not be shackled to paying the bill for the costly coalition's reckless spending.

* * *

TAIWAN

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I stand in the House today with a heavy heart as we mourn for those affected by one of the worst earthquakes to strike Taiwan in the last 25 years, with at least 16 dead and more than 1,000 people injured. Many homes and businesses have been destroyed, and communities have been shattered.

In the face of this tragedy, we witness the remarkable resilience of the Taiwanese people. As we extend our thoughts and prayers to those affected, let us also recognize the unwavering determination of the Taiwanese people. It is important to acknowledge that Taiwan has been an ally to so many nations in their times of need. Its generosity and compassion have touched lives around the world.

Now it is our turn to offer our unwavering support to the people of Taiwan. In this time of devastation, Canada extends our hand in friendship and assistance to Taiwan as it recovers from this earthquake.

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NORTHERN ECONOMY

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, northern Canadians cannot afford the Prime Minister anymore. Housing starts are at historic lows, according to a recent RBC report, and the trend is only going to get worse under the NDP-Liberals.

Nunavut is deep in this housing crisis, with over 3,000 homes desperately needed, and the number is climbing, with little being done by the Prime Minister. The NDP-Liberal Prime Minister has no plan to fix the housing crisis, according to his own housing department CEO. Making life far worse is the Liberal carbon tax being applied to farmers. A package of hotdogs in Nunavut is $19. One gallon of ice cream is $29, and one kilogram of bacon is $42.

Canadians are tired of being told they are better off under the Prime Minister, because it simply is not true. When will the Prime Minister make life better in the north, axe the tax on farmers and build the homes?

* * *

● (1415)

HOUSING

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Liberal-NDP Prime Minister, Canadians require 64% of their pre-tax income to afford housing, if they can even find housing. Michelle from Kawartha Lakes found work in Toronto but is couch surfing because she, like nine in 10 Canadians in this country, believes she will never own a home.

We are a G7 country, and it costs over $1,900 for a one-bedroom apartment. Rent has doubled. Mortgage defaults are on the rise. Housing starts are down. Tent cities across this country look like scenes from the Great Depression, and the Prime Minister has the audacity to say that he is doing a great job. He is a failure. His solution is to increase the carbon tax by 23%, which will drive up housing prices even more.

Canadians know better, and so do Conservatives. We will incentivize municipalities to build houses people can afford, and we will axe the tax to make the materials needed to build houses affordably. We will bring it home.

BESSBOROUGH SCHOOL ANNIVERSARY

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I congratulate the community at Bessborough Drive Elementary and Middle School on its 100th anniversary. With its opening in December 1923, Bessborough became the first public school in Leaside, and even served as the community's town hall.

For a century, Bessborough public school has been a place of academic excellence, committed to nurturing the minds of generations past, present and future. Through my regular conversations with students, parents and faculty, it is abundantly clear that Bessborough is more than an institution. It holds a special place in the hearts of many, with a legacy of familial ties spanning generations, from grandparents and parents to today's students, all proudly waving the Bessborough flag.

On this great occasion, I extend my deep appreciation to the dedicated faculty, volunteers and students who have contributed to the enduring legacy of Bessborough public school. May this milestone inspire continued excellence for generations to come.

* * *

NUNAVUT

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): [*Member spoke in Inuktitut, interpreted as follows*:]

Mr. Speaker, I do not always have celebratory statements in this place, but although many people are still struggling, there are some things worth sharing.

Nunavut reached a milestone because Tagak Curley's vision became a reality. I thank him for retaining Inuit laws, values and principles taught to him by our ancestors. I thank him for helping to modernize Inuit society by leading the way for Inuit to govern.

Through his vision, community negotiators worked with elders and community members on what terms to include in what would later become the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. I thank the community negotiators.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FRENCH INTEGRATION INITIATIVE

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, to promote the French language in Quebec, we need to share it with all new Quebeckers, but, of course, learning our national language takes time. That is why I want to talk about an inspiring initiative that is being taken by the Provigo in Boucherville. The grocery store gave all of its new employees who are learning French a button that says "I am learning French. Thank you for speaking slowly". What an extraordinary way to encourage employees as they learn and to encourage customers to take part in this learning process by being understanding, patient and kind.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I want to thank the owner of Provigo, Mona Turbide, and the person in charge of the French language training, Martine Coulombe. I also want to commend the workers who are learning French for their perseverance. I hope that this initiative will snowball and be implemented all over Quebec.

● (1420)

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadian families and business owners are paying the price with an NDP-Liberal government that is addicted to debt and deficits. Record-high deficits and carbon taxes driving up inflation are increasing the costs on everything, including the necessities of life. Interest rate increases fuelled by NDP-Liberal spending and increased debt are punishing Canadian families and business owners. We are just now starting to see the full impact that increases on mortgage rates are having on mortgage renewals, and it is a crisis.

No prime minister has added more to the national debt than the current Prime Minister. Through it all, he has been aided and abetted by his NDP coalition partners. Anyone who has any sense at all knows that one does not put more fuel on an already out-of-control debt-and-deficit fire. It is time for a return to fiscal common sense in this country that sees a government cap spending to bring down interest rates and inflation with a dollar-for-dollar rule that finds a dollar in savings for every new dollar spent.

Common-sense Conservatives will not support the budget unless it axes the tax, builds homes not photo ops, and caps spending.

* * *

SIKH HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, April is Sikh Heritage Month, and no matter where we go in Canada, we will find an immense amount of pride in Sikh heritage and its many contributions in every aspect of our society. It is a great pleasure for me to be able to stand in my place to recognize the month as a significant time for us to appreciate, love and better understand Sikhism and how it contributes to the very fabric of Canadian society.

I would encourage members to visit a gurdwara, talk to members of our Punjabi heritage community and get a better understanding of how Sikhism affects our Canadian heritage. It is something all of us should embrace no matter what our faith is, so let us encourage our constituents to get a better understanding of Sikhism.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*Translation*]

FINANCE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Prime Minister's incompetence is not worth the cost. His actions and overspending at the federal level have made a mess of inflation, interest rates, the military, immigration and the list goes on. Instead of cleaning up his own mess at the federal level, he is creating other problems with costly announcements and meddling in provincial jurisdictions.

Why is the Prime Minister imposing his incompetence on Quebec's jurisdictions?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is quite amusing to hear the word "incompetence" coming from the Conservative leader. When he was the minister responsible for housing, he created six affordable housing units across the country during his entire mandate.

A few weeks ago, he accused Quebec municipalities of being incompetent. On March 15, alongside Quebec City leadership, we announced 324 affordable housing units.

Who is incompetent, the Conservative leader with his six units or Quebec municipalities with hundreds of affordable housing units?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when I was minister, the cost of housing was half of what it is today, and hundreds of thousands of housing units were being built with low interest rates. Today we learned that the Bank of Canada will not be lowering interest rates. Why is that? The Bank of Canada Governor said that if the government spends too much, the bank will be forced to keep interest rates high, which will force people into bankruptcy.

Will the Prime Minister accept my common-sense plan to fix the budget with a dollar-for-dollar rule to bring down interest rates?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative leader spoke a moment ago about the Government of Quebec. I was speaking about the municipalities. With the leadership of the Quebec government, we signed an agreement to build 8,000 affordable housing units in the coming months. During his term as minister responsible for housing, the Conservative leader created six affordable housing units, and yet he called Quebec's municipalities, including Quebec City, incompetent.

When will he agree to come with me and meet Quebec City municipal officials to apologize in person?

● (1425)

[*English*]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will never apologize for keeping housing costs low when I was the minister of housing, but if someone was hoping for some interest rate relief today, as a mortgage holder or as someone with a small business loan or a line of credit, they got some bad news: The Prime Minister is not worth the cost. Rates are staying high long because, as the Governor of the Bank of Canada said, if government spending grows, then interest rates will have to stay high to combat the resulting inflation.

Why will the Prime Minister not accept my common-sense plan to fix the budget with a dollar-for-dollar law to bring down rates?

Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is possible to be prudent fiscally and have strong social programs as well. That is exactly what the government does with its AAA credit rating, the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7 and historically low unemployment.

At the same time, we have a national school food program on the table of $1 billion and supports for child care and early learning, as well as for renters and homeowners. That is what we do on this side of the House. Every day is a great day to fight for Canadians.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every day is not a great day when someone is living in a tent city or has had their mortgage double, or when they are part of a family for whom one in four children cannot get enough food, and the Liberals put forward a food program that does not have any food.

Instead, what they have done is doubled the national debt and driven up interest rates. Today we learned that the Bank of Canada is unable to bring rates down because the Prime Minister continues to make massive multi-billion-dollar inflationary spending.

Why will the Prime Minister not follow my common-sense plan to bring down the deficit and the rates?

Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, wages are growing faster than inflation. Under the Conservatives, poverty was at 14.5%. When we replaced the Conservatives, we brought it down to 7.4%. We will continue to invest in Canadians with the supports for affordable housing, for renters and for early learning and child care, and because of our work, we will make life fairer for Canadians, unlike the Conservative leader, who is here for himself.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are finding out today from the Bank of Canada that the Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

In September, the bank governor said that if government spending were to grow, then interest rates would have to stay high. That was echoed by the former bank governor and incoming Liberal leader, Mark Carney, who indicated that he does not expect rates to fall quickly, and that it is partly because of a lack of fiscal discipline.

If the Prime Minister will not listen to me, why will he not listen to his successor and understand that he is not worth the cost of high interest rates?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. Minister for Innovation.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Conservatives will listen this time, because Canadians are watching at home.

We will take no lessons from the Conservatives. On this side of the House, we have a plan to build more houses. We have a plan to build more prosperity in this country. We have a plan to create more jobs. On the other side, they have slogans. Canadians are smart. They understand that slogans do not build homes. They understand that slogans do not create jobs. They understand that slogans do not create prosperity.

Every day is a good day to fight for Canadians, and that is what we are going to do.

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● (1430)

[*Translation*]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for the past three weeks the Prime Minister has made pre-budget announcements in Quebec's areas of jurisdiction, but not today. No, today, he is at the Foreign Interference Commission. That means he does not have time for domestic interference. Health, schools, housing, dental care, early childhood centres, it is not the Bloc Québécois that fancies itself as the Government of Quebec, it is the Liberals.

Ottawa may well have the money, but Quebec has the expertise. If the Liberals want to help in an area under Quebec's jurisdiction, they should increase the transfers. What are they waiting for?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the time is always right to talk about the impact of federal investment for Quebeckers.

Let us start with child care services. A $6-billion investment over four years is helping give families, and women in particular, 35,000 new child care spaces. Naturally, this is helping boost family income and reduce poverty, while contributing to gender equality and childhood development—without interfering in anyone's jurisdictions.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government is treating us to a veritable budget striptease, one item at a time.

The way things are going, we will be having a five-minute lockup on April 16. There will be nothing left to announce. What will be left to spend after using billions of dollars to infringe upon Quebec's jurisdiction? What I know for sure is that competence is not a jurisdiction of the Liberal government: Phoenix, passports, ArriveCAN, processing of asylum seekers. Nevertheless, that is no reason to trample upon Quebec's jurisdiction.

Could it kindly transfer instead of encroach?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am so happy to answer a second question and give a second example of how we are working very well together.

On the question of housing, two times $900 million equals $1.8 billion. This agreement, which we signed just a few weeks ago, will allow us to build the largest number of affordable housing units ever built in the history of the province of Quebec. This will greatly benefit Quebeckers, especially lower-income residents.

* * *

[*English*]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Assembly of First Nations made it clear that this government is letting down indigenous people. Right now, the indigenous funding gap in infrastructure has risen to an astronomical $350 billion. That is not just a number on paper. It means that indigenous people are living in mouldy homes. It means that indigenous people do not have access to clean drinking water.

Why did the Liberal government turn its back on indigenous people?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for decades and decades, Canada has underinvested in indigenous communities, and the Liberal government is putting a stop to that. We have increased funding for housing on first nations by 1,100%. While we know there is a long way to go, I want to thank the AFN for co-writing this report with us. It is very important to understand the size of the gap so that we can work even more quickly to close it together.

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PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is not just indigenous people the government is letting down, but also Canadians living with disabilities. Right now, Canadians living with disabilities are disproportionately living in poverty. According to Angus Reid, 90% of Canadians support a Canadian disability benefit, but the Liberal government continues to delay the implementation of this benefit, and the Conservatives voted against it.

Why is the Liberal government continuing to delay? Enough is enough. When will people get their cheques? When will people actually get the benefit?

Hon. Kamal Khera (Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows extremely well that the Canada disability benefit is another concrete step to reduce poverty and to support Canadians who need it the most. This is our top priority. We are on track to deliver the benefit.

In the spirit of nothing without us, I want to take this opportunity to thank the disability community for their relentless advocacy and for the work they have been doing.

We will get it right and we will get it out for Canadians living with disabilities.

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CARBON PRICING

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Tina from Orangeville just sent me a photo from the Orangeville Food Bank. There is no juice. There is no cereal. There are almost no diapers. That is because the people who used to donate food are now lined up for food. This is actually Canada after eight years of the corrupt, incompetent NDP-Liberal government.

Will the Prime Minister finally show he has even a modicum of compassion for Canadians and pass Conservative Bill C-234 to take all carbon taxes off all farmers, so that Canadians can once again afford food?

● (1435)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important for this country to address the climate crisis that is facing us, and certainly Canadians understand that. There are significant costs that we are facing, including issues around wildfires as we move forward, if we do not address climate change. However, it is also important that we do that in a manner that is affordable.

Eight out of 10 Canadians get more money back from the carbon rebate than they pay in the price on pollution. If that is taken away, as the Leader of the Opposition would like to do, that would actually be attacking the poorest members in our society. Shame on them.

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these are the great Liberal lies: the budget will balance itself, and the rebate cheque is larger than the cost of the carbon tax. Everyone knows that is not actually what has happened. Do you know who else has joined the carbon tax revolt? Six premiers in this country from Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta, who are calling for a carbon tax summit.

Will the out-of-touch Prime Minister actually call this conference, the carbon tax summit, or is he too busy hiding because he called the premiers liars?

The Speaker: I would like to remind colleagues from all sides of the House that we must be very careful about using the word “lies”. Although it was not directed at an individual, it is really important that we not use language that can disturb the affairs of the House.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we actually believe in facts, and we believe in science. The hon. member made statements that actually have zero bases in facts. Two hundred economists in this country signed a letter two weeks ago, which said that eight out of 10 Canadians get more money back. The Parliamentary Budget Officer said that eight out of 10 Canadians get money back. They can make up all the things they want to, but the facts are on our side. It is an issue that addresses affordability for Canadians, particularly those on modest incomes. It is a plan to address climate change.

Those reckless, irresponsible Conservatives on the other side of the House should be ashamed.

The Speaker: Again, I would remind members to please stay away from language that is getting closer to being unparliamentary.

The hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, many Canadians can no longer afford to feed their families. Last year, two million Canadians visited food banks in a single month alone, but instead of bringing down the cost of food, the Prime Minister increased the carbon tax on groceries by 23% on April 1. Clearly, the Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

Instead of making things worse, will the Prime Minister finally cut the cost of food by adopting Conservative Bill C-234 to take all carbon taxes off farmers in next week's budget?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important that we talk in the House about all the supports we are providing to farmers and the agricultural community in the context of our fight against climate change. However, I would also point out that Conservative senators threatened female senators on amendments on this bill. This is a Conservative private member's bill that they can prioritize at any moment and that they can bring to a vote in the House. It is up to them. Bill C-234's fate is decided on the Conservative side of the House.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government is completely out of touch with ordinary Canadians who cannot feed their families with phony Liberal photo ops. Canadians are already lining up at the food banks in record numbers. Increasing the carbon tax on farmers and food is only making things worse. Seventy per cent of Canadians want the government to axe the tax, and half a dozen premiers are demanding an emergency meeting on the carbon tax crisis.

Will the Prime Minister stop hiding, hold a carbon tax conference with the premiers and listen to their plans to axe the tax?

● (1440)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again I would implore the Conservatives in opposition to actually use facts when they make statements. Two hundred economists in this country have validated the fact that the carbon price is the most efficient way to reduce emissions and is done in a manner that is affordable.

When Premier Moe was before the committee a couple of weeks ago, journalists actually called the statements he was making, which were the same as what this fellow is making, a "parade of nonsense" and "completely dishonest". I totally agree.

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[*Translation*]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this Prime Minister, rents have doubled and the dream of home ownership for our young people is dead. Food banks are reporting record demand.

Everything he touches turns bad. He is ruining everything in Ottawa, and now he wants to impose his incompetence on Quebec with his centralizing pre-budget announcements. Does the Prime Minister understand that his meddling is simply making things worse for Quebeckers?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we are investing to build homes in Quebec.

For example, with the housing accelerator fund, we are concluding an agreement worth $1.8 billion with the province of Quebec to build 8,000 affordable housing units across the province. The Conservative Party opposes this investment. That is unbelievable.

We continue to invest in order to make things better and build more affordable housing as quickly as possible.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, how can you trust them?

When it comes to any federal responsibility, like border management, managing our military, ArriveCAN or employment insurance to name just a few, it is apparent that everything goes haywire with this government. Now he is adding insult to injury by encroaching on areas of Quebec jurisdiction.

Does the Prime Minister understand that he will just make the situation worse for Quebeckers and for all other Canadians?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague the Minister of Housing has already talked about the 8,000 affordable housing units that Quebec municipalities will build in the coming months and years.

We already know about the six affordable housing units that the Conservative leader built during his time as housing minister.

What my colleague may not know is that in his own riding, the Charles IV housing project alone has built 163 affordable housing units in the past few months, which is 25 times more than the number of affordable housing units his Conservative leader had built across the country during his entire mandate.

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DENTAL CARE

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the expression area of jurisdiction contains the word "jurisdiction".

When someone has a toothache, they do not call the hairdresser, any more than they would call the federal government. Federal dental coverage is not even available yet, and already everyone is furious with Ottawa. Seniors are furious because after being promised free care, they are going to have to foot the bill. Dentists are furious because Ottawa blames them. This is all because Ottawa, which knows absolutely nothing about this, promised free care without knowing how much it would cost.

Why not act like the tooth fairy and put the money under Quebec City's pillow?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely essential for everyone across the country, including Quebeckers, to be able to receive oral and dental care. That is our goal and that is what we are going to do.

I will definitely continue to work with the Government of Quebec in a spirit of co-operation. It is only the Bloc Québécois that is looking for problems and picking fights. Our government is looking for solutions that ensure that everyone can get the health care they need.

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the money Ottawa is spending on dental care could be used to improve Quebec's health insurance plan, or RAMQ. Quebec even said that that is what it wants to do. Instead, Ottawa is creating a bureaucratic duplication that is infuriating everyone before the program even gets off the ground.

As for housing, Ottawa could pay out the money now, but instead it is picking a constitutional fight until 2025. It has to be said, the federal government does not exactly have the Midas touch. Everything it touches turns into mud instead of gold. Why would we allow this government to interfere in our jurisdictions if every single time things take longer, are poorly done, cost more and are all wrong?

● (1445)

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the oral health care program is quite simple. Plan members receive a card that can be used at any dentist's office across the country. With this card, dentists can use the same system as any other type of insurance. People can receive services easily.

If Quebec wants to run the oral health program, that is no problem. We can work together. It is essential that services be available to Quebeckers immediately. That is our response.

* * *

[*English*]

CARBON PRICING

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Prime Minister, Canadians are struggling to put food on the table. Food banks received a record two million visits in a single month last year, and a million more Canadians are expected to visit food banks this year.

The carbon tax is driving up the cost of groceries and everything else. Struggling families are desperate for relief in next week's budget, so will the Prime Minister axe the carbon tax on farmers so the food prices can go down?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again the hon. member is saying things that are devoid of facts. What she is proposing would take money away from folks who live on modest incomes. Eight out of 10 families get more money back than they pay into the price on pollution, and it works directly inverse to income. It is those people who live on the most modest incomes who would be most impacted by their plan to cut the carbon rebate.

That would be reckless and irresponsible, and it would put at risk people who live in this country on modest incomes.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are painfully aware that the Prime Minister and his NDP-Liberal government are not worth the cost.

Last week's carbon tax hike is driving up the cost of gas, groceries and home heating. Families are struggling to put food on the table, and they cannot afford higher costs. Next week's budget must take the foot off the gas of rising grocery prices.

Once again, will the Prime Minister axe the tax on farmers and make food more affordable for Canadians?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to my hon. colleague across the House, who is from the great province of Saskatchewan, that she have a conversation with Dr. Brett Dolter at the University of Regina, who has said that eight out of 10 Canadian families get more money back, and it is those who live on modest incomes who do the best on a net-benefit basis.

It is an affordability program, but it is also a program to address the climate crisis that imperils the future of our children. That these folks have zero plan to address the issue and do not seem to care at all about it is reckless and irresponsible.

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FINANCE

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has a superpower: the ability to spend other people's money. However, I would like to remind him that it is not his money he is spending. It is the hard-earned dollars of Canadians. It is clear he has no respect for Canadians or their hard-earned dollars. He is just not worth the cost.

Will his government commit to a pay-as-you-go rule in the upcoming budget to help fix the financial disaster it has caused?

Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, an accurate representation of the facts would be the following: First of all, we have a AAA credit rating, which is done by an independent, objective observer of our economy. Second of all, with regard to expenditures, we on this side of the House invest in Canadians, especially in vulnerable Canadians, with $10-a-day child care, early childhood learning and education, and a national school program.

Meanwhile, they vote against. They vote against dental care. They vote against pharmacare. Every day is a great day to fight for Canadians, and that is exactly what we will do.

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● (1450)

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the Liberals deflect, deny and gaslight, common-sense Conservatives will remain laser-focused on the affordability crisis. Bill C-234 is back before the House and the Liberals have a chance to help Canadians by reducing food costs by reducing the burden on farmers, which would ultimately make everything more affordable. Will the Liberals finally give farmers and Canadians a break by reducing and eliminating the carbon tax on farmers?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-234 is a Conservative private member's bill that the party can elect to bring to the House for a vote at any time. I would invite the hon. member to talk to his House leadership, and we will get on with the vote for Bill C-234.

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[*Translation*]

GROCERY INDUSTRY

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, rents are expensive. Groceries are expensive. Everything is expensive. Quebeckers suffer while the CEOs of the big grocery stores line their pockets at their expense. Instead of making these fat cats pay their fair share, the Liberals are giving them a $60-billion gift. Who do we have to thank for this? That would be the Conservatives, who gave away this money, our money, when they were in power.

This is money that could be invested in social and affordable housing, in health or in fighting the climate crisis. No, the Liberals prefer to give it to rich CEOs.

Why do the Liberals continue to line the pockets of CEOs?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague will admit that we are investing precisely to help the most vulnerable Canadians across the country. We are also investing in child care and in housing.

Moreover, my colleague knows full well that the best way to stabilize grocery prices in this country is to have more competition. That is exactly what we have done with the biggest competition reform since the law was passed.

Everyone in the House wants to help Canadians. That is exactly what we are doing and what we will continue to do.

* * *

[*English*]

CHILD CARE

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' child care plan forgets child care workers, 96% of whom are women, and many are facing a burnout crisis. The recent Liberal announcement falls short of what experts are calling for. Childhood educators need better wages and working conditions to improve retention and recruitment. Meanwhile, the Conservatives are pushing privatized child care, which would hurt workers even more. When will the minister stop with the disrespect and deliver a workforce strategy that would allow workers to live in dignity?

Hon. Jenna Sudds (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her continued advocacy on behalf of early learning child care workers.

Our government continues to work with the provinces and territories, as evidenced most recently in our budget announcement, which includes loan forgiveness for early childhood educators who choose to work in rural and remote communities where we see the need for more educators and more child care spaces. We will continue to work on the workforce strategies with the provinces and territories to support this workforce.

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TOURISM INDUSTRY

Ms. Joanne Thompson (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tourism is one of the most important pillars of Atlantic Canada's economy. In my riding of St. John's East, the Bell Island Heritage Society's #2 Mine and Community Museum is a hidden gem. Recognized as a world-class destination, it is helping attract tourists to experience for themselves what our community has to offer. This, in turn, supports our local economy.

Could the minister for ACOA tell us what efforts are being made to help our booming tourism sector grow even more, specifically in Atlantic Canada?

Hon. Gudie Hutchings (Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, big things are happening on the east coast. In February, I was with the Minister of Tourism to announce the signing of the Atlantic Canada Agreement on Tourism. This $30-million agreement gives a major boost to more than 7,500 tourism businesses throughout Atlantic Canada. This support creates year-round opportunities, fuels innovative marketing, grows our indigenous product and brings more visitors to our beautiful corner of the world. With its breathtaking landscapes, delectable cuisine and renowned hospitality, our region has so much to offer, and we are pulling out all the stops. I ask members to put Atlantic Canada on their bucket lists this year.

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● (1455)

[*Translation*]

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, this Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

Now, thanks to $500 billion in debt and out-of-control government spending, here is the daily reality facing Canadians. The cost of rent has doubled, one child in four in Canada does not have enough to eat, and two million Canadians are turning to food banks. That is the Liberal record after eight years of this Prime Minister's management.

Because the Prime Minister keeps meddling in provincial jurisdictions, the lives of Quebeckers have become worse, and so have the lives of Canadians.

Will the Prime Minister stop interfering in provincial jurisdictions and stop ruining the lives of Canadians?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is quite right to talk about the cost of living and the high cost of living for middle-class and lower-income families.

What is surprising, however, is that the Conservatives oppose the Canada child benefit, which reduces child poverty by 50% every month. They oppose dental care for children, and now for seniors. They are against investing in child care, which, in Quebec, has proven so important for gender equality and poverty reduction.

Now they seem to oppose investments in housing, despite the fact that their Conservative leader was the minister a few years ago—although he was not very good at housing then, either.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the minister that we voted in favour of most of the things he mentioned.

However, what makes us and Canadians angry is that this government is not effective when it comes to looking after its own affairs. Whether we are talking about passports, the military, the border, immigration, the cost of living or controlling expenses, to name only a few, this government has failed to take action.

What is the government doing now? It is encroaching on provincial jurisdiction. That is none of its business. When it comes to its own affairs, it is not up to the task.

When will a minister in this government stand up and finally take full responsibility for federal jurisdiction rather than encroaching on provincial jurisdiction?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleague that in his own riding, some 12,000 families receive the Canada child benefit on the 20th of each month, which is one week from now. That is about $500 a month tax free per family. This reduces child poverty in his riding by 50%.

Unfortunately, one of the first things the Conservatives did in 2016 was vote against the Canada child benefit, which helps thousands and thousands of families and children in his own riding.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, this Prime Minister is just not worth the cost of his incompetence.

His inflationary policies have increased the cost of everything: rents have doubled, inflation is at a 40-year high, violent crime is making our streets more and more unsafe, and Quebeckers are getting less and less for their money.

After breaking just about everything in Ottawa, the Prime Minister has spent the last two weeks announcing that he now wants to impose his incompetence on Quebec's jurisdiction.

Can the Prime Minister mind his own business?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we are hearing is the party of inaction. According to the Conservatives, doing nothing is the answer.

Well, no, the people watching us at home know we need to invest in housing, we need to invest in day care, we need to invest in workers.

If my colleague from Quebec wants to talk about success, let us look at the biggest private investment in Quebec's history. We attracted Northvolt to make the biggest investment here.

From our side of the House, we believe that by investing, we ensure prosperity not only today, but for generations to come.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the minister often says, after eight years, those watching at home know very well that the Prime Minister is the only one responsible for the incompetence he has shown in his area of jurisdiction.

It is no wonder that Quebec does not want him underfoot. The Prime Minister wanted to interfere in housing and the price of rent doubled in Quebec. He wanted to interfere in the lives of middle-class people, and he shattered young families' dreams of home ownership and middle-class workers now have to rely on food banks. When the Prime Minister interferes, Quebeckers pay a heavy price.

Will the Prime Minister listen to common sense and put aside his plans to meddle even further in areas where he has clearly shown that he has no expertise?

● (1500)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives when it comes to expertise.

One thing is clear. Every time we have been there for Canadians, the Conservatives have voted against our measures. They are against investments in child care, housing and seniors. If we were to listen to the Conservatives, we would be saying no to pretty much everything.

No, in today's world, confident countries invest. We are investing in health, education and housing. Confident countries invest in their people. That is exactly what we are doing.

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HOUSING

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there are plenty of concrete measures we can take to address the housing crisis. In fact, I proposed 12 of them just this morning. I am willing to discuss them with the Liberals at any time, because the only measures they have proposed so far include imposing ill-conceived conditions on the provinces. If they do not meet those conditions, Ottawa will cut off funding.

The Prime Minister is basically telling any province that refuses to be blackmailed that if they want the government to respect their jurisdictions, they will have to make do without federal money. However, it is our money.

There are no concrete measures, only threats to the provinces and municipalities. Is that the Liberal plan? It sounds like a Conservative plan.

Hon. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted by my colleague's question because I have taken a close look at the infamous report he spoke about and worked on himself.

Several stakeholders are mentioned in his report. These stakeholders, including FRAPRU, spoke positively about housing rights and hailed the fact that we want to build more housing.

We are not here to write reports. We are here to build housing.

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the conditions set by Ottawa are not speeding up housing construction. They are slowing it down. Instead of getting the money out now, so that Quebec can get to work, the Liberals are picking a fight that will last until 2025.

The money they are holding back is meant for infrastructure, like water systems. However, that is only the first step, unless the Liberals want homes without drinking water built on vacant land. Imagine, we are no further ahead than installing running water. We have not even started talking about constructing buildings and already the federal government is slowing everyone down.

Why not just transfer the money now so that we can tackle the housing crisis now?

Hon. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to me, the dark blue or light blue rhetoric is all the same.

Honestly, a person cannot claim to want to help others and then turn around and vote against all the measures that we announced this week. Incidentally, the measure that my colleague just mentioned was part of last week's announcements.

We announced a fund specifically to support housing infrastructure. We announced a fund to protect renters' rights. We announced a fund to ensure the creation of an industrial catalogue to speed up construction.

On this side of the House, we do not write reports; we build houses.

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INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of Canada under the Liberals, one in four children is going hungry, housing costs have doubled, people are sleeping in tents, and food bank usage has become the norm.

The Prime Minister has failed in his own responsibilities, and we know that his inflationary spending is creating chaos. He has the nerve to lecture the provinces and impose his incompetence on them.

Will the Prime Minister listen to the Premier of Quebec, who is urging him to withdraw from our areas of jurisdiction and mind his own business?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to do so with the co-operation of Quebec municipalities, including the City of Lévis, and the Government of Quebec. There will be 8,000 affordable housing units in the coming months. This is the largest number of affordable housing units built by Quebeckers in one go in the history of the province of Quebec. That is because we are working in partnership with the Government of Quebec.

We talk about competence, but I think we have forgotten the person who is perhaps the least competent of the gang: the Conservative leader. He built six affordable housing units during his tenure as housing minister.

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[*English*]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, at the public inquiry, it was confirmed that CSIS briefed top Liberal officials that Beijing had interfered in the nomination on behalf of the member for Don Valley North. Today, The Globe and Mail was reporting that a top Liberal broke the law by leaking classified information that resulted in the member for Don Valley North being tipped off that he was being monitored by CSIS.

Who broke the law? What is the name of that top Liberal?

● (1505)

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in regard to the fact that, unfortunately, foreign interference is a problem that some foreign state actors have taken to try to undermine our democracy, it is not new. That is precisely why we have taken this matter so seriously. It is precisely why we have initiated a number of steps to strengthen our democracy. We have all agreed to the inquiry, and we want to allow that work to continue so Canadians have a full picture of the issues around foreign interference.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that non-answer is completely unacceptable. Enough of the cover-up. Only a handful of Liberal officials were briefed by CSIS. We now know a top Liberal broke the law, undermined the work of CSIS and put the partisan interests of the Liberal Party ahead of national security.

When did the Prime Minister first learn of this criminal leak, and did he refer it to the RCMP?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all parties in the House agreed to the terms of reference for Justice Hogue's inquiry. It is important for Canadians and all members of the House that foreign interference not be partisan. It is important we allow Justice Hogue to continue in this work, so Canadians can have a full picture surrounding any attempts at foreign interference in this country. An interim report will be delivered in May, and I look forward to the recommendations on how we can strengthen our democracy.

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HEALTH

Mr. Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government signed bilateral agreements with all 13 provinces and territories this past March. A few weeks ago, in my riding, three agreements were announced with the territorial governments, to invest a total amount of nearly $86 million to improve health care access and services for the Yukon.

Can you elaborate on what this health investment means for those living in the Yukon and for all Canadians? This is for the Minister of Health.

The Speaker: I am certain the hon. member for Yukon was not asking the Speaker to elaborate but indeed the Minister of Health to elaborate.

The hon. Minister of Health has the floor.

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): You, Mr. Speaker, would also be very enthusiastic about the bilateral agreements that have been signed across this country. I want to thank the member for Yukon for his extraordinary work, not only as a member of Parliament but as a physician and a chief medical officer. The work he has done to promote public health and better health for Canadians across the country really has to be commended. I was so proud to be with him in the Yukon to make an announcement that is going to see more doctors and more nurses, reduce backlog, improve access to care and make sure that we allow our seniors to age at home. It is part of a $200-billion plan to take action across the country.

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PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after years of the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister, we know that he is not worth the cost or the corruption. We have seen that with the $60 million he spent on his failed arrive scam. Last year alone, he spent $21 billion on outside consultants, and his favourite, hand-picked consultants from GC Strategies are being hauled before the bar of the House to answer questions, under threat of imprisonment, for lying to parliamentarians in the inquiries about the Liberal scandal. It is a historic tool for historic levels of corruption.

In the budget next week, will the Prime Minister cut the corruption in his government?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we have said time and time again, when it comes to the procurement process, Canadians and all parliamentarians expect the process to be followed and expect laws to be followed. This is precisely why we have supported the work of the committee.

CBSA has already initiated a number of measures to improve its procurement process. We will continue to make those improvements so Canadians have trust in our procurement systems.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the procurement system that the Liberals are presiding over is so broken that millions of dollars are being paid to firms who add no value and do no work on contracts. Just last year, $21 billion went to outside contracts. The NDP-Liberal government is not worth the cost or the corruption of its $60-million arrive scam, which saw GC Strategies paid $20 million when they did no work and added no value. For their failed arrive scam, Canadians got lies, fraud and forgery. Will the Liberals cut the corruption in their budget next Wednesday?

● (1510)

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cybersecurity), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is ironic, coming from Conservatives, as these very same companies were also awarded contracts under Conservative leadership for millions of dollars, and Conservatives did nothing to fix the procurement process.

However, rest assured, Canadians can know that our government takes this exceptionally seriously. It is precisely why we have already implemented changes, something that Conservatives ignored for years. We are not going to do that. We are going to build trust in the procurement system, which is something Conservatives failed to do.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the House will make history when one of the favourite contractors of this NDP-Liberal government is hauled before the bar.

The parliamentary secretary just said that GC Strategies got contracts from Conservatives. Actually, do members know when GC Strategies was founded? It was in 2015. The company was founded in 2015 and did extensive business with the Liberal government to get sole-sourced for the arrive scam app. Can the government explain why this company got so much work after being founded in the same year that the Liberals took government, and will the government finally cancel its costly criminal corruption?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: The hon. government House leader.

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member across knows not to use such language, and he knows that there is no evidence for the kind of language he is using that supports that.

The government and the opposition parties all voted to bring this gentleman before the bar of the House of Commons, expecting answers. Parliamentarians are entitled to answers. We voted to get the answers, just like they did.

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INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has been unwavering in its support for our ally, Ukraine. With the values of all democracies threatened by Russia's illegal invasion, we have been there every step of the way, doing our part to ensure a Ukrainian victory.

My riding of Winnipeg South Centre is home to thousands of Canadians of Ukrainian descent, and in recent months we have welcomed thousands more who are fleeing the war back home.

Earlier this year, the House passed the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement. Unfortunately, the Conservative opposition prevented Parliament from signalling unanimous support. There is good news, however. Can the Minister of International Trade inform the House of important developments related to this critical and—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister for International Trade.

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to inform Canadians and the House that, in Ukraine, Ukraine's Parliament has passed the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement. Despite Conservative opposition, Ukraine's Parliament unanimously passed this agreement and has called this agreement one of the most modern, high-standard agreements in the world.

I am looking forward to putting this Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement to use, because I want to take a business delegation to Ukraine so that we can work on its rebuilding.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first nations in B.C. have suffered enormous loss throughout their 200-year history of colonization, including the devastating loss of language and culture. Although nations continue to make tremendous progress revitalizing their languages, the Liberals' new formula on funding means a 60% cut to language programs in B.C. Preserving and revitalizing indigenous languages is an essential step to reconciliation.

Will the government remember its most important relationship with first nations and act with urgency to ensure sustained and long-term funding for language programs in British Columbia?

● (1515)

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me first say that I fully agree with the member opposite about the need to preserve indigenous languages and restore them when they have been so cruelly ripped away from first nations communities for decades.

Indeed, in my own riding, Matawa tribal council provides first nation language training and support for first nations communities all through northern Ontario, supported by the federal government. I am very proud of the work they are doing, and we will continue to work on this preservation with first nations across the country.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, the government's defence policy, “Our North, Strong and Free”, is the latest in Liberal smoke and mirrors. It rightfully abbreviates into “NSF”, which Canadians know means “not sufficient funds”. Spread out 20 years, it has insufficient funds, and by “insufficient”, I mean zero dollars this year. There is nothing for tactical helicopters, maritime sensors and military housing.

With CAF members using food stamps and sleeping in tents, the Liberals provided nothing for housing in 2024 and 2025. Is the Prime Minister aware that his facade policy will keep CAF personnel and their families in tents for years?

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I should send a copy of our new policy update for defence to the member opposite because it is quite clear he has not read it.

What I can tell the House is that this is a historic investment in new capabilities, in maintaining the equipment and in ensuring that we can not only support the members of the Canadian Armed Forces but also grow our numbers. There is money for housing. There is money for other supports. There is a new focus for the Canadian Armed Forces in the defence of Canada that will make us strong at home to help us be strong around the world.

[*Translation*]

THE MEMBER FOR BÉCANCOUR—NICOLET—SAUREL

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion:

> That the House:
>
> (a) recognize that the member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel became, on April 3, 2024, the longest-serving and undefeated elected representative in the history of the Canadian Parliament on his 14,457th day in office, for a total of 39 years, 6 months and 29 days;
>
> (b) salute the dedication that he must have shown to the constituents of Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel in order to be worthy of their trust since 1984 in twelve federal elections;
>
> (c) thank the member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, the dean of the House, for his record-setting length of public service over four historic decades devoted to standing up for the people of Quebec; and
>
> (d) pay tribute to the member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel immediately following the adoption of this order to allow members to make brief statements, in the following order: a member of the Bloc Québécois, followed by a member of each recognized party, a member of the Green Party, and the member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel.

The Speaker: I cannot presume to know the decision of the House, so I am going to ask the question.

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

It is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

The Speaker: Accordingly, the House will now hear tributes to the hon. member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel.

The honourable member for Beloeil—Chambly.

● (1520)

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet: Mr. Speaker, we could, very carefully, despite his sense of humour, touch a little on the member's age. Now, we are mainly talking about the length of his reign as MP for this wonderful constituency. In theory, we should be talking about wisdom. We should be talking about the great wisdom of the member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, but no.

The member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel has not acquired, after all these years, what one might call wisdom. He is still quite a rascal. He is a man of consummate humour. He is an inexhaustible source of anecdotes. He is generous and deeply endearing.

When I started thinking about trying to fill the position I now hold, one of the first people I consulted was the member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel. I took his advice. I think I did the right thing.

Although I will need to bend the rules a bit, I speak for everyone when I say: Thank you, Louis.

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my turn to recognize the dean of the House, the member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, for his impressive public service longevity record. Over the past four decades, day after day, my Bloc Québécois colleague has done an excellent job of promoting, defending and representing his constituents.

I have to quickly mention our former colleague, Herb Gray, who held that record until now. However, on April 3, the member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel became the longest continuously serving elected member in the history of the Parliament of Canada. Clearly, my colleague should be extremely proud of that achievement. His constituents have placed their trust in him since 1984, making him the envy of us all. He has been consecutively re-elected since 1984. That is what I call a great batting average.

He has also shown us that we can politely agree to disagree in the House. The fact that he has been a member for 44 years should inspire us all to emulate his qualities and perhaps be here for as many years as he has. I must also point out how important institutions, even federal institutions, are to him. He and I are working together on the restoration of Centre Block, our crown jewel, the seat of our democracy in Canada. I also appreciate the great commitment the member has shown to our institutions and to what is perhaps the ultimate federal democratic institution. I thank him for that.

Once again, I would like to congratulate our dean, the dean of the House, a member who is present, proactive and greatly appreciated, not only by his colleagues, but also by his constituents, as his record shows.

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, of course, our party joins our colleagues in saluting the longevity of our colleague from Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel. I would also like to point out that our colleague started out as a Conservative. All joking aside, I think we need to emphasize what a demanding job it is to be a member of Parliament, to hold public office and serve the public, in terms of time, self-sacrifice and selflessness.

I will have been doing this for 20 years in about two years' time, and I know how difficult and how time-consuming it can be. Our colleague has been doing it twice as long, for nearly 40 years. That is a lot of self-sacrifice. That is a lot of sacrifice on his part, of course, but also on the part of his family. That is why we also need to acknowledge his family today, including everyone who has stood by him and supported him over the years.

Obviously, we are all taking notes, because we would all like to achieve such a record of longevity. However, it does not happen as often as we would like. In the Quebec National Assembly, which is where I came from and where I sat for nearly 15 years, it was said at the time that the average lifespan of a member was about six years. That just goes to show how much the member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel has defied the statistics. I congratulate him on behalf of all my colleagues.

I will close with this: After all these years, I bet the Bloc Québécois member knows Canada's national anthem by heart.

● (1525)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to pay tribute to the longevity and hard work of the member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, who has been elected 12 consecutive times without ever losing his riding. It is absolutely amazing.

He was first elected in 1984 as part of the same Progressive Conservative wave as the late Mr. Mulroney. I wonder where I was in 1984. I was 11 years old, finishing elementary school, and I was younger than my youngest child is now. That gives members some idea. The hon. member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel has a great sense of humour. He is always witty and sometimes has a tendency to tease us. I cannot resist pointing out that Wikipedia says he acted as interim Speaker of the House of Commons for six days last fall. For six days, the Bloc Québécois member was theoretically reporting directly to Charles III, King of England. He served him conscientiously for those six days.

More importantly, he has served his constituents conscientiously for over 14,000 consecutive days. That shows the depth of his local roots, his on-the-ground knowledge, and his grassroots connections. It also shows the power of local democracy.

On behalf of the NDP, I congratulate the member.

The Speaker: I think it says a lot when we see someone who has his own personal preferences but always respects institutions. I commend the member.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to join my colleagues in paying tribute to our dear colleague and friend, the member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel.

When I was elected in 2011, I was here on my own, as the only Green Party member, but I worked with the four Bloc Québécois members, including my dear colleague. We worked together, almost invisibly, but I think we worked as a small Bloc-Green coalition.

It is a great honour to work with my dear colleague, who is now the dean of the House and who has served in several Parliaments, with various prime ministers and members, always in a collaborative and friendly manner. He has a sense of humour, and I appreciate him.

I thank him.

● (1530)

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what can I say after all those kind words? I would like to thank the five speakers from the various political parties who spoke so kindly of me.

I have served in the governing party, I have served as an independent, I have served in the official opposition, and I have served as a member of the third party. I have known just about every trend and experienced all the highs and lows.

I would like to thank my constituents for supporting me in 12 elections with handsome majorities. The one in 2011 was harder because of the orange wave, but four of us got elected, including me.

I would like to thank all the people who helped me get elected, including the organizers, my riding executive, and my 1,000 members who renew their cards every year and who are also starting to get older too. I would like to thank my loyal and long-serving office staff as well. I would also like to thank the research and communications teams that support the parties and members. They are invaluable in helping us better serve our constituents and give them the answers they are looking for.

I thank my family and my children for understanding why I had to be away so much. I thank my partner Manon, who has been courageously battling cancer for two years. Despite her many treatments, she encourages me to continue my work here to help my constituents. She is very supportive.

Many people here in this beautiful chamber will no doubt break my record, since many of them were elected at a very young age. However, I would like to warn them right now that I hope I still have two or three more terms to serve. That is my intention. This time, it will be within the same party; there will be no changes.

I have often enjoyed hearing *O Canada* because, as Gilles Vigneault once said, I have always loved hearing foreign national anthems. What I like about *O Canada* is that it was sung for the first time at a separatist gathering in Quebec. We sang *O Canada* because we did not want to sing *God Save the Queen*. However, one day, Canada decided to adopt it so that it could have its own national anthem. That was a bit of history, but I will stop there.

Once again, I thank all my colleagues for their kind words. I am not sure I have been that worthy of them, but I look forward to continuing my work.

● (1535)

The Speaker: Colleagues, it is my turn to rise and pay tribute to our very dear colleague, my predecessor as Speaker, the member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel.

We have known each other for a very long time. In 1988, when I first came to the House of Commons as a page, the member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel already had four years of experience under his belt. I had the pleasure of bringing him water and messages. He was a gentleman and an upstanding man; he still is. He has set a record for years of service, but he has also set records for kindness, wisdom and, of course, sense of humour. He is known among MPs for his sage advice. For example, if someone announces that they are running for a leadership position, the member will whisper back that they have his support, but not to tell anyone. I am certain he made an exception for me when I ran for Speaker. It is that kind of practical and far from cynical approach that has enabled him to spend 40 years in this place.

The people of Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel are very well served by this gentleman. He is dedicated to working for them. His success among voters boils down simple mathematics, a subject he taught before becoming an MP. He follows a simple formula: He talks to at least 10 people a day in his riding, five days a week. At the end of the year, that adds up to 2,500 people who have had direct contact with him, or 2,500 people who know their MP. If we keep going with the math, we see that our colleague has had 100,000 personal contacts over the past 40 years. The lesson to be learned here is to never forget our roots and the reason we serve in this place.

I thank the hon. member for his outstanding service and congratulate him on 40 incredible years.

[*English*]

I see the member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston rising on a point of order.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words about our colleague from Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, who has served our country and the people of his riding for 40 years.

[*English*]

It is a matter of coincidence that the man whose record the member is breaking is a man named John Graham Haggart, who was a Conservative member of Parliament elected in Canada's second election, in 1871, and who served until his death in 1913 under every prime minister from Sir John A. Macdonald to Sir Robert Borden.

By coincidence, John Graham Haggart served in the ancestor of my own riding, and by an even more extraordinary coincidence, he lived in the same house that I now live in. Therefore I feel I am better qualified than anybody else to channel his ghost, so on behalf of the man whom he is bettering today, John Graham Haggart, let me just say “well done” to our colleague.

[*Translation*]

I congratulate him.

[*English*]

May he serve much longer indeed, and do so as nobly as he has done in the past.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—CARBON TAX EMERGENCY MEETING

The House resumed from April 9 consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

The Speaker: It being 3:40 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment to the motion of the member for Carleton relating to the business of supply.

Call in the members.

● (1540)

[*English*]

The question is on the amendment. May I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of amendment to House*]

● (1555)

[*Translation*]

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

(Division No. 683)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Angus	Arnold
Ashton	Bachrach
Baldinelli	Barrett
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Bergeron
Berthold	Bérubé
Bezan	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
Block	Boulerice
Bragdon	Brassard
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Cannings
Caputo	Carrie
Chabot	Chambers
Champoux	Chong
Collins (Victoria)	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	d'Entremont
Desbiens	Desilets
Desjarlais	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Findlay
Fortin	Gallant
Garon	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Généreux	Genuis
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Green	Hallan
Hughes	Idlout
Jeneroux	Jivani
Johns	Julian
Kelly	Khanna
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Kwan	Lake
Lantsman	Larouche
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lemire	Leslie
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	MacGregor
Maguire	Majumdar

Martel
Mathyssen
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McPherson
Michaud
Morantz
Motz
Nater
Patzer
Pauzé
Perron
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Rood
Savard-Tremblay
Schmale
Shields
Simard
Singh
Soroka
Ste-Marie
Strahl
Thériault
Thomas
Tolmie
Uppal
Vecchio
Vien
Vignola
Vis
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams
Zarrillo– — 171

Masse
Mazier
McLean
Melillo
Moore
Morrison
Muys
Normandin
Paul-Hus
Perkins
Poilievre
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Ruff
Scheer
Seeback
Shipley
Sinclair-Desgagné
Small
Steinley
Stewart
Stubbs
Therrien
Tochor
Trudel
Van Popta
Vidal
Viersen
Villemure
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson

NAYS

Members

Aldag
Ali
Anandasangaree
Arya
Badawey
Baker
Beech
Bittle
Blois
Bradford
Carr
Chagger
Champagne
Chen
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Coteau
Damoff
Dhillon
Dong
Dubourg
Dzerowicz
El-Khoury
Fillmore
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gaheer
Gerretsen
Guilbeault
Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather
Hutchings
Ien

Alghabra
Anand
Arseneault
Atwin
Bains
Battiste
Bibeau
Blair
Boissonnault
Brière
Casey
Chahal
Chatel
Chiang
Cormier
Dabrusin
Dhaliwal
Diab
Drouin
Duclos
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser
Fry
Gainey
Gould
Hajdu
Hardie
Holland
Hussen
Iacono
Jaczek

Joly
Jowhari
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lambropoulos
Lapointe
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McKay
McLeod
Mendicino
Miller
Murray
Ng
O'Connell
O'Regan
Powlowski
Robillard
Romanado
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Schiefke
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sousa
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandenbeld
Weiler
Yip
Zuberi– — 149

Jones
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Lalonde
Lamoureux
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
Maloney
May (Cambridge)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Miao
Morrice
Naqvi
Noormohamed
Oliphant
Petitpas Taylor
Qualtrough
Rogers
Rota
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sorbara
St-Onge
Tassi
Thompson
Valdez
van Koeverden
Virani
Wilkinson
Zahid

PAIRED

Members

Davidson
Plamondon
Vandal

MacDonald (Malpeque)
Rodriguez
Zimmer– — 6

The Speaker: I declare the amendment carried.

The next question is on the main motion, as amended.

Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of motion as amended to House*]

● (1600)

[*English*]

The Speaker: If a member participating in person wishes that the motion as amended 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.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Mr. Speaker, I believe we should have a recorded division on this.

● (1610)

[*Translation*]

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

(Division No. 684)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif
Albas
Angus
Ashton
Baldinelli
Barron
Beaulieu
Berthold
Bezan
Blanchette-Joncas
Block
Bragdon
Brock
Calkins
Caputo
Chabot
Champoux
Collins (Victoria)
Dalton
Davies
Deltell
Desbiens
Desjarlais
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Ferreri
Fortin
Garon
Gaudreau
Généreux
Gill
Godin
Gourde
Green
Hughes
Jeneroux
Johns
Kelly
Kitchen
Kram
Kurek
Kwan
Lantsman
Lawrence
Lemire
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lobb
Maguire
Martel
Mathyssen
McCauley (Edmonton West)
McPherson
Michaud
Morantz
Motz
Nater
Patzer
Pauzé
Perron
Aitchison
Allison
Arnold
Bachrach
Barrett
Barsalou-Duval
Bergeron
Bérubé
Blanchet
Blaney
Boulerice
Brassard
Brunelle-Duceppe
Cannings
Carrie
Chambers
Chong
Cooper
Dancho
DeBellefeuille
d'Entremont
Desilets
Doherty
Dreeshen
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Findlay
Gallant
Garrison
Gazan
Genuis
Gladu
Goodridge
Gray
Hallan
Idlout
Jivani
Julian
Khanna
Kmiec
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Lake
Larouche
Lehoux
Leslie
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd
MacGregor
Majumdar
Masse
Mazier
McLean
Melillo
Moore
Morrison
Muys
Normandin
Paul-Hus
Perkins
Poilievre
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Rood
Savard-Tremblay
Schmale
Shields
Simard
Singh
Soroka
Ste-Marie
Strahl
Thériault
Thomas
Tolmie
Uppal
Vecchio
Vien
Vignola
Vis
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams
Zarrillo– — 171
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Ruff
Scheer
Seeback
Shipley
Sinclair-Desgagné
Small
Steinley
Stewart
Stubbs
Therrien
Tochor
Trudel
Van Popta
Vidal
Viersen
Villemure
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson

NAYS

Members

Aldag
Ali
Anandasangaree
Arya
Badawey
Baker
Beech
Bittle
Blois
Bradford
Carr
Chagger
Champagne
Chen
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Coteau
Damoff
Dhillon
Dong
Dubourg
Dzerowicz
El-Khoury
Fillmore
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gaheer
Gerretsen
Guilbeault
Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather
Hutchings
Ien
Joly
Jowhari
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lambropoulos
Lapointe
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
Alghabra
Anand
Arseneault
Atwin
Bains
Battiste
Bibeau
Blair
Boissonnault
Brière
Casey
Chahal
Chatel
Chiang
Cormier
Dabrusin
Dhaliwal
Diab
Drouin
Duclos
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser
Fry
Gainey
Gould
Hajdu
Hardie
Holland
Hussen
Iacono
Jaczek
Jones
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Lalonde
Lamoureux
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)

MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McKay
McLeod
Mendicino
Miller
Murray
Ng
O'Connell
O'Regan
Powlowski
Robillard
Romanado
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Schiefke
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sousa
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandenbeld
Weiler
Yip
Zuberi– — 149

Maloney
May (Cambridge)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
Mendès
Miao
Morrice
Naqvi
Noormohamed
Oliphant
Petitpas Taylor
Qualtrough
Rogers
Rota
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sorbara
St-Onge
Tassi
Thompson
Valdez
van Koeverden
Virani
Wilkinson
Zahid

PAIRED

Members

Davidson
Plamondon
Vandal

MacDonald (Malpeque)
Rodriguez
Zimmer– — 6

The Speaker: I declare the motion, as amended, carried.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

CONSTITUTION ACT, 1867

The House resumed from April 9 consideration of the motion that Bill C-347, An Act to amend the Constitution Act, 1867 (oath of office), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

● (1625)

[*Translation*]

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

(Division No. 685)

YEAS

Members

Angus
Arya
Atwin
Baker
Barsalou-Duval
Bergeron
Bérubé
Blanchet
Blaney
Brunelle-Duceppe
Caputo
Casey
Chahal
Collins (Victoria)
Dabrusin
DeBellefeuille
d'Entremont
Desilets
Dhillon
Drouin
El-Khoury
Fast
Fortin
Garon
Gaudreau
Généreux
Godin
Green
Hughes
Idlout
Julian
Kmiec
Lake
Lehoux
Liepert
Long
Martel
Mathyssen
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Michaud
Morrissey
Normandin
Pauzé
Powlowski
Romanado
Ruff
Savard-Tremblay
Serré
Shanahan
Sinclair-Desgagné
Ste-Marie
Thériault
Trudel
Vien
Villemure
Zarrillo– — 113

Arseneault
Ashton
Bachrach
Barron
Beaulieu
Berthold
Bittle
Blanchette-Joncas
Boulerice
Cannings
Carr
Chabot
Champoux
Cormier
Davies
Deltell
Desbiens
Desjarlais
Diab
Dubourg
Erskine-Smith
Fonseca
Fry
Garrison
Gazan
Gill
Gourde
Housefather
Iacono
Johns
Khalid
Kwan
Larouche
Lemire
Lightbound
MacGregor
Masse
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McLeod
Mendès
Morrice
Naqvi
Paul-Hus
Perron
Rayes
Rota
Samson
Schiefke
Sgro
Simard
Singh
Stubbs
Therrien
Van Bynen
Vignola
Weiler

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif
Albas
Alghabra
Allison
Anandasangaree
Badawey
Baldinelli
Battiste
Bezan
Blair
Blois
Bradford
Brassard
Calkins
Chambers
Chen
Chong
Cooper
Dalton
Dancho
Doherty
Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ehsassi

Aitchison
Aldag
Ali
Anand
Arnold
Bains
Barrett
Beech
Bibeau
Block
Boissonnault
Bragdon
Brock
Carrie
Champagne
Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Coteau
Damoff
Dhaliwal
Dowdall
Duclos
Dzerowicz
Ellis

Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Ferreri
Fillmore	Findlay
Fisher	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Gaheer
Gainey	Gallant
Genuis	Gerretsen
Gladu	Goodridge
Gould	Gray
Hajdu	Hallan
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Hussen	Hutchings
Ien	Jaczek
Jeneroux	Jivani
Joly	Jowhari
Kayabaga	Kelloway
Kelly	Khanna
Khera	Kitchen
Koutrakis	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Kusmierczyk
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lamoureux	Lantsman
Lapointe	Lattanzio
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Lloyd
Lobb	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire
Majumdar	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	May (Cambridge)
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McGuinty	McKay
McLean	Mendicino
Miao	Miller
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Motz
Murray	Muys
Nater	Ng
Noormohamed	O'Connell
Oliphant	O'Regan
Patzer	Perkins
Petitpas Taylor	Poilievre
Qualtrough	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Roberts
Robillard	Rogers
Rood	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schmale	Seeback
Sheehan	Shields
Shipley	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Small
Sorbara	Soroka
Sousa	Steinley
Stewart	St-Onge
Strahl	Sudds
Tassi	Thomas
Thompson	Tochor
Tolmie	Turnbull
Uppal	Valdez
van Koeverden	Van Popta
Vandenbeld	Vecchio
Vidal	Viersen
Virani	Vis
Vuong	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Wilkinson
Williams	Williamson
Yip	Zahid
Zuberi– — 197	

PAIRED

Members

Davidson	MacDonald (Malpeque)
Plamondon	Rodriguez
Vandal	Zimmer– — 6

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

[*English*]

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order.

I wish to inform the House that, because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 44 minutes.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO ORDER PAPER QUESTIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am rising to respond to the questions of privilege raised by the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola and the member for Lethbridge respecting the government's response to two similar Order Paper questions, Question Nos. 1425 and 1445.

The members alleged that the government's response to these two Order Paper questions deliberately misled the House. I submit that this is, in fact, not the case. The government stands by its responses to these Order Paper questions.

Question No. 1425 reads in part, "With regard to government requests to censor information, since January 1, 2016: (a) how many requests has the government made to social media companies to censor information...?"

In the case of Question No. 1445, it reads, "With regard to the government requests to remove, edit, or alter information in the media, since January 1, 2016: (a) how many requests has the government made to social media companies, including for any article, post or reply...?"

Both questions deal with whether the government initiated a request for action.

As part of the written submissions and testimony before the public inquiry on foreign interference, officials spoke about the Declaration on Electoral Integrity Online, to which social media platforms voluntarily signed on. In accordance with its terms, these social media companies would identify inauthentic activity on their platforms and consider taking down information they considered to be violations of their community standards.

In early 2019, platforms had signed on to a framework agreement, the Canada Declaration of Electoral Integrity Online. Under this framework, Facebook engaged the Privy Council Office on an article from The Buffalo Chronicle, which contained misinformation. As noted in the testimony, the Privy Council Office agreed with Facebook that, in their opinion, the article contained misinformation and agreed with their proposal to remove it, pursuant to the declaration. At this point, Facebook ultimately reached the conclusion that the article represented a violation of its community standard and took action of its own accord.

I submit that, at best, the matter raised by both members constitutes a debate as to the facts, which is a normal part of debate in this place.

The government stands by the accuracy of the responses to Order Paper Question Nos. 1425 and 1445; in no way did it seek to mislead the House on this matter. The facts stand: A social media company engaged PCO about a posting on its platform that violated its own policy regarding its community standards on misinformation, and after notifying PCO of the situation, removed the offending post. That is a key point for the Speaker to consider in making a determination on matters relating to the responses to both Order Paper Question No. 1425 and Order Paper Question No. 1445.

It is a long-standing practice of this place to take members at their word. Moreover, there are numerous precedents to demonstrate that the Speaker is not empowered to judge the quality of the answers provided, as you stated in your ruling of February 29.

Having said that, I want to assure the House that the government takes seriously its commitment to providing accurate and truthful information to ensure that members have the information they need to discharge their parliamentary duties.

● (1630)

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise on the question of privilege, and this is concerning false information contained in the government's response to Order Paper Question No. 2340, which was filed by the NDP member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

While it may seem unusual for me, as a Conservative member, to be rising about a government response to a question filed by the NDP, this is not just about the member who filed the question but about all members of the House who suffer and whose rights are infringed upon when the government tables information which is clearly false and inaccurate in the House.

The response to Question No. 2340, which was tabled by the government on Monday, contains information that is clearly false, which is proven by the government's own records. The question asked was:

> ...since January 1, 2006: how much federal funding has been provided to (i) Loblaws, (ii) Metro, (iii) Walmart, (iv) Sobeys, (v) Costco, broken down by company, year, and type of funding?

The response, signed by the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, says:

> ...since January 1, 2006, no federal funding has been provided to Loblaws, Metro, Walmart, Sobeys or Costco.

We know that this is not true. The government took a lot of pride in announcing millions of dollars for fridges for Loblaws. If one types the word "Loblaws" into the government's proactive disclosure portal, under grants and contributions, one will see that there are three separate listings for government grants and contributions to Loblaws between November 7, 2019, and April 26, 2021.

The most significant of these is a contribution for $12,019,723 on November 7, 2019, from Environment and Climate Change Canada for low global warming potential refrigerant conversions in supermarket systems. In other words, it was $12 million to Loblaws to buy new fridges. That one entry, by itself, listed in the proactive disclosure database, proves that the government's response to Question No. 2034 contains false information. In addition, a quick search on the government's own website will show us that on October 24, 2019, it gave $15,803,515 to Costco for "Energy Savings Rebate Program Funding Regarding Canadian Appliance Source".

It is crystal clear, from the government's own data, that the response in the tabled document by the minister on Monday contains false information. This is not a matter of debate or opinion. This is proven by the government's own reporting on proactive disclosure.

I had wished that the NDP member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford had raised the question of privilege on his own, but as we all know, his party has an agreement with the government that stunts its ability to criticize the Liberals or to point out the hypocrisy of the NDP supporting a Liberal government that is giving handouts to Loblaws and Costco.

When the House of Commons is provided with untrue information or lies, all members of the House suffer and all members have the right to receive accurate information. What the government did here is a breach to all members' rights. On page 82 of Bosc and Gagnon, it clearly states that it is a prima facie case of contempt when someone "deliberately attempts to mislead the House or a committee". While the record will show that Speakers have been reluctant to intervene on the basis of a quality of an answer or a non-answer, this is a case of the government deliberately withholding the truth from the House.

On December 16, 1980, on page 5797 of Hansard, the Speaker said:

> While it is correct to say that the government is not required by our rules to answer written or oral questions, it would be bold to suggest that no circumstances could ever exist for a prima facie question of privilege to be made where there was a deliberate attempt to deny answers to an hon. member....

Should you find a prima facie case, I am prepared to move the appropriate motion.

● (1635)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I thank the hon. member, and it will be taken under advisement.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, the tradition in the House has been to allow the opportunity for the member who has actually asked the question to raise the question of privilege. I find this a bit discourteous.

That being said, we are currently looking at this, and I would like to reserve the opportunity for the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford to rise on this question of privilege a little later on.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The member's request is so noted.

The hon. member for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, I request unanimous consent to change my vote on our opposition day motion from nay to yea.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to change his vote?

Some hon. members: No.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

SUPERINTENDENT OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions 2024-25 departmental plan.

* * *

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 13 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 17th report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities in relation to the motion adopted on Monday, December 11, 2023, regarding the Canada disability benefit.

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on behalf of PROC members, I would like to thank the witnesses who appeared. I would also like to mentioned how much we appreciate our clerk, Michael, as well as the analysts Andre, Isabelle and Laurence, who has returned. We also want to give a shout-out to everyone who supports the committee, including those in food services, tech, interpretation, cleaning services and so many more.

[*Translation*]

Today, I am very proud to present, in both official languages, the 63rd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, entitled "Question of Privilege Related to the Member for Wellington—Halton Hills and other Members".

● (1640)

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise to present the supplemental report of the Conservative members on the procedure and House affairs committee.

Conservatives concur with the finding of the main report that Mr. Wei Zhao be held in contempt of Parliament for targeting the member for Wellington—Halton Hills and his family. However, it is our observation that the main report is incomplete in several respects.

For one, it does not fully account for the colossal breakdown in the machinery of government under the Prime Minister's watch that resulted in the member for Wellington—Halton Hills and his family having been kept in the dark for two years while they were being targeted by Beijing.

Second, the supplemental report outlines a campaign of obstruction by Liberal MPs to block the production of relevant documents to get to the bottom of how this breakdown in the machinery of government under the Prime Minister's watch occurred. It was clearly directed by the PMO as part of the continuation of the cover-up.

Finally, our supplemental report provides evidence that the now Minister of National Defence was not entirely forthcoming in his testimony before committee. It is our assessment that the false and misleading testimony of the Minister of National Defence may rise to a level of a contempt of Parliament. Consequently, I will forthwith be putting on notice a question of privilege. I will have more to say on that later today.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, I move that the eighth report of the Standing Committee on National Defence presented on Monday, February 26, be concurred in.

I will be splitting my time with the member for Peterborough—Kawartha.

I am proud to stand to speak to the eighth report from the Standing Committee on National Defence. It is a report that reads:

> Given that, rent for Canadian military personnel living on base is increasing this April, and at a time when the military is struggling to recruit and retain personnel, the committee report to the House, that the government immediately cancel all plans to increase rent on military accommodations used by the Department of National Defence....

I think all of us realize that on April 1, the Liberal government played a cruel joke on the men and women who serve in the Canadian Armed Forces. We saw the government jack up rent on military housing by 4.2%. On that very same day, the government also hiked up the carbon tax by 23%.

We are hearing all the time about the dire straits our members of the Canadian Armed Forces are facing. We are always discussing the retention and recruitment problems that we have in the Canadian Armed Forces today. We know that currently the Canadian Armed Forces is short over 6,700 military housing units. Those residential units are right across this country at a time when housing in every major urban centre is in desperate need.

There is not enough housing for the families out there, and that is why we have seen general public housing rent double in the last 10 years. In the last 10 years, mortgages have doubled, making it unaffordable for families, and that is impacting our Armed Forces members. When they cannot find a place to live on base in their own military housing because we do not have enough of them, being short 6,700, they are forced to go into the private property that is out there, and they cannot afford to buy or rent homes in communities.

We heard, just before Christmas, that the Nova Scotia legislature held hearings about the housing crisis for the Canadian Armed Forces in Halifax. Of course, we have the naval base, CFB Halifax, in Halifax. On the other side, we have CFB Shearwater. Military members there are living rough. The recount at the committee hearings in the Nova Scotia legislature pointed to the fact that the military members were living in one of the 30 tent cities that have sprouted up in Halifax. Military members were also living rough and having to live out of their cars. These are working members of the Canadian Armed Forces, working as either sailors or aircrew at either one of the two bases. We learned that a lot of them are couch surfing just to get by, and many of them are being forced to live in precarious situations, including having to live with domestic violence. They cannot afford to leave those situations and move to a safer accommodation.

I had, in particular, one military member and his spouse who were both serving in the Canadian Armed Forces and had been stationed at CFB Shilo in Manitoba. They sold their home in Manitoba because they were transferred to CFB Shearwater, and for the first while, they had to live in a camper. Then, when they were put into military housing, it was in such disrepair that they wrote to me and said that in the evening they would come home and just cry. They left this beautiful home in Manitoba and had to come to live in a shanty in Halifax because that is all that they could get from the Canadian Armed Forces.

We also know that things are tough in Esquimalt, and we often hear of the shortage of housing over there. I know for a fact that one of the members in the Royal Canadian Navy who is a master seaman from my riding, when he moved with his wife and small child to Esquimalt to serve, was put into a situation in which all they could afford with their salaries was a small one-bedroom apartment. It is so expensive that, on top of working full-time as a sailor in the Royal Canadian Navy, he has had to moonlight at night and work at a convenience store just to help make ends meet.

● (1645)

This has forced so many military families across this country to resort to other measures, including the use of food banks. I know we are going to hear from my colleague, the member for Peterborough—Kawartha, about how military families out of CFB Gagetown are now using the local food bank. We heard about how military families in Halifax are going to the food bank. That was part of the testimony that was presented at the Nova Scotia Legislature. Now, we just learned this week that military families at CFB Borden, those who are stationed there, are now also going to the food bank in the town of Borden.

This is no way to treat our military heroes. This is no way for them to have to live, and it was just reported last week that troops who had to come to Ottawa to train for cybersecurity at Willis College had to rely on food donations from the local college staff just so they could get by. This is an embarrassment, and this is a pox on the Liberal government for failing our troops.

The Liberals will talk about how great their defence policy update is, but if we look at what they are doing to military housing, in the past two years the government has only built 38 new homes for the Canadian Armed Forces. We are short 6,700, and all they could muster up was less than 20 homes a year over the last two years. In the defence policy update, they have promised, for the coming year of 2024-25, zero dollars. They promised, for 2025-26, zero dollars. The next year is only $1 million. The year after that is only $2 million, and in 2028-29, they finally get to $4 million.

That does not build enough homes when we are short 6,700 houses. That does not even build 20 homes, $7 million, with the price homes are at these days, and that is for the next five years. How are we going to fix this when there are not the dollars and resources to do it?

The Liberal government is failing our troops, and this has proven again that the Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

When we talk about the retention and recruitment crisis, there is no way that we can attract more people into the Canadian Armed Forces when we do not have proper housing to put them and their families in. We cannot attract them to come in to live in homes that are filled with black mould. We cannot put them in homes where they would be living in 1950s structures that have not been updated in the last 70 years.

When we are short 16,000 troops and we have 10,000 troops who are undertrained, they do not want to have to go for training where the barracks have frozen pipes or, even worse, are filled with rodents, which we are hearing about coming from Kingston.

I can tell members that as Conservatives we are going to go out there and help our forces. We are so proud of our military heroes and their families for stepping up and serving this nation. We are going to axe the carbon tax and make life more affordable for all Canadians, but especially for those who serve in the Canadian Armed Forces.

We are going to build the homes, and that includes building the homes for our military families across this country on every base, making sure we can maximize the land and space they are located on to build homes that are going to benefit them and their local communities.

We are going to fix the budget, and that means we are going to make sure we find the dollars to invest in the Canadian Armed Forces. When we fix the budget, there are going to be dollars available to go into the new kit that our troops need and into the equipment they require to do the difficult jobs we ask of them.

It is also about stopping the crime, whether it is sexual misconduct on base or crime in the communities people live in that are now just completely swamped in chaos because of the gangs that are out there, the car thefts that are happening and the violence that is on the rise because the Liberals continue to let violent offenders out over and over again.

We want to make sure that we are standing up for families and keeping our communities safe, because these are the greatest Canadians we have, those who serve in the Canadian Armed Forces. When they have a day of standing on the wall and keeping us safe here at home or when they are out on mission and they return from abroad, we need to make sure that they have a house they can afford and a home that is modern and comfortable, and that at the end of the day they can raise their families in safe communities and not worry about the cost of living crisis that they are dealing with right now because of the out-of-control spending and hyperinflation we have experienced because of the Liberals.

● (1650)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the problem with the member's assertion is that he is assuming that all military personnel want to live on the base. I can tell him that, when I was mayor of Kingston, every summer I would get together with the mayor of Watertown, which is right next to Fort Drum in the United States. The one thing the mayor of Watertown always talked about was how jealous he was, because Fort Drum was its own base with people living on it outside of Watertown and not really connected to the city. He would come to CFB Kingston and see the way it integrated so well into the community.

When I was younger and in high school, all those in the military community lived around the base on the east side of Kingston. Now they live throughout the entire community. My kids quite often are coached on a team by a military spouse who has children on the same team. We get a certain level of integration when we encourage those in the military to live and participate in our community.

I am wondering if the member can comment on whether he sees the benefit in that or if he thinks all military members should exclusively live on the base.

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, I would remind the member for Kingston and the Islands that he has not been mayor for over 10 years. For the last 10 years, he has been part of the Liberal government that has created the housing crisis we are seeing in every community across this country, including in his own.

I am not advocating that all military bases have enough housing for all members who currently live there. A lot of them want to live in communities. The problem is that, for those in Esquimalt, in Halifax, in Toronto and even here in Ottawa, they cannot find the homes they can afford to raise their families in. That is the problem. That is because of the government's inability to get homes built.

The number of houses getting built in this country continues to decline. We are building fewer homes this year than we did back in 1970 under the Liberals. That is because there is not the money, the regulation or the commitment to ensure that life can be more affordable and that houses can be more affordable for Canadian families, including those who serve in the Canadian Armed Forces.

● (1655)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I note that we were supposed to be debating pharmacare today, a pharmacare bill that would make a difference in the lives of millions of Canadians.

I also note, as I know the member is aware, that the national defence committee is meeting right now. The NDP proposed and members of the committee from all parties agreed to have a study that talks specifically about housing for our women and men in the service. I note that all of that is taking place and that we are putting aside a debate on pharmacare that will help millions of people.

My concern is that I lived through the Harper regime when there were massive cuts to veterans services and the closing of veterans services offices throughout Canada. Veterans were very badly misserved by the Harper government. I would ask my colleague, whom I have a lot of respect for, if he regrets now all of the actions, the cut-and-gut approach to funding for women and men in the service and our veterans that was done under the Harper regime. Does he regret that now, in retrospect?

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, I will remind the member that, as the shadow minister for national defence for the Conservatives and vice-chair of the Standing Committee on National Defence, we are debating a motion now that came from the Standing Committee on National Defence. This is important. We are talking about how the housing crisis is impacting our troops. We are talking about a rate hike. The Liberals jacked up the rental rates on our troops, and that deserves to be debated here as well.

Although the committee is meeting right now and talking about housing, I thought it was important today, pretty much our first opportunity since April 1, to raise this issue and make sure that the government has an eye on the crisis that is currently grabbing hold in the Canadian Armed Forces. Our troops deserve better than that. I know the troops appreciated that, when we were in government, we bought brand new C-17s, we bought brand new Hercules aircraft and we bought brand new Leopard tanks. We were able to support them throughout the war in Afghanistan and, when that war ended, there were actually some savings, which enabled us to fix the budget.

I can say that, as much as everybody always talks about where the Conservatives were on the percentage of GDP, we did not use creative accounting by adding in things like the pensions of veterans, the Coast Guard and border services to falsely inflate the GDP numbers.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): 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 Peace River—Westlock, Carbon Pricing; the hon. member for Spadina—Fort York, Government Accountability; the hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, Carbon Pricing.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a real honour to stand in the House of Commons today to speak to such an important committee report. For folks watching and paying attention at home, this is with respect to the eighth report of the Standing Committee on National Defence, entitled "Increase in Rental Housing Costs for Canadian Military Personnel". It reads:

> Given that, rent for Canadian military personnel living on bases is increasing this April, and at a time when the military is struggling to recruit and retain personnel, the committee report to the House, that the government immediately cancel all plans to increase rent on military accommodations used by the Department of National Defence.

As my colleague, the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, who spoke before me, eloquently stated, this is a pretty serious thing.

I want to tell members a story about what happened recently. I travelled to New Brunswick and went to the Oromocto food bank. The Oromocto food bank is run by incredible volunteers, like most food banks across this country, and like most has seen historic high usage.

If we could, in the House, give a round of applause for the people and volunteers who are feeding Canadians across this country, I think that would be amazing.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, when I got to the Oromocto food bank, I walked in with my colleague, the member for Tobique—Mactaquac. He is an incredible man, and there were two incredible humans there, Elizabeth and Jane.

We walked into the office. I believe the woman's name in the office was Dolores. They were working, and Jane was standing in front of a map of the area that they serve. We could see that it is a rural kind of area. She was talking about the record usage that they had seen since they opened, which was 13 years ago. It has just steadily gone up. They serve about 450 families a month, which is a shocking number.

While Jane was talking and was telling me this number, I happened to look behind her. The map behind her had this big patch on the map for CFB Gagetown. For people who know the Canadian Forces, CFB Gagetown is Canada's largest training facility. Most military personnel go there to train. It is a phenomenal facility. For all of our men and women who have served in uniform, most of them have at some point served in Gagetown. It is incredible.

I do not know why, but I asked, "You wouldn't be serving anyone from Gagetown here at the Oromocto food bank, right, Jane?" What she said next shocked me. She said they were serving about 40 to 50 families a month from CFB Gagetown. I said, "Pardon, what did you just say?" She said, "Yes, we are." I asked if the general public knew about this, and she said she did not know.

People who are the front lines of the defence of our country are relying on a food bank. I was gobsmacked hearing that information. It was like talking about doctors or nurses. The people who work to keep us safe are having to use a food bank in Canada, a G7 country. I said to Jane that she had to be kidding me, but she was not kidding. I could barely hear the rest of what she told me.

We went further into the food bank. Then she told me that I should also know that most of these military families have their homes heated by gas or oil and they pay a carbon tax. I asked her if she thought the carbon tax has an impact on military families accessing food banks. She said that it has an impact on everything, because the cost of food has skyrocketed and because the cost of housing has skyrocketed.

To build houses they need materials and they need fuel to get the materials. It is a really common-sense concept that the cult on the other side of the House has doubled down on to say they are going to fight this. It is actually the most frustrating thing for Canadians to witness.

● (1700)

There is a motion before us. Canadian military families will now suffer even further because the government will increase their rent. Why is it raising their rent? These are always the things I challenge everyone at home to say. Why does the government need to increase their rent? It is because it spends like a maniac and has to make up for it. That is why. We have to ask why in every single thing we see come through the House. Why would it increase their rent? That makes no sense. These are our frontline men and women.

I would note that it is April. Do members know that April is the Month of the Military Child? I am the shadow minister for families, children and social development. Children are our most precious resource in this country. Teen suicide is at an all-time high in this country. Military families already have an abnormal amount of stress in their life. Families are separated. Children of military families have to have an extreme amount of resilience.

Do members know what military members cannot do for their family? They cannot be present when they are worried about paying their bills, or even worse how to feed them, when they have to decide, sitting like most common-sense Canadians are doing in this country every night, asking themselves whether they have enough money for this or that. These are not luxuries but basic necessities.

The Department of National Defence wants to increase rent for military families, when we have record-low recruitment and retention rates. We are short 16,000 military personnel. A quote I read was just shocking:

> The military's chaplain-general says morale among troops is the lowest it's been in recent memory as many soldiers struggle with the cost of living.
>
> In a briefing note sent to the chief of the defence staff, Gen. Wayne Eyre, chaplains say more Armed Forces members have been asking for help to make ends meet.

I wonder why nobody wants to join the Canadian Forces. If they come work for the military, they will get to use a food bank and will not be able to afford housing. There are organizations, such as Homes for Heroes, that are out on the front lines trying to ensure that veterans are housed. There are veterans' claims coming through the office of every MP of the House that are not being met; they are being disregarded.

How we treat the people who protect us says so much about our country. I was very fortunate, in my former career, to have spent time with families of the military, of the Canadian Forces. These people serve something bigger than themselves, and this is how the government treats them. We can do better. We have to do better. I encourage every member of the House to recognize their service, because when the day comes that we need someone to stand in front and protect us, we had better hope that person is there, because that is what they do. That is what the Canadian Forces is.

The common-sense Conservatives stand with them. We will fight with them. We will ensure that there is freedom for them to be able to afford to eat and to heat, and to house themselves.

● (1705)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is somewhat pathetic when we listen to Conservatives try to defend their own previous record with respect to the Canadian Forces, and then have the audacity to try to say that the Government of Canada is not doing what it should be doing for them. In fact we have invested and continue to invest in our members of the Canadian Forces far more than the Conservative government ever did, and we did not shut down veterans' offices. In fact we are on target to get to, I believe, about 1.7% of our GDP by 2030. Compare that to less than a percentage point under Stephen Harper. How does the Conservative Party live with itself when it tries to give the false impression that its members care about the Canadian Forces?

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, what is pathetic is a government that has been in power for eight years and says that what happened way back then is the problem. This is the reality. To blame the past, when the Liberals have been in power for eight years, is the most bizarre argument I have ever heard in my life. There has never been usage of food banks by military families this high; it is historic. That is their argument. I think we know who is pathetic.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is a sacred trust. The women and men in uniform in this country need to be treated with respect at all times. That is why the NDP actually produced the motion leading to the report that is on the floor of the House of Commons. We believe fundamentally that it is important to provide services for those who are willing to put their lives and physical well-being on the line for their country.

I was incredibly dismayed, as were most Canadians, over the period of the Harper regime, when veterans services were slashed. Veterans were forced to drive hundreds of kilometres in order to access the services that had been available in their communities before. It was despicable. It was an absolute and total lack of respect for those who give their lives for our country and those veterans of our country.

It is important to make those investments in housing, but it is also important to apologize for the past. Will the member apologize for the despicable actions of the Harper regime in cutting veterans services?

● (1710)

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, I cannot understand why we are not talking about what is happening right now. This is such a bizarre, distracting tactic to me. This is what is happening on the ground.

That member is in government, talking out of both sides of his mouth. He is saying that they put forward this motion, but, at the same time, they are going to continue to prop up the Liberal government that has caused so much chaos and suffering. Which one is it? Whose team are the NDP on?

Right now, that member's leader is holding the Liberal government in power. The government has caused the worst inflation in history, a record-high usage of food banks, and military families to not be housed and to have to use food banks. It makes no sense.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, we know that, back in the day, the time under Jean Chrétien and the Liberals was called the decade of darkness. I had a veteran tell me here the other day that, under the current Liberals, this has been a decade of disaster. When we were in government, never did anyone complain about housing, being unhoused or having to use food banks; that all happened under the Liberals' watch.

Does my colleague believe that the Minister of National Defence should actually roll back this rent increase on our troops, properly support them and house their families?

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, absolutely, 100%; that is why we are here today. We are here to support them.

The Liberal members can put their money where their mouth is, not that they have any money left; they spent it all. They can support this report, reverse that rent and actually send a message to people out there.

There are kids watching who always thought it would be a dream to work for the Canadian Forces, to join the forces and serve their country. The Liberals can send a message that there is a place for them and that they will be taken care of.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, we were scheduled to debate pharmacare, which is going to make a difference in the lives of millions of Canadians. We need to adopt this report.

I would like to propose the following motion for unanimous consent: That, notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practices of the House, (a) the eighth report of the Standing Committee on National Defence presented on Monday, February 26, be now concurred in; and (b) the House now proceed to orders of the day.

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

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, Conservatives do not want to debate pharmacare, and they do not want this report passed. I am a little concerned about their motives.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That is not a point of order.

Resuming debate, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am not surprised, and I actually anticipated it. Day after day in the House of Commons, the simple objective of the Conservatives is to be as obstructive and destructive as possible. We are seeing that again today.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I see the House doctor of the Conservative Party agrees with that.

Today we were supposed to be talking about pharmacare. I appreciate the fact that the NDP House leader attempted to bring forward a motion that would have seen the report pass. It could have passed just like that.

However, we all know that the Conservative Party brought this motion forward today for the same reason as it has brought forward other motions in the past, which is to prevent the government from being able to debate its legislation. The government has a substantial legislative agenda, and the Conservative Party feels entitled to prevent as much government legislation as possible not only from passing but also from being debated.

The government cares greatly about the families in our Canadian Forces. Let there be no doubt about that—

● (1715)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): There is a point of order from the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman.

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, the member for Winnipeg North has not been relevant at all on the motion before us. We are supposed to be talking about the report. All he is doing is talking about—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member knows there is a lot of latitude given. He has time to make his point.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member is so sensitive to us calling out what the Conservative Party is doing. I just finished saying that the most important reality of our Canadian Forces is the families, and he is standing up on a point of order. Does he not realize that the families of the Canadian Forces members are, in fact, what this report is all about?

As someone who was in the Canadian Forces and who was posted in Edmonton, I understand the issue of housing. I understand the pros and cons, the dips and so forth that take place, the waiting list for PMQs, for barracks and the whole process in which housing has evolved in the Canadian Forces, and I understand how important the issue is. I knew this not only today, and it did not necessarily take the report coming to the floor to be debated. This is not new. There has always been waiting lists to get into PMQs since the days when I was in the forces. I had to wait, and I actually lived in a PMQ. There have always been waiting lists.

Why did the Conservative Party wait until today to introduce this motion? If, in fact, Conservatives were genuine and really cared about the families and the Canadian Forces, they could have introduced some form of a motion on an opposition day. They should have done that if they genuinely cared about families and those in the forces representing our country and doing a phenomenal job, whether in Canada or abroad.

The Government of Canada has the backs of those members in the Canadian Forces and their families a lot more than Stephen Harper ever did. When I was first elected to the House of Commons in 2010, Stephen Harper literally closed down veterans offices, not two or three, but nine all over the country.

Members can imagine the veterans who already served in the forces in many different capacities and were going into private homes and facilities, some even in the non-profit area, when Stephen Harper shut down those access offices. In Manitoba, it was in Brandon. I was glad that when we took over the reins of power, we actually reopened those offices to continue to support our veterans.

There are two issues here that really need to be talked about. First and foremost is the motivating factor of the Conservative Party today and why the Conservatives are moving this motion. As the NDP House leader clearly attempted to get this motion passed, the Conservatives said no. It was not because of interest for members of the forces but rather to prevent legislation from being debated.

Just yesterday, I was in the House and had the opportunity to speak to a private member's bill, Bill C-270, which dealt with the issues of child porn and non-consensual porn. I stood in my place and provided commentary on how serious and important that issue is, not only to the government but also to every member inside this chamber. Throughout the debate, we found out that the Conservative Party was actually going to be voting against Bill C-63, which is the online harms act.

● (1720)

That was important to mention because the Conservatives were criticizing the government for not calling the legislation. They were heckling from their seats and were asking why we did not call the legislation if it was so important.

The Conservatives realize that when they bring in motions, as they have done today, they are preventing the government from bringing in legislation and from having debates on legislation. Then, they cry to anyone who will listen. They will tell lies and will do all sorts of things on social media. They spread misinformation to Canadians to try to give the impression that the House and Canada are broken.

There is no entity in the country that causes more dysfunction in the House of Commons, or even outside of the Ottawa bubble, than the Conservative Party of Canada under the leadership of the far right MAGA leader today. That is the core of the problem. They have a leader who genuinely believes and who wants to demonstrate that this chamber is dysfunctional. The only thing that is dysfunctional in this chamber is the Conservative Party. It does not understand what Canadians want to see.

If we look at some of the commitments we are making to the Canadian Armed Forces, we are talking about billions of dollars in the coming years. We have a target, and a lot depends on economic factors, but we are looking at 1.7% by 2030.

Let us contrast that to the Conservative government of Stephen Harper, who was the prime minister when the current Conservative leader was a parliamentary secretary and was a part of that government in a couple of roles. We saw a substantial decrease in funding. I made reference to the veterans and to shutting them down. What about the lack of general funding toward the Canadian Forces? We hit an all-time low under the Conservative Party and Stephen Harper. It was 1% of the GDP. That would be awfully embarrassing to go abroad and to start talking to people in the United States or to any of our ally countries in NATO. They were laughing at the Harper regime.

The Liberal government had to straighten out the problems of the Conservatives' inability to get a jet fighter. For years, they tried and failed. The Liberal government is now delivering on getting the jet fighters. The Liberal government continues to look at ways we can enhance our Canadian Forces, not only for today but also into the future. We will have new search and rescue aircraft that will be operating out of places like the city of Winnipeg.

An hon. member: They cannot fly.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: I do not know if the member knows what he is talking about across the way. Yes, they can fly. Planes do fly.

Madam Speaker, I can suggest to the members opposite that we are being challenged by the official opposition to get legislation passed, but the problem is that when it comes time to allow for that debate to occur, the Conservatives put in blockades of sorts. They will filibuster endlessly. They will bring in things like concurrence reports. What totally amazes me is that one Conservative member will stand up, and then another Conservative member will stand up to say, "I move for another Conservative member to be able to speak". Then, they cause the bells to ring for 30 minutes. How productive is that?

● (1725)

How productive is it to debate when the Conservative Party says that it is done for the day and that it is going to adjourn debate for the day, again, causing the bells to ring? That is one of my favourites. We all know the Conservative Party does not like to work late. It is more nine-to-five work, and if one goes a little beyond that, its numbers go down.

In the end, we wanted to have more debate. To facilitate that debate, we are prepared to sit late into the evening. We will even sit until midnight to have debates. I am happy to hang around the floor of the House of Commons and to contribute to debates. I do not have a problem going until midnight.

The Conservatives, on the other hand, need their sleep time and need their relaxation. After 6:30, they do not want to have debate, yet they will tell Canadians, "they are trying to ram things through, not allowing debate and cannot get legislation off". It is like how a little kid wants to get a chocolate bar, and here is a Tory kicking him under his feet so that he constantly falls down and cannot reach the chocolate bar—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman is rising on a point of order.

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, Standing Order 18 is very clear:

> No member shall speak disrespectfully of the Sovereign, nor of any of the royal family, nor of the Governor General or the person administering the Government of Canada; nor use offensive words against either House, or against any member thereof.

For the member for Winnipeg North to imply that any of us over here or that any member of the House is not working hard, as we all do, and we sit the same hours as every other member here—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I do take note of the hon. member, but it is a debatable kind of thing.

I would invite the hon. member for Winnipeg North to be, perhaps, more respectful of the other colleagues.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay is rising on the same point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I just want to follow up. I think it is a question of respect, about people being in the House, and I do remember that my Conservative colleagues were there all night. It was their leader who was off having canapés—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We cannot mention absences or presences in the House, as the member well knows.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the interjection by the member, because it reminds me of something. We had 24 hours of votes on the main estimates, line by line, and one of those lines was an increase in salaries for members of the Canadian Forces. There are two things I want to highlight on that. Here is the problem.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, my colleague asks how the Conservatives voted. Part of the problem was that it was around five o'clock in the morning. Some say they might have been sleeping, but I will not speculate. All I know is that it is public record. At five o'clock in the morning, the vote totals were really low. I can say that, at the end of the day, the Conservatives voted against increasing the salaries of members of the Canadian Forces.

That is kind of hard to imagine. They had a choice. It is not as though they had to vote on the whole budget. It was line by line. For those who were around and decided it was important to vote, the Conservatives voted against that.

A member stood on a point of order with regard to relevance. We voted on additional support for Ukraine under Operation Unifier. Members of our Canadian Forces were training and helping members of the force in Ukraine.

Mr. James Bezan: It's not Ukraine. They're in England.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Ukrainian soldiers are fighting in Ukraine against the Russians, Madam Speaker, for those who do not quite get it.

At the end of the day, Canadian Forces provided supports; those supports were a line item in the budget. Again, the Conservative Party intentionally chose to vote against that.

It is important to recognize that, when we think of the Canadian Forces, the first priority of the government is how we can support members of the armed forces and their families. For the short term, we should think of the $50 million-plus that are in the budget to help deal with the housing issue. We should think of the $290 million-plus over the next 20 years.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member says the housing we doubled. I really wish Conservatives would do some homework and compare investments in housing by the Harper regime compared with ours. One would think that this in itself would shut them up, or at least they would be quiet about it.

At the end of the day, we will invest tens of millions of dollars in the next year or two; over the next 20 years, we are talking about well over a quarter of a billion dollars. Unlike the Conservative Party, the government understands the needs of our forces, and that is why we will see budgetary actions for today and for tomorrow that will show such support.

I am disappointed that the Conservative Party says it cares about the Canadian Forces but does not take the time to use one of the many opposition days it has. Conservatives could articulate specific concerns, whatever they might be, and then allow for a discussion on it, not for a few hours, but for an entire day. An actual vote would then come of it.

● (1730)

To me, that just demonstrates the lack of integrity coming from the Conservative Party toward what are important issues of the day, because its sole focus is on being a destructive force. I can tell members and those who might be following the debate that, day in and day out, as a government, we are continuing to be focused on Canada's middle class and those wanting to become part of it, including generation Z, on that sense of fairness and on making sure that we are there to support our forces, their family members and so forth through budgetary measures in many different ways.

I am speaking specifically to members of the forces to let them know that as a government, our attention is focused on ensuring that we are going to be there not only for today but also well into the future. That is why we put the target somewhere in the neighbourhood of 1.7% to 1.8% of Canada's GDP, which would be really quite amazing to see when compared to what the former government budgeted, which was closer to 1% at one time.

● (1735)

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we come in here and listen to the member for Winnipeg North drone on and on, and he is loud. I live next door to him, and I know that his political epitaph is going to say that no member has ever spoken so much and said so little. That is a reality we are dealing with.

There is lots to chew on with all of the misinformation that was in the member's comments just now. First of all, he wanted to reflect on F-35s. The Liberals do not get to take credit for the F-35s, when they sidelined it in 2010. It was the Prime Minister, in his campaign of 2015, who said he would never buy the F-35. Guess what? The F-35 was the correct plane to buy. We applaud the government for finally coming to its senses and getting the right plane, 10 years too late. It wasted billions of dollars on buying used, rusted-out jets from Australia that are still not flying today, and we do not have pilots, because of the retention and recruitment crisis right now caused by the Liberals.

The member wants to talk about votes. In 2014 and 2015, when he was a member of the third party, he voted against Operation Unifier. Let us also remember that with respect to salaries, we voted against them because we lost confidence in the government and there was not enough money for our troops, because now they are lined up at food banks.

The Deputy Speaker: I try not to cut off members because I do want to get their questions and comments out there, but let us be reasonable in the amount of time we are taking to ask and answer questions, because we do get long answers as well.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member talks about the F-35. "We wanted the F-35 when Stephen Harper was the prime minister", is what he was saying, "but it is not our fault; it is the Liberal Party's fault. It did not allow us to buy the F-35s."

Now the Liberals are in government. We voted to put in a proper tendering process, and the F-35 is now going to be on its way because there is a competent government that truly cares about the Canadian Forces today, compared to a Conservative government that liked to talk about it. However, the Conservatives' actions speak louder than words, and all one needs to do is reflect back to the days in which the member was the parliamentary secretary to the minister of defence when its budget was borderline 1% of Canada's GDP. I would suggest that the member needs to reflect on that government's poor performance. I would contrast it with ours any day, with regard to the Canadian Forces.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, even though I only had the pleasure of hearing the second part of it, since we were called back to the House at the last minute.

The minister just tabled an update of Canada's defence policy, which will invest $8 billion over the next five years. Most of that money will be invested in the final part of those five years, however. In the first part, the investment will be much lower. We are also being told that the $900 million in cuts announced in September will not be reversed. This works out to roughly the same thing, considering what will happen in the first few years.

We heard military personnel complain a lot about these cuts and say that they were the first victims of penny-pinching. That is more or less what this motion touches on when it talks about military personnel, who are the first victims of the federal government's penny-pinching at their expense.

I would like to know whether the member thinks the government is sending the wrong message by saying that it is going to increase the defence budget but not reverse the cuts, which were made primarily at the expense of military personnel, even though it hopes to improve personnel retention and recruitment in the future, given that our national security depends on it.

● (1740)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, it is important, when we think of our Canadian Forces, that a long-term, multi-year budget come forward to ultimately deal with a great deal of the concerns members of the forces have and to provide reassurances. That is why I would refer the member to the release we put out last week, which literally, on a number of points, makes substantial commitments to build upon our Canadian Forces, so that it is good for us not only here in Canada but also abroad by meeting our international commitments. It also adds a great deal of value with respect to our Canadian manufacturing capabilities.

That is not something that is going to take place overnight, but it would take place over the next number of years. At least, it is a commitment that I believe will go a long way to providing stability and allowing members of the Canadian Forces to continue the fine work they are doing today.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this report, the eighth report, is the report the NDP commissioned. It calls on the government to cancel all plans to increase rents for military accommodations.

I just tried to get unanimous consent to get this report adopted. It was not the Liberals, the members of the Bloc Québécois or the independents saying no. It was the Conservatives who said no to the very report they are presenting. Therefore, if they refused to have the report adopted, this is obviously a procedural technique to block the important debate on pharmacare that the NDP initiated, which was on the Order Paper today.

Does my colleague find it reprehensible that Conservatives are blocking the adoption of the report, which would lead to cancelling those rent increases? Why are they blocking this important debate on pharmacare that will help millions of Canadians?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I can tell the member that the Minister of Health was prepared today to deliver a very important speech on Bill C-64, on pharmacare, and members of the Conservative Party knew that.

I have introduced petition after petition on the importance of pharmacare for a number of years now. I have been advocating very strongly for it. As the House leader of the New Democratic Party has articulated, literally millions of Canadians are going to benefit from a national pharmacare program, and this is just another piece of legislation the Conservatives want to play games with. They have no intention of making life easier for Canadians. Their sole focus is on developing bumper stickers for the next election, which is very sad to see.

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since 2014, Canada has had the third-largest increase in defence spending and ranks sixth among the 32 NATO countries. Recently, we announced that we are going to invest $8.1 billion over the next five years and increase it to about $73 billion over the next 20 years.

I would like to ask the member if he can touch upon the recent announcement we made, where we said we are going to invest $295 million into the Canadian Armed Forces housing strategy to build new housing as well as to rehabilitate the existing housing stock. We also announced about $497 million for the electronic health records of the Canadian Armed Forces. Can he touch upon the recent announcement we made that refers to these increases to improve the strength of the Canadian Armed Forces?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, let me take one component of what the member referenced. When we think of defending Canada over the next 20 years, think in terms of specialized maritime sensors, $1.4 billion; satellite ground station, $222 million; and tactical helicopters, $8.4 billion. There is a great deal of money being invested in the Canadian Forces for domestic and international roles, very critical roles that we play. There is a genuine commitment to get us up to 1.7% or 1.8% of Canada's GDP. I think we are doing, overall, reasonably well.

At the end of the day, members should give the proposed 20-year plan within the budget a serious look and get behind it. If they support the Canadian Forces, as they like to say they do, then they should be supporting some of the initiatives, getting behind them and voting. That includes family members or, more specifically, members of the forces. Members should not do what the Conservatives did last fall, when they literally voted against increases in the salaries of members of our Canadian Forces. They intentionally chose to do that.

● (1745)

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all I would ask the member is this: Is it true that in the budget, there will be $2.7 billion less spending on defence over the next three years, yes or no?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the good news is that next week we are going to get the budget. The member will have ample opportunity to peruse it. There are a lot of good things in there for Canadians. We understand the many benefits and issues around affordability that are so important to all Canadians.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion, that notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practices of the House, that the motion to concur in the eighth report of the Standing Committee on National Defence, presented on Monday, February 26, be deemed adopted and—

The Deputy Speaker: I am already hearing a number of noes.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, Conservatives have said no twice now to adopting the report.

The Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order.

The hon. member for Regina—Lewvan.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Mr. Speaker, we might actually listen to a unanimous consent motion from the NDP House leader if he had any honour to follow through on some of his promises.

The Deputy Speaker: We are getting into debate once again.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay on a point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, it has been so difficult to follow. My understanding was that the Conservatives refused to support our work on helping the military, but there was so much chaos in the House that I am wondering whether the hon. member from Burnaby he could repeat so we can have it on the record.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, I do think it is important for the House to understand this very clearly. For all Canadians watching, the Conservatives did say no twice to our veterans—

The Deputy Speaker: That is descending into debate.

The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman.

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, it is common practice in the House that if somebody is going to move for unanimous consent, they actually talk to all of the other whips to make sure we get to a unanimous consent motion. We were not consulted, and we will not say yes on something we have not been consulted on.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, I agree completely with the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman that those discussions should be had in advance. The unfortunate reality is that Conservatives never do that. They are the biggest abusers of that rule in the House, so for the member to stand up and say that is quite ironic and demonstrates hypocrisy.

The Deputy Speaker: The point is well taken. From this chair, I would ask all parties to get together to debate these things to make sure that before they come to the floor, they are actually going to be voted upon in the positive.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, just to clarify that that was the second time that they voted—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton in rising on a question of privilege.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

STATEMENTS BY MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a question of privilege from the 63rd report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, which was tabled earlier today. While the main thrust of the report concerned the prima facie contempt, which the House referred to the committee last year related to foreign interference directed toward the hon. member for Wellington—Halton Hills and other colleagues, it is my view that the report lays out grounds for finding a new prima facie contempt. Namely, that the Minister of National Defence provided misleading evidence to the committee and misleading comments in the House.

I should first offer some context. After the House agreed, on May 10, 2023, to refer to the committee that question of privilege, which was sparked by a report in The Globe and Mail based on a July 2021 intelligence assessment, it came to light, through special rapporteur David Johnston's subsequently published report that:

> In addition to the memorandum in question, CSIS sent an issues management note (IMU) to the then Minister of Public Safety, his Chief of Staff, and his Deputy Minister in May 2021, noting that there was intelligence that the PRC intended to target [the member for Wellington—Halton Hills], another MP, and their family in China (if any).

As the Speaker will recall, having been a member of the procedure and House affairs committee at the time, this led to new areas of important questions for our witnesses and especially for the public safety minister.

In the portion of the 63rd report summarizing the minister's appearances before the committee, we may read that the minister "understands that CSIS authorized the IMU to be shown to him, but he never received it." The associated footnote in the committee's report points to the minister's statement responding to one of my questions, which is found at page 22 of the committee evidence for June 1, 2023. It reads:

> It was authorized by CSIS to be shown to me, but they determined.... The director determined that this was not information the minister needed to know, so I was never notified of the existence of that intelligence, nor was it ever shared with me.

On the following page, one may read his further statements. When pressed about ministerial responsibility, he said:

> This is a situation where it's an operational decision of CSIS as to what information needs to be passed along to government. In this case, they made an operational decision that this was not required. Two years later, when it was leaked to the press, that information was subsequently shared with me.
>
> At the time, I had no knowledge that it existed. I had no knowledge that it was not being shared with me, because I wasn't aware that the information was available. CSIS, quite appropriately, made a determination that they didn't believe it was necessary to pass that information along.

The minister's version of events was soon contradicted. Elsewhere in the 63rd report, in the portion summarizing the testimony of CSIS director David Vigneault, we read that he:

> ...told the Committee that in May 2021 an IMU was sent from CSIS to the Minister of Public Safety...warning that [the member for Wellington—Halton Hills] and his family were being targeted by the PRC. The IMU included a specific directive that it be forwarded to the Minister. The purpose of the IMU was to highlight the information and bring it to the Minister's attention. When asked whether the information contained in the May 2021 IMU was information that [the minister] did not need to know, Mr. Vigneault stated that "the fact that we did an issue management note speaks to the notion that we wanted to highlight the information" to [the minister].

● (1750)

The associated footnote directs the reader to the following comments by Mr. Vigneault, at page 4 of the evidence from the committee's evening meeting for June 13, 2023, in response to my questions:

> It's also important that when we see we have something of high importance...we have instituted this process called an "information management note". That would be shared to bring attention to something more specifically. That was the purpose of this note. It was to bring it to the attention of the people to whom it was destined to go.

Another footnote points to the following answer, at page 7 of the evidence, in response to a question from the hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable: "As I mentioned a little earlier, CSIS and I conveyed the information to the Department of Public Safety along with the very specific directive to forward it to the minister... it's important for the committee to understand that we shared the intelligence and the briefing note."

In spite of this, the minister doubled down on his position. During question period on June 14, 2023, the day following Mr. Vigneault's committee appearance, in response to a question from his coalition partner, the hon. member for Burnaby South, the minister said, at page 15981 of the Debates, "Mr. Vigneault did not send his note to me".

Suffice to say there was no "operational decision" that was "appropriately made", or otherwise, by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service to keep the minister of public safety in the dark about a serious matter of national security, namely the threats from a foreign government directed toward a senior, long-serving member of the House of Commons.

However, this analysis does not rely exclusively on the evidence of Mr. Vigneault. According to the 63rd report, the minister's then deputy minister, Rob Stewart, did not recall an operational decision not to inform the minister about the IMU. More pointedly, the IMU in question has been released by CSIS under the Access to Information Act and was subsequently tabled by Conservatives at the procedure and House affairs committee. The committee has made reference to its possession of the IMU in the following comment at footnote 98 of the 63rd report: "The Committee notes that, in documents that it received, the May 2021 CSIS IMU was sent to [the minister], his Chief of Staff, and his Deputy Minister".

A copy of the publicly released version of the IMU has, for good measure, been annexed to the Conservatives' supplemental opinions in the 63rd report, so that the House is seized with a copy of it. While the document is heavily redacted, it is still plain to see on its face, in two separate locations: "Distribution...confined exclusively to: DM Public Safety, Minister Public Safety, MIN PS CoS, NSIA."

Recall that the minister said here on the floor of the House that the note was not sent to him. The facts are clear: The Minister of National Defence misled the procedure and House affairs committee, and he misled the House.

● (1755)

Page 82 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, notes among established grounds of contempt, "deliberately attempting to mislead the House or a committee (by way of statement, evidence, or petition)". Similar comments can be found on pages 153 and 1,081, for example.

As explained in numerous Speaker's rulings, to establish a prima facie contempt in respect of deliberately misleading statements three, elements must be made out. First, it must be proven that the statement in question was misleading. Second, it must be established that the person making the statement knew at the time that it was misleading. Third, in making the statement, it must be established that the statement was offered with the intention to mislead. It is clear from the evidence I have cited that the statement was misleading.

As for the other two elements of that test, the correct analysis is the following one. On its face, the minister's testimony is, frankly, absurd. Why would CSIS issue an IMU to the minister on intelligence about which an operational decision had been made to not share it with him? This defies common sense and lacks all credibility. After the minister was caught out on this deception, he appeared before the committee a second time, on October 24, 2023, and offered this weak explanation: "I assumed that if the director did not share information with me, then he didn't require that I see it."

Without more, we are not satisfied with the minister's explanation. Not only was the minister's assumption incorrect. It was, I would submit, a faulty one, too. Certainly, the minister was in no place to speak so authoritatively or with such conviction that CSIS had "made an operational decision" to keep him in the dark. The minister used very specific words. He was unequivocal in his words. Moreover, the minister made the claim repeatedly. Taken together, it is evident his choice of clear, convincing and unequivocal wording was deliberate. He showed no hesitation, and he did not shade his words with doubt or otherwise represent that he was speaking on the basis of an assumption. Put simply, he did not misspeak. He actively misled the procedure and House affairs committee, and he actively misled this House.

Speaker Milliken stated, on February 1, 2002, at page 8581 of the Debates:

> The authorities are consistent about the need for clarity in our proceedings and about the need to ensure the integrity of the information provided by the government to the House.

The integrity of information here, too, is in doubt. To this, it is worth adding the words of one of your predecessors, Mr. Speaker, from a ruling delivered March 3, 2014, at page 3430 of the Debates:

> This incident highlights the primordial importance of accuracy and truthfulness in our deliberations. All members bear a responsibility, individually and collectively, to select the words they use very carefully and to be ever mindful of the serious consequences that can result when this responsibility is forgotten.

What is serious here is that these exchanges at committee appear to have been meant to deflect from the shocking fact that the minister of public safety, as he was, through his own inaction and omission, was unaware of intelligence concerning the targeting of a senior long-serving member of Parliament by a hostile foreign state, intelligence that CSIS had specifically sent to him as a matter of high importance.

● (1800)

This constituted a serious breakdown in the flow of information and intelligence under the minister's watch. As the minister, he bore responsibility for this breakdown. Instead of accepting responsibility, the minister deflected blame to the director of CSIS for a supposed "operational decision" that had been made to keep him in the dark.

The minister had to have known that no such "operational decision" had been made, yet he said so anyway. The minister had a duty to be truthful in his testimony to the committee. He was not truthful. He misled the committee in a self-serving attempt to evade accountability for a massive failure that occurred under his watch as minister of public safety.

Misleading a parliamentary committee is a serious matter. Indeed, it can be a contempt of Parliament. That it was a minister of the Crown who did so makes this even more grave. It simply cannot be overlooked. Indeed, as Speaker Milliken ruled, on November 6, 2003, at page 9229 of the Debates:

> However tempting the invitation, the Speaker cannot presume to articulate the expectations that committees have of the witnesses who come before them. Suffice it to say that I believe all hon. members will agree with me when I say simply that committees of the House and, by extension, the House of Commons itself, must be able to depend on the testimony they receive, whether from public officials or private citizens. This testimony must be truthful and complete. When this proves not to be the case, a grave situation results, a situation that cannot be treated lightly.

On February 1, 2002, after concerns about the statements of another Liberal minister of national defence, Speaker Milliken found a prima facie case of privilege, commenting, at page 8582 of the Debates:

> ...I have concluded that the situation before us where the House is left with two versions of events is one that merits further consideration by an appropriate committee, if only to clear the air.

Similarly, your predecessor ruled, on March 3, 2014, at page 3431 of the Debates, that a prima facie case of privilege existed:

> ...the fact remains that the House continues to be seized of completely contradictory statements. This is a difficult position in which to leave members, who must be able to depend on the integrity of the information with which they are provided to perform their parliamentary duties.

> Accordingly, in keeping with the precedent cited earlier in which Speaker Milliken indicated that the matter merited "...further consideration by an appropriate committee, if only to clear the air", I am prepared in this case for the same reason to allow the matter to be put to the House.

In the present case, the House, again, is possessed of two versions of events by virtue of the 63rd report. Before concluding, I should note that while the statements of concern were made last spring, the matter is actually being raised in the House at the earliest opportunity. I would refer the Chair, in that regard, to Speaker Milliken's February 10, 2011, ruling on page 8030 of the Debates:

> The parliamentary secretary to the government House leader was not mistaken in his assertion that any and all statements made in committee, even when those have been repeated verbatim in the House, remain the business of the committee until such time as it elects to report them officially to the House. This is a long-standing practice....

● (1805)

> Furthermore, while a copy of an internal CIDA document obtained through an access to information request was provided to me, it was not tabled in the House and, thus, is not officially before it....

Speaker Milliken continued:

> It may sound overly technical but the reality is that when adjudicating cases of this kind, the Chair is obliged to reference material fully and properly before the House. With regard to statements made by the minister, this material is limited to a few answers to oral questions and one answer to a written question, not to any comments in committee.

A week following that ruling, the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade presented its sixth report, which referred to the committee testimony in question as well as provided a copy of the document obtained through the access to information process. On the strength of this information with which the House had become seized, Mr. Speaker Milliken found a prima facie case of privilege on March 9, 2011, at page 8842 of the Debates.

The same circumstances prevail here with the 63rd report now placing properly before the House the necessary evidence to make out the relevant tests for the question of privilege I am raising.

Should the Speaker agree with me that the air again needs to be cleared because the current Minister of National Defence appears to have committed a contempt by deliberately misleading the procedure and house affairs committee, I am prepared to move the appropriate motion to task that committee with assessing this specific problem and reporting its views back to the House.

● (1810)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the time to digest what the member just said and reserve the right to return to the House tomorrow on this.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this particular point, we too will return.

However, while I have the floor, after discussions with you and others in the chamber, I am hoping to get unanimous consent to go back so that I can answer some Order Paper questions and motions for the production of papers.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today. Question Nos. 2357, 2361 and 2363.

[*Text*]

Question No. 2357—**Ms. Lori Idlout**:

> With regard to Indigenous Services Canada's 2023-24 Departmental Plan: (a) what indicators does the department use to measure the mental health and well-being of First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities; (b) do the indicators used by the department show that the mental health and well-being of First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities will improve by 2024-25; (c) does the Minister of Indigenous Services believe that the department can achieve its mental health targets by March 2028 with the sunsetting of funding for mental health and wellness at the end of 2023-24; (d) what is the total number of (i) full-time equivalent, (ii) part-time equivalent, employees who will be affected by the sunsetting of mental health and wellness funding; and (e) what are the details of all programs and services that will be reduced or eliminated as a result of the sunsetting of funding for mental health and wellbeing?

Ms. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Indigenous Services Canada, or ISC, works closely with first nations and Inuit partners to gather and develop monitoring systems to address the need for timely, community-based and national-level data. We work collaboratively to ensure that data informs policies and programs, and we seek to build upon national monitoring and research activities. ISC also supports first nations and Inuit to develop self-determined indicators. Although data are less readily available for Métis populations, ISC also supports Métis organizations to develop a long-term strategic plan for Métis data development and governance.

In response to part (a) of the question, indicators within ISC's departmental plan that relate to mental wellness are the percentage of first nations individuals who reported "excellent" or "very good" mental health and the percentage of Inuit adults who reported "excellent" or "very good" mental health.

In response to part (b), the Minister of Indigenous Services remains committed to working with indigenous partners to achieve by March 2028 the mental health targets identified in the departmental results framework, which seek that 55% of first nations and at least 50% of Inuit people report “excellent” or “very good” mental health. The department will measure distinctions-specific progress towards increasing positive outcomes by using data from self-reported health surveys that ask respondents to rate their mental health. This is a recognized metric that closely aligns with other measures of mental health and well-being.

As noted in several indigenous-led mental wellness strategies and frameworks, such as the first nations mental wellness continuum framework, the national Inuit suicide prevention strategy, and Métis Nation’s vision for health, addressing inequities in the social determinants of health and the impact of colonization, racism and discrimination are key to Indigenous mental wellness. The journey of reconciliation is far from complete, and it remains a priority for the government. Moving forward on the commitments of implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action continues to be a priority in the mandate of the Minister of Indigenous Services and the mandates of all ministers. It is with the knowledge that it will take at least seven generations to heal from the profound harm caused by the Indian sesidential School system and other colonial sources of trauma that we are working with partners to ensure that survivors and intergenerational survivors continue to have access to the services they need to support them on their healing journeys.

With respect to part (c), ISC will continue to advance its mandate to work with first nations, Inuit and Métis to improve access to high-quality services, improve well-being in indigenous communities across Canada and support Indigenous peoples in assuming control of the delivery of services at the pace and in the ways they choose. Federally funded mental wellness programming aims to improve well-being in indigenous communities across Canada by supplementing the programs and services offered by provinces and territories. Contributing to this are access to local multidisciplinary mental wellness teams, wraparound services at opioid agonist therapy sites, life promotion and suicide prevention initiatives, substance use prevention and treatment services, and crisis line services.

In response to part (d), these programs are supported by 80 full-time positions.

Regarding part (e), these mental wellness investments are funding mental wellness teams in communities, bolstering wraparound services at opioid agonist therapy sites and enhancing suicide prevention and life promotion efforts. This investment is also funding trauma-informed health and cultural support programs, including the Indian residential schools resolution health support program, the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls health and cultural support program, the federal Indian day schools health and cultural support program, and the Indian residential schools crisis line. The program funds community-based cultural and emotional support services across Canada.

Question No. 2361—**Mr. Eric Melillo**:

With regard to the government's commitment to plant 2 billion trees: (a) which organizations have received funding as part of the tree planting program; (b) for each organization in (a), how much funding has it received to date, broken down by year in which the funding was received; (c) for each organization in (a), how many trees was it expected to plant with the funding provided to date; and (d) how many of the trees in (c) have been planted to date?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada has made significant progress on its commitment to plant two billion trees. As of December 2023, the government had agreements signed or under negotiation to plant over 393 million trees, with over 200 contribution agreements with provinces, territories, municipalities, indigenous organizations and other groups. As of the most recent progress update in August 2023, the program had supported the planting of over 110 million trees since it was launched in 2021. As funding recipients have until May 31, 2024, to submit planting numbers for the 2023 planting season, an update on progress to date will be provided shortly thereafter.

Information on projects, organizations and planned planted trees with signed contribution and grant agreements can be found here: https://search.open.canada.ca/grants/?sort=agreement_start_date+desc&search_text=contributions+for+2+billion+trees&page=1&agreement_type=C%7CG%7CO&owner_org=nrcan-rncan

Information about the two billion trees program can be found here: https://www.canada.ca/en/campaign/2-billion-trees.html

Information on the progress of the two billion trees program can be found here: https://www.canada.ca/en/campaign/2-billion-trees/our-action.html

Information on the two billion trees program's collaboration with provinces and territories can be found here: https://www.canada.ca/en/campaign/2-billion-trees/2-billion-trees-partnerships-with-provinces-and-territories.html

Question No. 2363—**Mr. Philip Lawrence**:

With regard to government funding for highway or road projects: (a) what are the details of all proposals or requests for funding related to highways or roads which the government has received but for which the funding has not yet been either formally approved or denied, including, for each, the (i) date on which the government received the proposal or request, (ii) amount of federal government funding requested, (iii) entity that submitted the request, (iv) summary of the proposal or request, including geographic location and road or highway numbers, if known, (v) current status of the application, (vi) expected timeline for when the government will provide a response; and (b) what are the details of any highway or road projects which are currently proposed or in progress and which are subject to, and waiting on, a federal environmental review, including, for each, the (i) name and description of the project, (ii) geographic location and highway or road numbers, if known, (iii) date on which the environmental review began, (iv) expected completion date of the environmental review, (v) current status of the project, including details of what has been completed to date, (vi) total amount of federal funding committed to the project, (vii) amount of government funding on hold pending the completion of the review?

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to government funding for highway or road projects, a list of projects submitted under the investing in Canada infrastructure program, or ICIP, is available on the Infrastructure Canada, or INFC, website at: https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/plan/icip-projpiic-eng.html

Information received in respect of projects from a province, territory or municipality that have not been funded cannot be provided as such information is considered to be confidential information under paragraphs 13(1)(c)(d) of the Access to Information Act, respecting information received in confidence from another level of government.

Likewise, information received in respect of projects provided from the private sector, including non governmental organizations, that have not been funded cannot be provided, as such information is considered to be confidential information under paragraphs 20(1)(b)(c) of the act, respecting confidential information supplied by a third party. The names of project proponents also cannot be provided, since such information is confidential under subsection 19(1) of the act, respecting personal information.

Therefore, INFC is not in a position to provide information on the details of all non-funded applications received as requested in part (a) of the question.

With respect to part (b), INFC currently has no highway or road projects subject to an impact assessment under the Impact Assessment Act.

[*English*]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, furthermore, if the government's responses to Question Nos. 2356, 2358 to 2360, 2362 and 2364 to 2370 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled in an electronic format immediately.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Text*]

Question No. 2356—**Mrs. Julie Vignola**:

With regard to all federal contracts awarded between 2019 and 2023 to suppliers of the federal government, reporting departments, organizations and agencies, federal offices and any other federal entity that received funds from the Public Accounts of Canada: (a) which contracts required essential knowledge of the English language, both with respect to the spoken or written language of suppliers in the workplace and the language of deliverables; and (b) what are the details of each contract in (a), including the (i) contract number, (ii) name of the supplier, (iii) name of the federal department or agency responsible for the contract, (iv) amount awarded, (v) date of the contract, (vi) languages required for the work, (vii) languages required for deliverables, (viii) justification for requiring only English as the language of work or deliverables?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2358—**Ms. Lori Idlout**:

With regard to all federal funding committed to the creation and maintenance of housing stock in Nunavut, broken down by fiscal year since 2015-16: (a) what is the total amount committed; (b) what is the total amount spent; (c) how much new housing stock was created in Nunavut; and (d) what are the government's projections for the number of housing units that will be built in Nunavut by 2030?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2359—**Mr. Sameer Zuberi**:

With regard to the Cadets and Junior Canadian Rangers youth programs, in the 2022-23 fiscal year: (a) how many staff, broken down by employment status (i.e. full-time, part-time), were employed at the (i) Regional Headquarters, including the Northwest Region, Pacific Region, Central Region, Eastern Region, Atlantic Region, (ii) National Headquarters, (iii) Corps/Squadron level; (b) of the staff in (a), what were their roles, responsibilities, and job descriptions; (c) what was the salary range of those in (a)(i) and (a)(ii); (d) what professional and special services were used, how often, and for what purpose, and how much did each of these items cost; (e) how much money was spent on advertising by the (i) National Headquarters, (ii) Northwest Region, (iii) Pacific Region, (iv) Central Region, (v) Eastern Region, (vi) Atlantic Region; and (f) what is the breakdown of (e) by type or platform of advertising (e.g. Meta, Google, local television, local newspapers), how much money was spent exclusively on recruitment efforts, and what did those efforts include?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2360—**Mr. Sameer Zuberi**:

With regard to the federal public service, broken down by year since 2015: (a) how many public servants are employed in each department, agency, Crown corporation, or other government entity; (b) what is the breakdown of the employees in (a) by (i) branch of each department, agency, Crown corporation, or other government entity, (ii) directorate in each branch; (c) what is the breakdown of the employees in (a) and (b) by level (i.e. at the executive level or higher, below the executive level); and (d) what is the breakdown of employees in (a) through (c) by employment status (i.e. full-time, part-time)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2362—**Mr. Philip Lawrence**:

With regard to government programs that provide funding for roads and highways, including both regular and non-traditional highways or roads, such as those in northern or remote areas: what are the details of all funding agreements that are currently in place, including, for each, the (i) amount of federal funding, (ii) type of agreement, (iii) partners of the agreement, (iv) cost-sharing arrangement, (v) name of the agreement, (vi) program under which the funding is provided, (vii) project description, (viii) specific geographic location of the roads receiving the funding, including highway or road numbers, if applicable?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2364—**Mr. Gord Johns**:

With regard to contracts awarded since the 2009-10 fiscal year, broken down by fiscal year: what is the total value of contracts awarded to (i) McKinsey & Company, (ii) Deloitte, (iii) PricewaterhouseCoopers, (iv) Accenture, (v) KPMG, (vi) Ernst and Young, (vii) GC Strategies, (viii) Coredal Systems Consulting Inc., (ix) Dalian Enterprises Inc., (x) Coradix Technology Consulting Ltd, (xi) Dalian and Coradix in joint venture?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2365—**Mr. Colin Carrie**:

With regard to Health Canada’s approval of the COVID-19 modRNA vaccines (modified with N1-methylpseudouridine) for pregnant women: (a) what specific research data supported the claims that (i) this product may be safely administered at any stage of pregnancy, (ii) this product protects pregnant women from SARS-CoV-2 infection and severe disease, (iii) the vaccinated mother is less likely to transmit SARS-CoV-2 to her newborn after delivery compared to an unvaccinated mother, (iv) the modRNA vaccine, and consequently the spike protein, do not excrete into breast milk, (v) the modRNA, and consequently the spike protein, do not cross the placental barrier, (vi) all modRNA is destroyed in the human body within about two days, (vii) there is no possibility that the modRNA vaccine contents will enter the cell nucleus and modify the human genome; (b) with respect to the claims in (a), has Heath Canada modified these claims based on updated scientific research, and if so, which claims and how; (c) what is the real-world data indicating that this product presents no safety concerns for the pregnant woman or the developing fetus or newborn; (d) what is the quantitative threshold for a concerning safety signal for these cohorts; (e) how has the monograph for the COVID-19 modRNA vaccines been updated in relation to pregnancy and lactation to convey this safety research data; and (f) when were these updates made?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2366—**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall**:

With regard to Health Canada's (HC) approval of mRNA vaccines for pregnant and lactating women, and children, youth, and adults of reproductive age: (a) what is the cause of the reported menstrual irregularities in vaccinated women; (b) what is the safety data on any single exposure and repeated exposure to lipid nanoparticles (LNP) for (i) pregnant women, (ii) unborn fetuses; (c) do LNPs, spike protein encoding mRNA, or spike protein pass through the placenta; (d) if the answer to (c) is affirmative, does this present a safety concern to the unborn fetus, and how was this determined; (e) where are LNPs, mRNA, or spike protein distributed in the fetus; (f) what are the potential genetic effects of the COVID-19 vaccine with respect to the epigenetic effects on germ cells; (g) what are the specific references confirming that mRNA is not integrated into the genome or genetic material of the oocyte or the sperm; (h) how, and for how long, does HC actively monitor or plan to actively monitor the impact of the dose-dependent effect of the vaccine on future fertility in (i) vaccinated women and men of child-bearing age, (ii) vaccinated children, (iii) children exposed in utero to the COVID-19 vaccines following maternal injection; (i) does HC actively monitor or plan to actively monitor the adverse effects of the mRNA vaccination, and for how long, in the (i) pregnant mother, (ii) fetus; (j) if the answer to (i) is affirmative, does this or will this include miscarriages, uterine deaths, possible illnesses and birth malformations; (k) with respect to studies analyzing various components and products of COVID-19 vaccination, including spike protein, what have been the findings comparing placental tissue and breast milk from vaccinated and non-vaccinated mothers, and what are the specific references; (l) based on available research and real-world data, what updated written guidance has HC provided to provinces and territories regarding information which is given to pregnant women prior to and after vaccination, their doctors (neonatal doctors, paediatricians, fertility doctors, obstetricians), other medical staff (including midwives), and vaccinators with respect to (i) the potential adverse events to monitor post-injection, (ii) their duty to report adverse events and where; and (m) does the guidance in (l) include the updated mRNA vaccine monographs and where to find them?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2367—**Ms. Lori Idlout**:

With regard to Bill C-61, An Act respecting water, source water, drinking water, wastewater and related infrastructure on First Nations land, since December 7, 2022: (a) what are the details of all consultations for the purposes of this legislation, including the (i) date of consultation, (ii) name of the First Nations rights-holder or organization consulted, (iii) details of the feedback received; (b) how many engagements did the government receive (i) through the mail, (ii) by phone, (iii) by email; (c) did the government receive any requests to extend the consultation period; and (d) what changes were made to the draft proposal sent to First Nations rights-holders and organizations on February 17, 2023, that were reflected in the version of Bill C-61 that was introduced and read the first time on December 11, 2023?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2368—**Mr. Scott Reid**:

With regard to penitentiary farm and agriculture and agri-food operations at the Joyceville Institution and the Collins Bay Institution: (a) what funds have been spent on Public Services and Procurement Canada fees and disbursements and professional project management services, including, but not limited to, concept design, project leaders, tender packages, geo-technology, hydrogeology, engineering, and architectural consultants, broken down by fiscal year since 2018; (b) what funds have been spent on feasibility studies, public consultations, online consultations, and contracts with Goss Gilroy and Monachus Consulting during the feasibility and consultation phase of the penitentiary farm project, between January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2018; (c) prior to the reinstatement of the penitentiary farm program, what revenues were earned by Correctional Service Canada from rental agreements for the penitentiary farmland at the Collins Bay Institution and the Joyceville Institution, broken down by year for each year from 2013 to 2018; (d) of the revenues earned from penitentiary agriculture programming since 2018, what is the breakdown by source and year; (e) how many offenders are currently employed in penitentiary agriculture programming, broken down by location; and (f) of the offenders who have been employed in penitentiary agriculture programming since it was reintroduced in 2018, how many have been released, and, of those released, how many obtained jobs in the agriculture sector?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2369—**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas**:

With regard to funding for research at universities and associated organizations: (a) what amount of funding, in Canadian dollars, is provided directly by the various federal government departments; (b) what amount of funding, in Canadian dollars, does not come from the granting agencies, used to fund research projects (i) in universities, (ii) in research organizations affiliated with universities, (iii) by researchers affiliated with a university, (iv) in total; and (c) what is the distribution of this amount in (a) and (b) between (i) U15 universities, (ii) small and medium-sized universities?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 2370—**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas**:

With regard to funding for research at universities and associated organizations: (a) what is the amount of funding, in Canadian dollars, that is provided directly by the granting agencies and is used to fund research projects (i) in universities, (ii) in research organizations affiliated with universities, (iii) by researchers affiliated with a university, (iv) in total; and (b) what is the distribution of this amount between (i) U15 universities, (ii) small and medium-sized universities?

(Return tabled)

[*English*]

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all motions for the production of papers also be allowed to stand at this time.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6:14 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

CRIMINAL CODE

(Bill C-376. On the Order: Private Members' Business:)

February 12, 2024—Mr. Melillo (Kenora)—Second reading and reference to the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights of Bill C-376, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (orders prohibiting the possession of weapons).

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Kenora is not present to move the item as announced on today's Notice Paper. Accordingly, the item will be 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*]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just this morning, my office was in communication with a local food bank, which confirmed that food bank use continues to go up.

Barrhead and District Family and Community Support Services, in a town of fewer than 5,000 people, saw 184 new families using the food bank in 2023. This was a dramatic increase from 2022. It has seen seniors who are embarrassed to come and use a food bank for the first time. The Westlock & District Food Bank has already added 140 families just this year, for an increase of 30%. The Salvation Army food bank in Peace River has seen a 30% increase since 2021 and is adding an average of two families per week.

Most people who are starting to come to these food banks are young families. After paying for their utilities, gas and rent, they cannot afford to put food on the table. This is because, when we tax the farmer who grows the food, tax the trucker who delivers the food and tax the person who sells the food, Canadians cannot afford to buy food. Very soon, a farmer with a 5,000-acre farm in Canada will be paying $150,000 a year in carbon tax. The carbon tax is stopping Canadians from being able to afford to live.

Back in December, I asked the government House leader whether the Prime Minister would put aside his ideological position on the carbon tax and remove it for all family farms across the nation. Here we are, four months later, and the government continues to be relentless in its pursuit of making life more unaffordable for Canadians.

Instead of putting a spike in the hike on April 1, the Prime Minister has chosen to increase the carbon tax yet again by 23%. It is no surprise when we see large numbers of people protesting. Farmers and families are angry and frustrated with the government, and 70% of Canadians and 70% of premiers have called on the Prime Minister, but he has refused to listen. When asked why he will not meet with the premiers, he said that he had already met with them back in 2016, eight years ago. In very few of those provinces, if any, is the same person still premier.

Whether it is the trucker who opposes the Prime Minister's radical mandates or the farmer who opposes his radical carbon tax, the Prime Minister has shown Canadians his true colours. He cares more about advancing his radical ideology than he does for the Canadians he is supposed to represent. Common-sense Conservatives understand how hard it is for Canadians to survive in Canada, whether they are hard-working farmers, young families or seniors.

We have stood with the farmers by putting forward Bill C-234 to give farmers relief from the carbon tax, so they can help put affordable food on Canadian tables. We stand for the families who are trying to feed their children, fill their car with gas and pay their rent. We have taken every opportunity to get the government to axe the tax, voting non-confidence in it 135 times and voting against the Liberal budget. Provided that it continues to support a carbon tax, we will continue to vote non-confidence in the government. Conservatives will not stop fighting for Canadians.

Again, I want a clear answer for all Canadians: When will the government stand up, remove the carbon tax from farmers and rural families, and axe the tax for all Canadians so life can be affordable in Canada once again?

● (1815)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad that for the first time, and for as long as I have been paying attention to federal politics, Conservatives are talking about poverty elimination. It is good that we are actually looking at strategies to help people with their bills.

While the member was talking, I went on the Food Banks Canada website. They have provided an Alberta checkpoint. It is like a report card, which they have provided, with policy recommendations, a whole bunch of rankings and letter grades for various things. I read all of the policy recommendations.

I have met with Food Banks Canada. I meet with all of the poverty elimination and food security experts across the country on a frequent basis because poverty elimination is a top concern for my government, our government and for me personally. I grew up in community housing, and I believe that poverty is something that we can tackle together.

None of the policy recommendations from the Alberta report card on the Food Banks Canada website mention the price on pollution. It does not mention the carbon tax because pollution pricing does not contribute to the financial difficulties that Canadians are experiencing.

That is something that has been repeated over and over again by over 200 economists in Canada. They wrote a letter, which basically called out Conservative misinformation and the criticisms that the party has put forth over the last two years, since the member for Carleton has been the leader of the Conservative Party.

I have said this a number of times in the House. All of those Conservative members ran on a price on pollution that was very similar to ours, except instead of getting rebates, such as the Canada carbon rebate, it would have been deposited into some type of loyalty account that they could use to spend on specific items. A lot of people called the proposal, “the more you burn, the more you earn”. It was widely refuted by environmental organizations and groups as a half measure in lowering our emissions.

The price on pollution sends money back to eight out of 10 Canadian families, and that includes Albertans. The report card on poverty reduction from Food Banks Canada, specifically under its Alberta section, lists all of the things that the Alberta government could be doing. It calls out, as a contributing factor, the Alberta government for changing the previous NDP policy on the Alberta child benefit. The Alberta government has not adequately kept up with inflation with respect to minimum wage. It has not built any affordable housing. The report card makes some very good recommendations on things such as better basic income programs, similar to the Canada child benefit, which we modernized and made tax-free.

We are continually being told by the Conservatives, as the only party in the House of Commons saying this, that the price on pollution in Canada is what is causing the financial difficulties Canadians are facing. This is absolutely false. It is not true. These Conservatives can repeat their slogans all they want. When hundreds of Canadian Ph.D.s and economists write a letter to say that it is nonsense, that it is garbage and they should stop saying it because it is untrue, I wish the Conservatives would take heed.

Now, it is important to recognize why the Conservatives are on this campaign. It is clear now. It is actually a cover-up campaign. It is because the Premier of Alberta, Danielle Smith, on April 1 increased the price of gas in the province of Alberta by 4¢. This is the exact same day that the price on pollution went up a little bit, and the Canada carbon rebate went up to accommodate that. She increased it by more than the price on pollution.

It seems that the Conservative members, particularly those from Alberta, would like to cover that up and hide it from public knowledge. The Canadian Taxpayers Federation called them out and said that, if they are going to throw stones, to get out of their glass house. The Conservatives from Saskatchewan are in the exact same situation. Both of those premiers have done nothing for affordability in those provinces.

● (1820)

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, I was listening to the member across the way. He must live in some alternate reality. Alberta is one of the most affordable provinces to live in this whole country. Housing is relatively affordable in Alberta, compared to the rest of the country. No matter what he says, affordability is less of an issue in Alberta, particularly when it comes to housing.

Most of my question was about food costs. We know that, no matter what the minister says, Canadians are seeing the impacts of the carbon tax on their food budget. The price of groceries is up significantly. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has confirmed what Conservatives have been saying the whole time. Canadians are worse off because of the carbon tax. We need a government to take leadership seriously when it comes to helping Canadians and doing what is best for them, for the future, and the prosperity of this nation.

The government is well beyond its expiry date. Canadians have seen through the smoke and mirrors of the Liberal government and are ready to vote in a majority Conservative government that would axe the tax. We would bring home affordable housing, axe the tax, and bring it home.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Mr. Speaker, once again I want to stress that pricing pollution does not cause financial stress. In fact, the Canada carbon rebate sends more money back, particularly to those families who are experiencing food insecurity and poverty.

However, since the member opposite wanted to use food banks as an example, I would like to read the policy recommendations for Alberta food banks from Food Banks Canada.

Under recommendations on "Accountability", it reads:

> Introduce a provincial poverty reduction strategy
>
> While Alberta made significant headway in the reduction of child poverty between 2015 and 2020...thanks to...the federal Canada Child Benefit, the lack of a comprehensive plan with clear goals and indicators stymies the ability of government and stakeholders to work together with a common vision.

The second section is "Affordable Housing". Despite what the member opposite just said, housing is expensive in Alberta. The report goes on to say, "Dedicate 0.5% of the provincial budget every year to affordable rental housing construction". This is something they have not done.

The next section is "Adequate Income Support", or decent work that pays. They are asking the provincial government in Alberta to help more. Alberta's premier, Danielle Smith, could start by stopping the price hike on gas that she did on April 1, which was more than the price on pollution.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, on March 22 I asked the government to level with Canadians on the true efficacy of the mega programs it announced that fall short on the delivery of real and substantive assistance to all Canadians. I referenced the much-touted Liberal-NDP pharmacare deal reached by the governing coalition. However, when Canadians took a closer look, they saw a scheme that is more smoke and mirrors and that would not actually truly help people.

Canadians saw the charade repeat in the not-so-glorious dental deal worked out by the coalition. The problem is that it freezes out most of the middle class and makes seniors wait until age 87 for coverage. So much for how the Liberals and NDP care about Canada's senior citizens. I guess seniors under 87 do not have dental issues. The scheme is also not going over well with Canada's dentists. They have indicated they will not accept the government's proposed fee schedules.

Canadians have also seen multiple carbon tax grabs. Another one came into effect on April 1, a real cruel April Fool's Day joke. It is just like all the other carbon taxes, raking in billions but doing little to improve Canada's environment and provide an honest and full rebate to all Canadians, especially small businesses, which were promised $2.5 billion by the government and have yet to receive a single dollar.

The government then turned around, after reviewing the polls in Atlantic Canada, and gave a carbon tax holiday to the region, forgetting about the rest of the country, the farmers, the truckers, the increased grocery prices and so on. So much for being concerned about the environment. Also, if the Liberals managed by some miracle to pull out another minority victory in the next election, the respite from the carbon tax grab in Atlantic Canada would disappear quickly.

Then there was the equally shady national child care strategy. That wonderful plan has led to a net loss of over 100,000 spaces and created child care deserts, especially in rural areas. Even now, there are constituents in my community asking when the spaces are going to become available. What good is $10-a-day child care if there are no spaces to access?

Let us not forget the cannabis policy that backfired and led to the growth of a huge black market and increased crime and welcomed the return of organized crime in the cannabis business.

Yes, what has been given much fanfare from the government needs closer examination. The proof is indeed in the pudding, and these policies are severely unappetizing. They are devoid of true benefits to Canadians and are just a bundle of smoke and mirrors.

Finally, in responding to my initial question, the parliamentary secretary, and I am glad another individual is joining me this evening, tried to defend the indefensible and took a few shots at me. He stated that I had initially campaigned on most of these policies as a Liberal candidate in the last election, and he said that I begged to be a member of the Liberal caucus when I was removed. This was based on a years-old trumped-up charge against me, presumably to defeat me in the later election. However, that charge was conveniently forgotten and withdrawn by a Crown prosecutor, well before that election was eventually held.

I want to tell the parliamentary secretary I certainly did not campaign on many of these dubious policies that came out after the election and are designed to pretend real assistance would be given to all Canadians. No, I did not campaign on mismanagement and hoodwinking, and I am glad not to have rejoined the Liberal caucus. It is one that rallies around misleading policies and deal-making with its NDP partner to retain power.

Canadians deserve better.

● (1825)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, speaking of Canadians who deserve better, the constituents of Spadina—Fort York, indeed, deserve better than this show. Regarding this effort to join the Conservative caucus, all I can say is good luck. I do not recall a time when there was a Conservative MP for Spadina—Fort York.

While the member prefers to borrow slogans from the Conservatives' empty political rhetoric, I will choose to focus on the work we have done for Canadians from coast to coast to coast. Since 2015, our government's economic plan has invested in the middle class, strengthened Canada's social safety net and worked to build an economy where everyone has a real and fair chance at success. From historic investments in child care to quarterly Canada child benefit payments, Canada carbon rebates, enhancements in the Canada workers benefit and tax cuts for the middle class, we have worked tirelessly to make life more affordable for Canadians, ensuring everyone has a fair chance at succeeding.

Our government continues to prioritize what matters most to Canadians today by building more housing, taking concrete actions to stabilize prices and delivering more important supports to Canadians. We extended the one-time grocery rebate to some 11 million eligible low- and modest-income individuals and families, who have been hardest hit by rising food prices. We also enhanced the Canada workers benefit by introducing automatic advance payments.

We are offering direct tax-free payments of up to $1,300 per child over two years through the Canada dental benefit. We have also launched the Canadian dental care plan; when fully implemented, this will help up to nine million uninsured people access the care they need. These supports have enabled millions of people to buy essentials, such as groceries, and pay the rent, but we know that we need to do more.

We are also meeting the moment and tackling housing affordability. We recently introduced new measures to incentivize the construction of new rental housing, protect renters and homeowners and make it easier for Canadians to get those first keys of their own. Canada does not have enough homes, and we need to build more of them at a faster rate.

That is why we are unlocking billions of dollars in new financing, money that will go toward supporting the construction of new homes in Canada. This includes $15 billion in additional low-cost financing through the apartment construction loan program, which will help build more rental homes for Canadians. The Canada housing benefit was launched in 2020 and has helped many Canadians since then. By 2027-28, this benefit will have helped make rent more affordable for over 300,000 low- and modest-income households.

While the member borrows from the Conservatives, who eagerly gamble with the supports Canadians rely on, we will stand firm in our commitment to the people of Canada. We will continue in our relentless pursuit of economic strategies that work for all Canadians.

● (1830)

Mr. Kevin Vuong: Mr. Speaker, I do not blame the parliamentary secretary for struggling to find a coherent theme. There is such a litany of failures. Where does one even begin? The $10-a-day child care sounds great, but there are 100,000 fewer spaces. What use is affordable child care if there are no spaces to access?

On the carbon tax, let us put aside the fact that the independent and non-partisan Parliamentary Budget Officer says more Canadians are hurt than helped and just focus on the fact that the government had promised small businesses $2.5 billion in rebates, yet has conveniently forgotten this. That $2.5 billion is owed to small businesses, which are the lifeblood and engine of our economy. It is not a personal slush fund for the government to try to buy votes or cover up for the fact that its spending has been out of control. It is not the government's money but Canadians' hard-earned taxpayer dollars.

I hope the government will reflect on its actions to date and ensure that it guards, safeguards, protects and invests taxpayer dollars responsibly.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Mr. Speaker, again I extend my sincerest condolences to the constituents of Spadina—Fort York. They had great representation with people such as Adam Vaughan in the federal Parliament, as well as Joe Cressy and Mike Layton, who have done an extraordinary job standing up for their constituents. It is sad to see the member dial it back, but in a couple of years, Spadina—Fort York will be well represented by a Liberal. I am certain of that.

A key pillar of the government's economic plan has been a focus on making life more affordable for Canadians. When people have the support they need to thrive, they can contribute to the economy, build better lives for themselves and their families, and play an active role in their community.

Inflation is down to 2.8%, and wage growth in Canada has been outstripping inflation for almost a year now. It is important to note that 18 months ago, a lot of economists thought we would be in a recession today. Our economic policies have ensured that this is not the case, and over one million people are employed today compared with before the pandemic.

Progress is being made on our commitment to help make life more affordable for people from coast to coast to coast, and we will stick with it because there is more to do.

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Liberal chair at the environment committee stated, "there is no data specifically stating that the price on carbon resulted in an *x* amount of reduction in greenhouse gas emissions".

Is this true, yes or no?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what was provided to the member, in due course, after his request for some documents, was some modelling on how carbon pricing works, not just in this country, but also in over 50 countries around the world that have implemented a strategy to lower their emissions.

The good news is that in Canada it is working. Canada's emissions are down by over 8% since 2015, and that is because of a lot of factors, one of them being carbon pricing. Demonstrated by proactive provinces, like British Columbia and Quebec, carbon pricing works to lower our emissions, and also, with the rebate program we have put in place, it does not cost families. It sends more money back through the Canada carbon rebate than it costs at the pumps. That is because we are making big polluters pay and making sure that families are made whole through the Canada carbon rebate.

I will admit that the 31-page report that was sent to the member was a bit confusing. There were some big math words in there and a lot of modelling, and it is very complicated stuff. Reducing emissions is a challenging thing, particularly for an oil-producing nation and a big country like Canada, but we are making it work with an approach that supports affordability and that lowers our emissions.

Two hundred economists have also chimed in to make sure that Conservatives hear, loud and clear, that their campaign of misinformation, the "axe the tax" campaign they have started, is based on misinformation. They continually say that carbon pricing is the cause of inflation and that carbon pricing is the cause of financial insecurity and hardship for Canadians, when that has been proven, time and time again, to be false.

Carbon pricing does work. I do not have a Nobel Prize in economics. I do not think the member opposite has a Nobel Prize in economics, but William Nordhaus does have a Nobel Prize in economics. He actually earned it for his work on carbon pricing. He says that Canada's approach on carbon pricing is exactly what the rest of the world needs to fight climate change, to lower our emissions and to ensure that the planet our grandkids will inherit will be even more prosperous and livable than it is today.

The answer to his direct question of whether it is true that we do not have data to support the fact that carbon pricing drives down emissions is no; it is not true. The fact is that carbon pricing works. It is demonstrated to be true. It is mathematically accurate and based on sound financial, economic and mathematical principles. It has also proven to be true because per capita emissions in British Columbia have fallen steadily since its implementation of a carbon tax over a decade ago. That was also supported by members of the current Conservative caucus who were Liberals in the B.C. government at the time of implementation. It has also been demonstrated by Quebec.

There are provinces, like Manitoba, which I had the pleasure of visiting. I went to a Jets game with my father, since it was Parkinson's night with the Jets. Thankfully, the Jets won. I think the member opposite and I can agree on at least one thing, and that is a good thing; when the Jets win, that is a positive thing.

Manitoba has a new premier, which is also a really great thing for Canada. Winnipeg is a great city. I love The Weakerthans. It was one of my favourite bands when I was a kid. That great city deserves a great mayor and a great premier, and I am glad that Wab Kinew is considering options to lower emissions in Manitoba, because Manitoba used to have a cap and trade program, just like Ontario, so it is very possible that soon the people of Manitoba will have a new way to lower their emissions.

I was glad that the Premier of Manitoba did what the previous premier would not, which is to stabilize gas prices with their provincial excise tax cut. That is something that the Premier of Saskatchewan refuses to do, and it is something that the Premier of Alberta actually did the opposite of. On April 1, she was able to blame the price on pollution for the increased price of gas when she increased the price of gas by 4¢, when the price on pollution went up by just 3¢ and was rebated back to Albertans. The price on pollution works and so does the Canada carbon rebate.

● (1835)

Mr. Dan Mazier: Mr. Speaker, the member has suggested that I was a climate change denier because I opposed his failed carbon tax. Is the member calling the first nations who took the Liberal government to court over the carbon tax climate change deniers?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Mr. Speaker, indigenous people feel the effects of climate change more than anybody else. Farmers, indigenous people and rural residents recognize that climate change is not just a threat to our weather, but also a threat to our economy, to our livelihoods and, indeed, to our lives.

Recently, I was up in Kashechewan in northern Ontario to announce some funding for a big conservation project, which the Mushkegowuk Council was thrilled about. It is good news for them. We talked about climate change a lot when I was up there, because first nations, Inuit, Métis, people who hunt, people who gather, people who work off the land and people who work in agriculture all recognize that climate change is an existential threat. Frankly, if someone does not recognize that humans are responsible for climate change and that climate change is the worst existential threat to our species, then they would be a climate change denier, but I did not accuse anybody of that. I am just saying that if someone does not believe that climate change is the biggest threat to us, then they are indeed denying climate change.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:39 p.m.)

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