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# House of Commons Debates

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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, May 31, 2024

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1000)

[*English*]

### ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION ACT

**Hon. Dan Vandal (for the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs)** moved that Bill C-65, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and talk about anything related to Elections Canada and our election laws. When I think of elections, I think of the stakeholders. The most important stakeholders, of course, are those who vote. Next to that, we should always consider the candidates, who play a very important role. I have a bit of experience in that sense. I have been a candidate a dozen times or more. Volunteers and, of course, third parties also play important roles in our elections.

It is important for us to recognize that Elections Canada plays an absolutely critical role in building and ensuring public confidence in our electoral system. I would suggest that Elections Canada is second to no other independent election authority in the world, to no other agency or country. I have a deep respect for the fine work that individuals at Elections Canada do, not only during an election but also between elections. That often gets lost. We often take Elections Canada and its work for granted. Countries around the world will often talk with Elections Canada to get the insight to improve their democracies and elections.

I will start by highlighting how important the work is that Elections Canada does and that we recognize the individuals involved. We all have something at stake in our democratic system, and nothing highlights that more than a general election. Bill C-65 is a positive step forward. For quite a while now, the government has been looking at ways to make positive changes to the Elections Act that will engage more people and increase the confidence that people have in our system; the legislation would do that in several ways.

It would make it easier to vote. The best way to amplify that is voting by mail. More and more, we need to recognize the options there are. How can we ensure that someone in a situation requiring them to vote by mail has that option? Elections Canada has done a great deal of work to ensure the legitimacy and the integrity of mail-in ballots.

We are also looking at increasing the number of days people can go to advanced polls. I would like to think that every one of us, in all political parties, can appreciate the importance of advanced polls. When election results come in, we wait for the results of advanced polls because a higher percentage of the population uses them. More political parties, candidates and voters depend on advance polls. I see that as a good thing. As parliamentarians of whatever political stripe, we need to recognize where we can enhance voting opportunities and do just that. This is one aspect of the legislation I would think every member is solidly behind. We should all be concerned about getting more people to vote.

• (1005)

There are other aspects, such as campus voting. We often hear from members about how important it is to get the younger generation to be engaged, to go out and vote and to volunteer. The roles they play are important, whether it is by voting or being a candidate. More and more young people are getting elected at a younger age. When I was first elected, I was 26. At the time, I think I was only the third. Nowadays, a lot of people are getting elected in their twenties, which is a great thing to see. We want more young people engaged in our democratic system. We all have a vested interest, so it is encouraging to see that.

One way we can enhance that is to have more voting at post-secondary institutions, on campuses. The legislation would also take a positive step towards that. Increasing the percentage of votes is of the utmost importance.

One thing we need to be aware of is the importance of protecting personal information. The data bank has evolved to quite the thing in politics. I remember my first election, when the best data bank was the *Who Called?* book. For those who are not familiar with it, the *Who Called?* book was like a phone book, but instead of being based on last names, it was based on addresses. If I wanted to find out how to contact people, I would take a look at Burrows Avenue, for example. I would be able to see every house with a phone number attached to it, and 85% to 90% of the people would be in that book.

*Government Orders*

If one wanted to be a candidate, all one really needed to reach out by phone was a phone bank and a *Who Called?* book. How things have changed. Dealing with data is so very important. It has become apparent that we need to ensure we protect personal information as much as we can, without compromising the principles of democracy.

It is interesting to contrast, and I might do this in a couple of ways, what we do with what other jurisdictions do. At the national level, there is certain information that Elections Canada collects in co-operation with the Canada Revenue Agency to ensure we have a base of a data bank that candidates can use to contact the voter. It differs by jurisdiction.

I like what the Province of Manitoba does. It also provides a telephone number along with the collection. It is optional, but its data bank has far more opportunities to be able to make telephone contacts than the Elections Canada list does. That might be worth some discussion at the committee stage. I say that because, even as I go through some of these items, I think it is important for us to recognize that different members might have different experiences and thoughts on how the legislation, the electoral participation act, can work.

When one thinks about it, there are ways for all of us to have the opportunity to participate. Some of the actions in the legislation are not only for this upcoming election but also the election of 2029. These are such things as being able to vote anywhere in one's riding.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

• (1010)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I want to remind hon. members that they are to wait for questions and comments. We have lots of time. I just ask members to please wait as opposed to interrupting other members.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, that one literally came out of the blue.

When one thinks of it, the ability to vote anywhere in a riding is actually a positive thing. It might be a bit difficult for Elections Canada to put something in place that would allow that to occur for this election. However, for 2029, I think it is a fair expectation that we should be able to vote anywhere in the riding. Again, I will compare it to an election in Manitoba.

In Manitoba, one can vote at any poll within the constituency; in fact, one can even go to a mall and vote. Enabling people to vote in malls and at any polling station would give people the opportunity to exercise their franchise and vote. That is one thing.

When we talk about how members can contribute, going into committee and talking about ideas, there is another thing on the books, and that is to extend the number of election days. It is within the legislation and being proposed for 2029.

We seem to be of the mindset that the election has to be on one day and that this is the only day people can actually go. If one cannot go then, one goes to an advance poll. There is a valid argument

to be made to extend it for a three-day period, for a wide variety of reasons. One could take a look in terms of anything from an environmental condition in a region of the country—

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères on a point of order.

• (1015)

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Madam Speaker, I would just like to know if we have quorum in the House.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I will ask the clerk to count the members present.

*And the count having been taken:*

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** We have quorum.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, Friday morning quorum calls are an interesting tactic. It interrupts my speech a bit. I can assure the member that if they look at the chamber and the lounges where we have the TVs, where people participate online, there are a number of people around, listening to the debate.

Members might want to take a look at the legislation and parts of the legislation. It would be great to have feedback because not all members go to the committee stage. I was commenting in regard to voting anywhere inside one's riding and what other possibilities are out there. Members might want to encourage, and I would encourage, Elections Canada to look at other options. I cited the Province of Manitoba that has the ability to vote in malls and other places.

I made reference to a three-day election and why it is so important that we look at making that a reality because that will be the case in the 2029 election. It takes some time to make those types of arrangements. I am not confident enough to say that it would happen in 2025, but who knows what the standing committee might say on that.

There are all sorts of reasons that we could easily justify moving in that direction. There could be something taking place in a community, which could cause a problem on a particular election day. On the current October 20 election date, I believe the Province of Alberta and its municipalities are having their election on that particular day.

Having the option to vote over two or three days, as we will see in 2029, could be a very positive thing. It could be something of that nature, or there could be something weather related. From a personal voter perspective, something could come up within the family. These are the types of discussions that should take place.

It is important to realize that when a minister and the department have put a great deal of effort into this legislation, they are very open to hearing what members of Parliament have to say. Elections Canada not only will be monitoring this debate, but also will be looking at what is said at committee.

*Government Orders*

I would suggest that there are other aspects to the legislation that would make things easier and that would alleviate the administrative burden for candidates, such as pre-registering a candidate, facilitating the use of e-signatures by eliminating the witness requirement or reducing the signatures required for the nomination papers. Some candidates submit 200-plus signatures as a mechanism to get an introduction at the door and whatever else they might want, but they get a lot of signatures on their nomination papers.

That is great if someone wants to be able to do that. However, we are proposing, in this legislation, to see a reduction in the signatures required. I believe that would help facilitate many would-be candidates. Again, it would be interesting to hear the thoughts from across the way.

The bill, Bill C-65, would establish polls in long-term care facilities and would remove requirements for long-term care residents to show proof of address when voting on site. It would allow electors who need assistance to select anyone they wish to help them cast their ballots. These are the types of initiatives that I think we learned a lot from during the pandemic. There are opportunities to enhance people's abilities to get out and vote.

• (1020)

The Electoral Participation Act accounts for the fact that outreach, contact and engagement between federal political parties and voters are absolutely essential and healthy to a modern democracy. Having said that, I would quickly make reference to those data banks. We need to ensure that we have checks in place that ensure privacy for a wide spectrum of ideas. I mentioned the idea of the "Who called?" book, back in the day, where at one time, the poll list was actually posted publicly so that someone could easily find out the names of individuals, where they lived and even their phone numbers, in certain types of elections. One can appreciate and understand why, today, we would have a very difficult time with that. We have a Privacy Commissioner and many parliamentarians who I believe are very much concerned about the privacy issue. A lot of that is now within the legislation being proposed. Federal privacy regimes would also bolster privacy requirements for political parties and would ensure a single, complete and comprehensive federal privacy regime.

As I only have one minute left, I will talk about electoral integrity. The legislation would ban disinformation that is intended to disrupt the conduct of elections. It would remove the time frame limit for offences involving impersonation or false statements and more. It would ensure that malicious actions using artificial intelligence are captured. It would safeguard against foreign, untraceable and difficult-to-trace donations, so in other words, it would ban things such as prepaid credit cards, cryptocurrency and other things. It would prohibit the aiding and abetting of a violation. We are strengthening Elections Canada's enforcement and compliance abilities.

This is all good stuff. I would highly recommend that members of all political parties see the value in bringing forward any thoughts they might have at committee stage and, hopefully, we will see the bill, Bill C-65, pass relatively quickly so that we can start the dialogue at the standing committees and get this exchange in the legislation moving forward.

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, what we have is a self-built elections bill that really is a pension bill. It ought to be called the "loser Liberal pension protection act" because what we have is a deeply unpopular government faced with an election date of October 20, 2025. The problem is that the Liberals elected in 2019 would not qualify for their pensions, so what does the government do? It tries to push back the election date to pad its pockets at the expense of Canadian taxpayers. It is about as cynical and as dishonest as it gets. To add to the level of dishonesty, the Liberals initially said that it was all about Diwali. It has nothing to do with Diwali.

If it has nothing to do with pensions, then why do the Liberals not get on with it and call a carbon tax election so that Canadians can be put out of the misery that the Liberal government has caused them?

• (1025)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, as I was speaking, the member seemed to be agitated as he was kind of bubbling in his seat. Now I think I know why.

Here is a news flash for the member across the way. This is a minority government. In a minority government, the Liberal government, as he puts it, does not get everything it wants. This is legislation that not only one political party is behind. I like to think there are many aspects of it that even the member who posed the question is going to support, at least I would hope.

First, let us get the consensus. Elections Canada is an incredible organization and does a wonderful job of protecting the security and the confidence of Canadians in our electoral system.

The second thing I would say is that if the member is passionate about one aspect, it takes more than one party in order to pass any aspect of the legislation.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the member opposite gave an excellent speech praising the merits of the bill introduced by his government. From what he said, it seems like this is a very worthwhile bill. I want to commend him for that. There seem to be a lot of good things in his bill.

However, he did not mention the issue that this bill fails to address, and I am wondering why. Often, when the Liberals introduce bills, they brag about all the extraordinary measures the new bill contains to show us all the good things about it, but sometimes there is another side to things. History has shown us that we often need to see if there is a partisan angle to consider. We could well wonder about the Liberals' partisan interest in a bill, for example.

*Government Orders*

In this case, can the member opposite tell us how many Liberal members would not have been entitled to a pension if the date of the election had not changed by one week and how many Liberal members will be entitled to one now with the date change?

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, as I indicated to the Conservative member, in order to pass the legislation, we are required to have a majority of votes. I would not be focusing much attention on that particular issue because it is the Conservative Party that would actually benefit the most. The Conservative Party has over 30 members that would benefit. They would benefit more than any other political party in the chamber. If the Conservatives do not want to see it, okay. Do the NDP members not want to see it? Do the Bloc members not want to see it? Do the Green members not want to see it? Maybe there might be some Liberals who do not want to see it.

Let us allow the process, and allow it to go to committee. Is there validity in saying that there are celebrations on some days that might justify having the election on a different date? Members of the opposition are creating something in the room, which they could ultimately change. If all the opposition parties, and maybe even some Liberals, were to say that they wanted to have it on  $x$  date as opposed to this date, then we would go with the majority.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Madam Speaker, as we all know, there are some very important components within this bill, Bill C-65, specifically around adding two additional days for advanced polling and enshrining legislation for the vote on campus program; that is huge. I could go on.

As my colleagues have mentioned, there is one portion of this bill, Bill C-65, that speaks to moving the election date forward, which has consequences on members of Parliament's pensions. There is a reason that my colleagues are bringing this up. Canadians do not want to see members of Parliament putting forward legislation that personally benefits their own pensions. They want to see solutions being put forward that would address the climate crisis and the affordability crisis that many Canadians are experiencing.

The NDP has made it very clear that we will be putting forward an amendment to move this election date back to the original date, and to see this important legislation go forward but not to see this component that unfairly benefits members of Parliament. Will the member be supporting this amendment?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I can assure you that I will fully respect what the majority of members of the House want to see when it ultimately comes to a vote.

One can do the math. If every member of the Conservative Party, of the Bloc and of the NDP says that they want to go to October 20, I suspect the election will be on October 20. It is as simple as that.

We should not be looking at only that issue. The committee will no doubt deal with that issue. I hope that they have all sorts of discussions with respect to it and that they are able to resolve it. However, there are other critically important aspects to the legislation that the members made reference to, including increasing the num-

ber of advance voting days. That would help immensely in ensuring that more people get engaged in the 2025 election.

Whether it is voters themselves, political parties or Elections Canada, we are seeing an uptick on the number of people participating at the advance polls. Increasing the number of advance poll days would be a positive thing. There are a lot of positive things within this legislation.

• (1030)

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Madam Speaker, with respect to the piece of legislation before us, the defeated Liberal MPs' protection act or, forgive me, it says it is the electoral participation act, the parliamentary secretary did not answer the colleague for St. Albert—Edmonton's question about the pension, specifically. All the parliamentary secretary has talked about is supposed electoral participation improvements and process improvements. He refuses to answer as to why the Liberals feel the need to delay the next federal election by a week, when the only reason to do so is to protect defeated MPs' pensions.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, who am I to defend the 32 Conservative MPs who would benefit by that? Let us have that discussion at the committee stage.

We have before us a substantial piece of legislation, and I am glad that all opposition parties are taking positions on it. Let us allow the bill to go to committee. Remember that we are a minority, and if a majority of members of Parliament want to change the election to whatever date, they are entitled to do so.

I am hoping that the opposition Conservatives will see the value in the legislation itself, think beyond just the one issue and see how more Canadians would be able to get engaged as a direct result of the passage of the legislation. I suspect, contrary to the impression that the Conservatives are giving, that for a vast majority of things that are being suggested within the legislation, the Conservatives will be voting in favour of it.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Madam Speaker, there are three reasons why the Bloc Québécois cannot vote for this bill. None of them are positive.

The first is that we should not be making accommodations on religious grounds. When it comes to something as important as the democratic process in a G7 country, for us, that simply has no merit.

The second is that we think it is irresponsible to postpone this for a week when we are going to be six days away from municipal elections in 1,109 municipalities across Quebec. We already have trouble mobilizing people for municipal elections.

I do not have time to talk about the third reason. I will let the parliamentary secretary answer.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, there is a great deal more than just the change of a date within the legislation. Let us think in terms of foreign interference. Let us think in terms of voter participation. These are very positive, progressive measures that would enhance the legislation.

*Government Orders*

Let us always remember that it is a minority government, so that means that it takes more than one political party to ultimately make a determination of the bill's passage. Let us see it go—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington.

**Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-65, and I will use the official title for the moment: an act to amend the Canada Elections Act.

I would first ask for unanimous consent to split my time with my hon. colleague from St. Albert—Edmonton.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

• (1035)

**Mr. Dave Epp:** Madam Speaker, I often begin my interventions in the chamber with the following statement: “It is an honour for me to bring the voices of the residents of Chatham-Kent—Leamington to this place.” I have and retain that privilege only by a process. It is the election process, and that is what Bill C-65 purportedly seeks to amend.

Running in and the timing of an election should always be about maintaining the confidence of this place, about putting a vision forward for the country and about running on one's record in serving the country. Therefore, while some of the provisions of the bill are supportable, Conservatives have serious concerns about the changing of the fixed election date.

Let me first make a few comments with respect to the laudable provisions contained in the bill. The modest changes to the third party regime, where foreign entities should not be permitted to contribute to third parties that engage in election-related activities, are supportable. There has been much discussion regarding foreign interference in our elections, so measures that would address these activities can be supported.

While there are costs associated with advance polling days and locations, they pale in comparison to the costs involved with the amendment to move the next election date from Monday, October 20, 2025, to October 27, 2025. Therefore, any further possible committee examination of the bill should be contingent on addressing the following point: These additional seven days would cost Canadian taxpayers millions of dollars. I will be focusing on this aspect of the legislation in my remarks today, because the provision would make the bill an MP pension bill impersonating as an elections bill. This begs the question of why the government is proposing it.

The Liberals are claiming that they would be changing the election date so as not to overlap with the festival of Diwali, and it just coincidentally happens to be that the seven-day additional delay would secure the pensions of over 80 MPs after six years of service, meaning any MP elected after October 21, 2019, would reach that six-year threshold only if the election occurs after October 21, 2025. I will note that this includes me and 31 of my Conservative colleagues, and I am prepared to run on my record. Will my Liberal

colleagues make the same vow? Will they run on their respective records before October 21, 2025?

Of the 80 members elected in 2019, here is how the members pushing the pension date break down across the political parties represented in the chamber: Conservatives have 32 members of Parliament from the cohort of 2019, and the Liberals have 22. The Bloc Québécois has 20, and the NDP has 6. The Conservative caucus and all of the 2019 cohort support running on our record and not delaying the final election date.

Will the Bloc members also support not delaying the final date for the election? I welcome in the Q&A that follows my remarks any formal statement by the members on the record from that party. Similarly, I would invite my NDP colleagues, who have been alluding to that as well as the Bloc, to put on the record in their questions to me that they will not support the change. That is first and foremost, before we go on to any further discussions on the bill.

The Liberal government is adamant that the sole reason for the proposed legislation is to strengthen our democracy. In fact, the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs was quoted in a recent National Post article as saying the following: “[The] government believes that a strong democracy begins with enabling...Canadians to freely exercise their fundamental right to choose their representatives and we'll always be there to defend that right”. However, the actions of the government and the Prime Minister show otherwise.

I will go back for a moment to foreign interference and the intimidation my colleague from Wellington—Halton Hills and his family faced from foreign state actors. Our security agencies learned of this and informed the Prime Minister, and he did nothing. With the interference in the 2019 and 2021 elections in several ridings across this country, where was the government action? What about the unnecessary invocation of the Emergencies Act, an action that erodes the very foundational principles of our democracy and the rights of our citizens? We only need to look at the conduct of our present Speaker and the lack of respect he has shown for the non-partisan role of his office not once and not twice. I cannot keep track of the number of violations.

• (1040)

The government continues to erode the institutions that support the foundation of our democracy. If the minister and the government are so concerned about the defence of democracy, why do they not give Canadians back some of the freedom from the fiscal black hole they have imposed upon the citizens of this nation and not force us to pay an estimated \$120 million if all MPs were to lose their seat in the next election?

*Government Orders*

I have an idea. What if the government held the 2025 election on October 6, 2025 instead? That way it would not interfere with Diwali, nor would it affect the Jewish celebration of Shemini Atzeret, allowing the Hindu, Jain, Sikh, Buddhist and Jewish communities to vote on election day if they chose not to vote in advance polls. It bears noting that this is not the first time the issue has come to the forefront. In 2019, the Chief Electoral Officer ruled against changing the fixed election date. In 2019, Aryeh-Bain, a Jewish Orthodox woman running for the Conservatives in Eglinton—Lawrence, attempted to have the October 21 election date switched to October 22. She wanted to avoid the overlap of the Jewish holiday of Shemini Atzeret, which was to begin on October 20 and end on October 22 of that year.

The riding of Eglinton—Lawrence was home to about 5,000 Orthodox Jewish voters in 2019, and the previous, 2015, federal election had been decided by fewer than 4,000 votes. Aryeh-Bain argued the merits of her case based on the closeness of the results in the previous election. As I mentioned earlier, the Chief Electoral Officer in 2019 ruled against it, stating, “There is no such thing as a perfect election day, especially in a country as diverse as Canada. There are always Canadians who are unable to vote on election day.”

Given the precedent set in 2019 by Elections Canada in that ruling, the government need not be selective in its observance of religious holidays. However, an October 6 election date would seem to resolve all of the possible issues around religious observances. Even better yet, let us have an election now, which would allow the government to run on its carbon tax record that it so proudly defends in the chamber. It can run on its housing record. It can run on its record on fiscal management of the country.

After nine long years of the Liberal government, we can ill afford another selfish Liberal policy that would further bankrupt future generations. Conservatives will bring down inflation, allowing interest rates to fall by capping federal government spending with a dollar-for-dollar rule, and we will ensure that Canadians are not on the hook for tens of millions of dollars in pensions from moving the election date for spurious or disingenuous purposes.

The bill before us is an MP pension bill impersonating as an election bill. Conservatives will restore hope to Canadians. We will bring it home for Canadians to unite this country for our common home. It is your home, my home, our home. Let us bring it home.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, that is a bit much. I do not want to defend 30-plus Conservatives, the largest number that would actually benefit, if the member wants to look at it as a benefit. There are 30 Conservatives, 20 Liberals, just under 20 Bloc members I think, and a half-dozen New Democrats who would be affected by what the member is actually talking about.

As opposed to trying to recognize that aspect and only that aspect, let us look at how the legislation would enhance our electoral system. We would get more people participating in elections, and I see that as a positive thing, which is why we would be increasing the number of advance polling days. Students would be able to vote on their campuses. These are positive measures.

The question I have for the member is this: It is a minority government, which means that if a majority of the House wants to change—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I have to allow for other questions.

The hon. member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington.

**Mr. Dave Epp:** Madam Speaker, I am very relieved that I can assure the member that he does not have to defend the interests of our Conservative members, of the Bloc members or of the NDP members. We will put that question to Canadians. We are very willing to put the question to the Canadian electorate, and they can decide. That is how the government works. That is how our institutional democracy should work. The issue of MP pensions should not come into play in an election, period, simple, done.

• (1045)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech. I know he worked very hard last night to prepare it.

Although many of the measures in this bill are generally aligned with our vision of democracy, there is still one very problematic element.

Pushing back the date of the federal election by a week would mean that it would take place just six days before municipal elections which, in Quebec, are also very important. We are talking about a local democracy that is already struggling to carve out a space, and we absolutely want to protect it.

We want these two elections to be held on very different dates. I would like to hear my colleague's opinion on this.

[*English*]

**Mr. Dave Epp:** Madam Speaker, I want to acknowledge the preparation that goes into the work that all members in this chamber do. I also want to acknowledge the hard work of our municipal politicians. As I said in my speech, moving the election date ahead, or even calling it anytime, would avoid exactly those conflicts regarding the date.

I appreciate the member's and everyone else's hard work in this chamber.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would also like to congratulate the member for Chatham-Kent—Leamington on his speech.

My colleague just spoke about municipal elections, which are extremely important in Quebec, and about the need to motivate the public to get involved at every level in each election.



*Government Orders*

However, the sensitive issue of pensions cannot be overlooked. I know that my colleague touched on it earlier. Personally, I am extremely uncomfortable about telling Quebeckers that we are going to push back the date of the election. The only message that people will remember is that a whole bunch of MPs elected in 2019 are going to be eligible for their pensions. I think that sends a very bad message. It encourages and fuels cynicism toward politicians.

I would like to know whether my colleague would agree to a possible proposal to amend this bill and move the election to a different date, two or three weeks earlier if necessary. This would address concerns over the municipal elections scheduled at the same time and quell public cynicism toward politicians, precisely over the pension eligibility issue.

[*English*]

**Mr. Dave Epp:** Madam Speaker, I fully agree with the opinion expressed by my colleague. Cynicism is something we should be addressing, and we should not be trying to drape an elections bill over, as he correctly characterized, an MP pension bill. We can talk about improvements to our elections, absolutely, but not when we are trying to slip something through and pull the wool over the eyes of the Canadian electorate. Let us address that issue first. Then there is an opportunity to improve our election system.

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill C-65, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act. I listened attentively to the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader's speech. He characterized the bill as "good stuff" and suggested that at the end of the day, the Conservatives would support the bill. I can assure him that what is in the bill is not good stuff and that the Conservatives will not be supporting it.

There are problems with this bill, putting aside the pension issue, which I will get into later. There are amendments that we cannot support. For example, one of the amendments provided for in the bill is with respect to special ballot voting, whereby a voter would be able to mark their ballot by filling in their preferred political party as opposed to their preferred candidate. This raises constitutional questions.

Under our Constitution, there are multiple references to individuals being elected to the House of Commons. In contrast, there is not a single reference to political parties, and that is because in Canada, we elect individuals to the House of Commons; we do not elect political parties. This amendment would completely upend that. I submit that, while it is arguable that the amendment is unconstitutional, at the very least it is problematic. For instance, if it were to be adopted, what is to say that another amendment could not be made to the Canada Elections Act whereby the names of individual candidates are removed altogether and Canadians would simply mark their ballot by filling in their preferred political party?

Another problematic amendment to the Canada Elections Act provided for in the bill relates to assisting voters marking their ballots. As it stands today, a voter who requires assistance may receive assistance from an individual to help them mark their ballot. Such an individual may only help one voter in an election, and there must be some personal connection between the voter and the individual assisting them. This legislation would remove both of those

criteria. With this bill, an individual would be able to help an unlimited number of voters mark their ballot, notwithstanding any connection of any sort between the person assisting and the elector. I would submit that this, on its face, raises questions of potential abuse, and I therefore suggest that this amendment be carefully scrutinized at committee.

With respect to the third party financing regime, this bill is a step in the right direction but is inadequate. It is a step in the right direction insofar as it makes an important step forward with respect to financing during the pre-election and election periods. It appears that the objective of the changes to third party financing is for the expenditures third parties make during those periods to be made from funds donated by individual Canadian contributors in the same way as political parties must raise donations from individual Canadians. The problem is that it does not entirely close a long-standing loophole whereby third parties can use contributions made from foreigners, foreign funds, to influence elections.

● (1050)

I have to ask why the Liberals have not seen fit to close that loophole. We know that during the 2015 election, millions and millions of dollars were funnelled from U.S.-based organizations, including the U.S.-based Tides Foundation, to registered third parties that ran a coordinated campaign to defeat Conservatives, to the benefit of the Liberal Party.

After nine years of the Prime Minister, we have seen a Prime Minister and government that have a deeply troubling record of turning a blind eye to foreign interference and even being complicit in foreign interference, whether that foreign interference emanated from Beijing or from the U.S., so long as it benefited the Liberal Party. I cannot help but wonder if the reason the Liberals have not fully closed this foreign money loophole with respect to third party financing is that they see it as a loophole that benefits them electorally.

I could go on to talk about other aspects of this bill and problems with it, but at the end of the day, it really does not matter, because this bill is not an elections bill. That is not what this bill is about. It is a pension bill. It is the loser Liberal pension protection act, under the guise of an elections bill.

By the way, the government is not fooling anyone. To put it into context, we have a deeply unpopular Prime Minister in government who is on the verge of facing a massive electoral defeat whenever he has the guts to call the next election. What that means, of course, is that many of the Liberals sitting across the way are not going to be here after the next election. They have to call an election by October 20, 2025, but the problem they have is that the Liberals who were elected in 2019, many of whom face almost certain defeat, do not qualify for their pension. What do the Liberals do? They introduce the loser Liberal pension protection act to push back the election date so that all of a sudden, the soon-to-be loser Liberals can pad their pockets with a pension.

*Statements by Members*

This is about as cynical and dishonest as it gets from arguably one of the most cynical and dishonest governments that have ever governed this country. It is an absolute abuse of the legislative power of the government. It constitutes the government yet again giving everyday Canadians, as it does every day, the middle finger, as the Liberals pad their pockets. After nine years, they have pummelled everyday Canadians, made life less affordable and caused enormous hurt and pain for Canadians.

Contrary to the representation of the member for Winnipeg North, the Conservatives will not be supporting the loser Liberal pension protection act.

With that, I move:

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

the House decline to give second reading to Bill C-65, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act, as the Bill delays the next federal election so that more departing members of Parliament can collect taxpayer-funded pensions, a measure that is particularly offensive at a time when Canadians are struggling due to the NDP-Liberal Government's inflation, carbon tax and housing costs.

• (1055)

[Translation]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The amendment is in order.

[English]

Questions and comments, 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, who am I to defend 32 Conservatives? Some 32 Conservative MPs are the biggest beneficiaries, yet the member is calling out the Liberals for defending the Conservatives. There are 22 Liberals and—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Order. We all want to hear the question. If not, I would still ask members to not disrupt the proceedings.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, there are 32 Conservatives, 22 Liberals, 19 from the Bloc and half a dozen New Democrats. Those are the individuals who would be affected.

That aside, I do not understand the Conservatives. The last time they brought in legislation, they tried to get rid of the voter ID card as a way of identifying ourselves. We remember voter suppression and robocalls. We remember when Dean Del Mastro was led out handcuffs.

Why does the Conservative Party not understand the importance of democracy in Canada?

• (1100)

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Madam Speaker, I would invite the member to talk to the member for Steveston—Richmond East, and then compare that to the testimony of our former colleague, Kenny Chiu,

who provided evidence of the Liberal Party amplifying disinformation for the partisan gain of the Liberal Party.

That speaks to the integrity of the Liberals. If they had any integrity, and if it really was not about protecting their pensions, they would support my amendment and remove the loser Liberal Pension Protection Act from the bill.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

### INVEST OTTAWA

**Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, Ottawa is a global tech hub with about 1,800 tech companies, 88,000 tech professionals and North America's highest concentration of tech talent.

Ottawa is renowned for our cutting-edge R and D and innovation in SaaS, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, machine learning, robotics, advanced networks and 5G, health tech and life sciences, smart mobility, IOT and many other disruptive technologies.

Thanks to Invest Ottawa and federal government funding, we have Nepean-based Area X.O, which evolved from the Ottawa L5 connected and autonomous vehicle test facility into a world-class R and D complex that enables and accelerates the development, testing and application of next-generation smart mobility, autonomy and connectivity technologies.

I would like to recognize and thank former CEO of Invest Ottawa, Michael Tremblay for his contribution to Ottawa's tech sector.

\* \* \*

### BRUCE—GREY—OWEN SOUND

**Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Madam Speaker, six students from Bruce and Grey counties participated in the Canada-Wide Science Fair here in Ottawa this week.

They are the following: Chayle Oatt for her project, Plant Growth Spurt; Oscar Weerasinghe for his project, Breakfast on the Brain, which won the gold medal in the junior division, plus a health and nutrition award; Kenna Wilson for her project, Body Temperature, which won a bronze medal in the junior division; Lucas Muir for his project, Hydro Harvest; Emily Caulfeild for her project, Schooled: Diving into the Social Behaviours of Fish; and Charlotte Woodhouse for her project, Dairy Dilemma: The Fertility Fallout of Inbreeding in Holsteins, which won a bronze medal in the senior division.

Congratulations to all the participants in the Canada-Wide Science Fair. Canada's future in science is bright.

*Statements by Members*

Further, I would like to recognize Ross McLean, who is retiring after 45 years of law across our riding. Ross has been a dedicated, tireless member of the community. I wish him and Brenda all the best in the future.

\* \* \*

**THEATRE AURORA**

**Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I had the opportunity to join Theatre Aurora to celebrate 65 years of theatrical performances.

Over the years, audiences have enjoyed, and actors have been challenged by, performances such as *The Sound of Music*, *Annie*, and *Murder on the Orient Express*.

Live theatre captures our imaginations and enriches our lives, and it provides a shared experience for both the audience and the actors. Theatre Aurora provides an opportunity for experiencing a wide range of emotions. It provides professional-type experiences for those involved: actors, directors, producers, set designers, costume makers, musicians and ticket sellers.

That Theatre Aurora accomplishes this in what used to be a cement factory is a testament to the creativity and the drive of all involved, providing us, the audience, with a memorable experience. For all that it does, I thank Theatre Aurora.

\* \* \*

**SAFE SPACE LONDON**

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Madam Speaker, Safe Space London is a collective by, with, and for sex workers, allies, women and non-binary folks.

Since 2009, this collective offers harm reduction and first aid supplies, HIV and STI testing, cosmetics, clothing, hygiene products, peer support programming and a safe place for sex workers. It also provides important education campaigns and advocacy for sex work decriminalization.

Across Canada, organizations like Safe Space are under attack by Conservatives who use cheap slogans to fearmonger and victimize the most vulnerable in our communities. They do this in an attempt to raise their own status and to fundraise. Punching down is not leadership.

The community around Safe Space London is fierce. I want to thank all the allies and organizations in London that have stood with them, showing the power women have when we stand together. I will always stand and support Safe Space, and I will always fight against the Conservatives' misogynistic, anti-choice, anti-sex work agenda.

\* \* \*

● (1105)

**LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, last weekend I was asked what the primary difference is between the Liberals and the Conservatives.

I said that Liberals care, Conservatives cut. Let us think of it in this way. On the national food program in schools, Liberals care. On the national disability program, Liberals care. On the Canada dental plan, Liberals care, Conservatives cut. On the Canada pharmacare program, Liberals care, Conservatives cut.

What is the primary difference between the Liberals and the Conservatives? The Liberal Party of Canada genuinely cares about Canadians and all the Conservatives want to do is cut.

\* \* \*

**FINANCE**

**Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is a sad reality that almost daily my office is approached by someone who just cannot catch a break in navigating through the cost of living crisis. Renate from Beaverton, a senior who suffers from severe allergies, has been stuck in an unsuitable unit for years because rental rates are far too expensive.

Meghan from Kawartha Lakes, a farmer, business owner and mother, is faced with a carbon tax on her and her husband's daily operations and she has nowhere to turn for child care due to outrageous costs and long wait-lists.

Just yesterday, Laurie, a senior from Lindsay, called because she is being forced to decide between paying for food and rent, and now she relies on a food bank she was once a dedicated donor to.

As hard as these stories are to hear, they are just the tip of the iceberg in what has become a shameful legacy of the NDP-Liberal agenda, forcing almost two million people per month to the food bank. I join the plea for the NDP-Liberals to show some compassion because, after nine long years, they are not worth the cost or the misery.

*Statements by Members***ANTI-SEMITISM**

**Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, enough is enough. On Wednesday, a Jewish school in Montreal had shots fired at it. On Saturday, two men opened fire at a Jewish school in Toronto. Last night, a synagogue in Vancouver was attacked. Over the course of the last seven months, Jewish buildings and stores have been vandalized; encampments have been set up at universities, where posters extolling terrorist groups and glorifying violence against Jews are common; demonstrators yelling chants for Jews to go back to Poland, calling for intifada and saying that Zionists are not wanted here have surrounded community buildings and blocked access to and exit from them.

At this point, condemnation is not enough. All levels of government need to do more, immediately. At the federal level, we need to designate the IRGC and Samidoun as terrorist organizations. We need to adopt Criminal Code amendments to protect schools, places of worship and community centres the same way we did for hospitals during the pandemic. Enough is enough. Canadian Jews have a right to be safe in our country.

\* \* \*

**JOE KENNEDY**

**Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, when I was 14, I met a guy named Joe Kennedy. We formed a friendship that would last a lifetime. On March 9, Joe passed away due to a heart problem, which is ironic given that he had a better heart than anybody I have ever met. He was kind, he was generous and he oozed integrity and humility, which guided him during a successful career, first with Ontario Hydro and later with Community Living Toronto.

He was also the most honest man I ever met; sometimes too honest. I know because I was at the receiving end of it for over 45 years. He dished it out with a dry sense of humour. His opinion mattered to me more than any other and I would not be standing here without him. He was also fiercely loyal and there is probably no greater example than his dedication and commitment to supporting the Toronto Maple Leafs.

However, nothing, and I mean nothing, meant more to Joe than his family, his wife Mary and his daughter Sarah. His final words to me were to make sure they are going to be okay. They are going to be okay, and that is because of Joe.

\* \* \*

● (1110)

**NATIONAL ACCESSABILITY WEEK**

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have blonde hair with hazel eyes. I am 5'7". I am wearing a black dress with a royal blue blazer. As the shadow minister for disability inclusion, it is my pleasure to recognize National AccessAbility Week. Let us acknowledge the contributions and leadership of persons with disabilities and of their allies, the organizations and communities that care for, support and champion persons with disabilities in Canada.

There is still much to do to make our society more accessible so that persons with disabilities can access many of the services and

places most people take for granted. Even in this place, the highest institution in the land, word has come to my attention of ways that this place has not met accessibility needs and I am actively working with House administration on this.

This week and every week, let us recognize the important contributions of Canadians living with disabilities and those who support them, and commit to work on removing barriers to accessibility.

\* \* \*

**NEW HORIZONS FOR SENIORS**

**Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to highlight our government's New Horizons for Seniors program. This federal grants and contributions program for seniors is a truly transformative initiative in the lives of so many seniors across Canada and in my riding of Mississauga—Erin Mills.

Let me take this opportunity to highlight just a few of the many awesome organizations in my riding that do so much great work to bring communities together. These organizations include the Mississauga Seniors Club, Ivan Franko Homes, Shubh Helping Hands, The Meadows Church and Feng Hua Senior Association.

Whether they are awareness programs to educate us about the issues of elder abuse, weekly recreational activities or even helping seniors access government services that they may be eligible for, these organizations represent the heart of my community. It is so important that we come together to support our seniors, who continue to do so much for our community.

\* \* \*

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC):** Madam Speaker, in Durham Region, for years the rite of passage included spending a week with mom and dad at Darlington Provincial Park, with camping, roasting marshmallows and hot dogs, and the famous sing-alongs.

According to the out-of-touch Liberals, kids are rebelling and demanding that their parents cancel their summer vacation and immediately take them to the dentist. Yes, according to the Minister of Health, kids would prefer to say no to spending time with their loved ones this summer and instead have their teeth drilled and filled. Whose kids are the Liberals talking to?

Yes, we all know that dental health is important, but this is not an either-or question. Sadly, this summer many Oshawa families will not be able to afford a local staycation because of the Liberals' out-of-touch tax-and-spend agenda. When the Liberal MP for Whitby stated that their net-zero goals were going to cause pain, is this what they were talking about?

*Statements by Members*

Why does the NDP-Liberal government not axe the carbon tax and lift the taxes on gasoline so Canadians can save that extra \$670 over the summer and afford a traditional family camping trip with the kids?

\* \* \*

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Madam Speaker, what could be better than packing up the bathing suits, the camping gear and some snacks and hopping in the truck for a family road trip? Well, according to the Liberals, it is picking up some extra shifts at work just to be taxed to the max and then staying home, pretending the couch is a van and Netflix is the great outdoors, or maybe it is another trip to the food bank line.

After nine long, miserable years, it is crystal clear that the Prime Minister is simply not worth the cost. In the middle of this cost of living crisis, the Liberal-NDP government hiked up the carbon tax by a whopping 23% this year. That is why common-sense Conservatives are calling on the carbon tax coalition to give Canadians a summer break by axing the carbon tax, the federal fuel tax and the GST on gasoline and diesel, lowering gas prices on average 35¢ a litre, so families can afford a simple summer vacation.

Conservatives will axe the tax on everything for everyone after the carbon tax election, but until then, let us give Canadians a summer break.

\* \* \*

**INTERNATIONAL PIZZA CHALLENGE**

**Ms. Lisa Hefner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, “cowabunga” is a word that is used to express delight. Fittingly, it is also the name of a pizzeria in my riding of Hamilton Mountain that recently won the title “world’s best cheese slice” at the International Pizza Challenge in Las Vegas.

Owners Andy Huynh and Justin Tanda had entered the competition several times in years past, and they always did well, but this year was different from the start. This year, they almost could not compete at all. The luggage that held their signature sourdough got lost during their flight south. Luckily, they kept a little bit in their carry-on, and a staff member grabbed a last-minute airline ticket to bring them some more.

I can tell members that that sourdough crust, with its Canadian cheese and sauce ingredients, is the perfect mouth-watering combination. The international judges agreed. If the cheese pizza is perfect as it is, just imagine how good the pizzas are with other toppings added.

The word is out. Hamiltonians are so enthusiastic about the pies that Cowabunga can hardly keep up with demand. I know my family cannot wait to go back.

Congratulations, Cowabunga.

● (1115)

**LUPUS AWARENESS MONTH**

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am honoured to wear today a purple pin in recognition of May as Lupus Awareness Month. Lupus, a chronic autoimmune disease, affects more than one in a thousand Canadians. Managing lupus is as complex as diagnosing it.

I want to share the story of my constituent Brenda, from New Westminster, who has battled lupus for over three decades. This disease can impact organs, including the skin, eyes, joints, heart, lungs and kidneys. Brenda requires 17 different medications to manage her lupus effectively.

That is why the NDP advocates for increased funding to support a comprehensive approach that encompasses medication for symptom management, lifestyle adjustments and consistent supervision by health care professionals. Together, we must ensure all lupus patients have equitable access to quality care, which is crucial for their well-being now and in the future.

I extend my gratitude to Brenda; to my terrific niece, Charlotte, who works as a teacher and battles lupus; as well as to Lupus Canada, for its tireless advocacy during Lupus Awareness Month.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**YVES DESAUTELS**

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Madam Speaker, radio is a one-of-a-kind medium that really becomes part of people’s everyday lives, sometimes literally. This is definitely true in the case of Yves Desautels, a Radio-Canada traffic reporter who just retired after a 47-year career.

From Regina, where he began his career, to Montreal, where he eventually got behind the wheel of his famous “hedgehog”, Mr. Desautels, Yves, quietly became part of our morning and afternoon routines, a trusted companion on our commutes to and from work. Even when working from home, we would tune in to listen to him, like a faithful friend whose voice is so comforting. With the perfect touch of humour at just the right time, he always struck the right tone when the situation was more serious, and was always grateful to the listeners who regularly called in to inform him of current traffic conditions.

Whether we like it or not, Yves Desautels is retiring. Yes, it will leave a void, but it has been so lovely seeing and hearing all the tributes he is receiving these days. To paraphrase journalist Anne Marie Lecomte, what a perfect off-ramp for him.

I wish Yves Desautels a happy retirement.

*Oral Questions**[English]***FINANCE**

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Madam Speaker, “We can’t redistribute what we don’t have.” After nine years of Liberal inflationary spending, this is what Mark Carney, likely the next leader of the Liberal Party, said in a campaign-style speech at a recent meeting of the Liberal politburo, Canada 2020: “We can’t redistribute what we don’t have.”

As plates of expensive food were being distributed to Liberal backroomers, while countless Canadians stood in line at a food bank, Mark Carney went on to blame Canadian workers and job creators for not producing enough revenue for the Liberals to redistribute to wealthy insider friends: “We can’t redistribute what we don’t have.”

Mark Carney would know, because his international wealth redistribution scheme, something called the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero, is falling apart, and now he has his sights set on the wallets of everyday Canadians. “We can’t redistribute what we don’t have.”

Here is a message to Mr. Carney: A Conservative government will stop arch-elites like him from taking another dime from working-class Canadians to redistribute to their wealthy friends.

\* \* \*

**HANNAH PARE**

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Windsor—Tecumseh, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I rise today in the House of Commons to honour the life of Hannah Pare, who dreamed of being a nurse since the moment she could walk. Her first patients were her stuffed animals that she examined with her toy stethoscope. It was to no one’s surprise that Hannah studied nursing at the University of Windsor, where she stood out for her hard work, warmth and peer mentoring. It was her calling. When she graduated, she was snapped up by Windsor Regional Hospital and began a bright future as a neurology nurse. On May 2, Hannah passed away at the age of 22 from medical complications.

In a final act of selflessness, Hannah saved the lives of seven women through organ donation. Her sister Grace opened a GoFundMe page to establish a Hannah Pare memorial scholarship, which has already raised \$55,000 to support the next generation of nurses.

Hannah’s love and spirit were boundless and will continue to live in our hearts and touch the lives of many.

**ORAL QUESTIONS***[English]***TAXATION**

**Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC):** Madam Speaker, this is breaking news. Last week, the GDP per capita was worse than in 2017. This week, it is worse than in 2016. After nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, Canadians are getting poorer. A recent study from the Fraser Insti-

tute found that Canadians are experiencing the worst decline in living standards in the last 40 years. Food banks are being overwhelmed. The cost of housing has doubled. Homeless encampments are now across our country. Canadians need a break.

Will the Prime Minister stop his inflationary spending, stop his carbon tax, stop putting ideology before Canadians and just, for goodness’ sake, stop?

● (1120)

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member today talks about the Fraser Institute. I have heard him and other Conservative MPs in the past talk about Rebel Media and cite it, for example. They ought to expand their horizons and actually look at the IMF list on GDP per capita. The reality is that we actually lead. We, in fact, are ahead of Japan, Germany, France and the United Kingdom. The reality is also that the Conservatives want to cut pensions. Unemployment would be higher under them. It is an endless list.

**Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC):** Madam Speaker, there we have it. Over and over again, the Liberals tell Canadians that they have never had it so good, when in reality that is far from the truth. We learned today that 0.7% is how much the GDP per capita declined in the first quarter. Things keep getting worse here.

The Liberals are capable of giving a carbon tax carve-out. Why will they not give a carve-out to all Canadians this summer? We know that the carbon tax adds to the cost of living. They know it, we know it and Canadians know it. On Monday, they will have the opportunity to vote for our common-sense motion to save Canadians 35¢ per litre on gas. Will they vote in favour of it? Will they finally give Canadians a break?

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member opposite is obviously from Ontario. What he just made clear and what the Conservative Party always makes clear is that they want to ruin the rebate for their constituents, a quarterly payment that disproportionately and positively benefits lower-income Canadians and middle-income Canadians.

The member talks about, as he always does, GDP per capita. Again, I would refer him to the IMF list. We are ahead of powerhouses like Japan, Germany, the U.K. and France.

It is a hard time. We have more to do, but we are going to approach this in a responsible way, not like the other party with its austerity agenda.

**Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC):** Madam Speaker, as always, the Liberals give us half-truths. The reality is that Canada has the worst GDP per capita in the G7. Those are the numbers. More than that, our constituents are feeling it. Their constituents are feeling it. The longer the Liberals are in government, the poorer Canadians get. Canadians desperately need a break.

Will the Liberals agree to giving Canadians a fuel tax holiday, or better yet, call a carbon tax election?

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I have been hearing the members opposite talk about road trips. I would like to tell them about my last road trip when I was driving across Canada with my family. We had to cancel our camping plans because of wildfires. We had to reroute our road trip because of wildfires.

We are taking action to make sure we are fighting climate change. The members opposite are letting the planet burn.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Madam Speaker, CAA-Québec conducted a poll of its members about their summer vacation plans. Unfortunately, the result was brutal. According to the *Journal de Québec*, “inflation, the price of gas and mortgage renewals are putting a damper on Quebecers' vacation plans”. Those are exactly the three themes we tackle here on behalf of Canadians every day during question period and they are exactly the three themes this Liberal government keeps washing its hands off.

When will this government understand that Quebecers and Canadians have had it with this irresponsible management?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member across the way knows full well that Quebec is not included in the Canada-wide or federal price on pollution because Quebec has its own system.

The member also knows that what he is proposing would help Quebecers save a penny or two per litre of gas. To actually get the savings they have been told to expect, Quebecers would have to drive to Mexico and back every summer.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I will say it again: inflation, taxes and mortgage rates. For nine years, this government has had no control over spending, over inflationary budgets and over deficits that feed inflation and increase interest rates. Plus, we know that they have invented new taxes. Worse, their friends in the Bloc Québécois want to drastically increase the carbon tax, which they have not denied until now.

When will these people understand that Quebecers are sick and tired of paying taxes and, more importantly, of having additional taxes imposed on them?

• (1125)

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, that is exactly what is needed here, for them to understand. It is very simple. Eight out of 10 fami-

### *Oral Questions*

lies in Canada receive more money through the Canada carbon rebate than they pay through the price on carbon. The reason for that is very simple: All the proceeds from the price on carbon are returned and redistributed to Canadians. The richest pay more than they receive. The middle class receives more than it pays. That is why eight out of 10 families get more back in their pockets than the price on pollution costs them. Obviously, this also reduces pollution.

\* \* \*

### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

**Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the Liberals have transformed the Standing Committee on Official Languages into an endless source of reasons to be concerned for the future of French. After the Liberal member for Saint-Laurent said that Bill 96 prevents anglophones from receiving care, and after the Liberal member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell insulted researchers who are worried about the decline of French, yesterday, the Liberal member for Alfred-Pellan added that Quebec should become bilingual in order to be, and I quote, strong, not just a unilingual francophone province. In his opinion, the French language is limiting us.

Once again, is that the Liberals' position? If not, are they going to set their MPs straight?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, if there is one thing that we could not be any clearer about, it is the dedication within the Liberal Party of Canada and the Government of Canada to respecting this country's two official languages. In every institution and at every moment of life in Canada, we are there to protect francophone minorities outside Quebec. We acknowledge that French is declining across the country, including in Quebec, and yes, we also acknowledge that there is a linguistic minority in Quebec.

**Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ):** Madam Speaker, this is indicative of a culture problem within the Liberal Party. The whole purpose of the Standing Committee on Official Languages is to promote French in Canada. All the Liberals need to do is choose five of their 156 members who speak French and who want to protect the French language. That is all. Those are the only two criteria, but they cannot even do that.

Let us get back to the member for Alfred-Pellan, who is arguing in committee that English should become Quebec's official language. Why is he even there? Why is it so hard for the Liberals to send members who do not want to undermine French?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member for Alfred-Pellan is just as much a Quebecer as my colleague opposite. The Quebec Liberal caucus, with its 35 government members, is here to protect the French fact in Quebec, as well as official languages in general and francophone minorities across the country. In contrast, the Bloc Québécois exists to do just one thing, and that is to pit Quebecers against one another, to create conflict and divide people.

That is not why we are here. We are in favour of linguistic unity.

*Oral Questions***DENTAL CARE**

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, a third of the people who have registered for the NDP dental care program are in Quebec. The need is there, and the NDP delivered results. The Conservatives and the Bloc Québécois do not want dental care for seniors, children and people with disabilities. The Conservatives are spreading disinformation and do not care about the impact that might have on people's health and wallets. We cannot allow this to happen.

Will the government counter the Conservatives' disinformation and ensure that this dental care is available to everyone who needs it?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we heard some shocking news from the Conservative leader. Last week, on Radio-Canada in Quebec City, he said that the Canadian dental care plan did not exist. He said, on my radio, in Quebec City, that the Canadian dental care plan did not exist.

My colleague is so right to talk about disinformation. The Conservative leader says that the plan does not exist, when two million seniors in Canada have registered for it and 60% of providers in Quebec are already registered. No one could be more out of touch or more adept at spreading disinformation.

[English]

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, on dental care, the NDP forced the government to do it; now we want to make sure that all Canadians get it.

Beginning in June, children under 18 and persons with disabilities will benefit from the NDP's dental care plan. Tens of thousands of seniors are already saving money, thanks to this dental coverage, but the Conservatives want Canadians to pay out-of-pocket. They already want to axe dental care for seniors. They are spreading disinformation and doing everything they can to take it away.

Will the government put into place all the resources necessary to fight Conservative disinformation and stop them from denying dental care for Canadians?

• (1130)

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the Conservatives are in denial. They will continue to say that somehow dental care does not exist, because they really do not care about Canadians. They do not care about the seniors. Hundreds of thousands of seniors have already had access to dental care. What Conservatives would do is cut this really important, essential program that is already looking after our seniors. We will continue to defend the dental care program and grow it so that all Canadians who are eligible can get access to good oral health care.

\* \* \*

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC):** Madam Speaker, after nine years it is clear to Canadian families that the NDP-Liberal government is not worth the cost. Canadians are struggling to make ends meet. Rents and mortgages have doubled,

and groceries have doubled. Now the summer family road trip that so many look forward to is becoming out of reach. In fact, families from my riding who look forward to going to Jasper every summer are having to cancel this trip because of the NDP-Liberal carbon tax.

That is why Conservatives are calling on the NDP-Liberal government to give Canadians a break this summer by axing the carbon tax and all other fuel taxes. It would save Alberta families and all Canadian families hundreds of dollars. Why will the NDP-Liberal government not give Canadians a break?

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, let me talk more about that road trip. As I travelled through the Rocky Mountains, I could not see them, because of the thick smoke coming from wildfires. I could only see about two cars ahead of me. We are fighting to save the family road trip, to make sure that Canadians get to experience this beautiful country.

What are the Conservatives doing? They are letting the planet burn.

**Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC):** Madam Speaker, yesterday the Liberal health minister and that Liberal over there showed Canadians just how out of touch the Liberals are with the lives of everyday Canadians. Apparently, any family vacation that is not using a bicycle needs to be cancelled because it is destroying the planet. Conservatives are calling on the NDP-Liberal government to axe their carbon tax this summer to give Canadians a break, so they can enjoy a summer vacation. Unlike these out-of-touch Liberals, Conservatives want our children to explore our great country.

Why are the Liberals telling them to stay at home instead and just look at their phones?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, what happened yesterday in the House is that the health minister exposed the Conservatives. The Conservatives had offered up what they called hundreds and hundreds of dollars in savings, but the health minister was describing what one would have to do to access these savings that the Conservatives were claiming: 38,000 kilometres in an automobile, locked up with their children non-stop, would be the requirement in order to derive the savings the Conservatives were claiming. They should be ashamed of themselves. It is misinformation.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** We were not doing too bad. I just want to remind members to please keep their thoughts to themselves until they are being recognized by the Speaker.

The hon. member for Saskatoon—Grasswood has the floor.



*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC):** Madam Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister is not worth the cost. Instead of offering tax relief, the government increased the carbon tax by another 23%. Conservatives are asking the Prime Minister to immediately axe gas taxes. That would save a Saskatchewan family \$860 this summer alone.

Will the Prime Minister vote with us on this side of the House on a common-sense Conservative motion, so Canadians can afford a summer trip?

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as with some others, the member's math is off. The reality is that Canadians benefit. Eight out of 10 Canadians end up better off as a result of the rebate, where it applies, in the various provinces. The member talks about taxes, though. It is funny; I heard an interview where the Leader of the Opposition told a journalist from the National Post that bakers bake bread and Conservatives cut taxes. That is not exactly true. This government has voted to put in place measures to cut taxes for the middle class and to cut taxes for small businesses. The Conservatives voted against that every single time.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I spy with my little eye a government that wants to ruin family summer holidays. Does anyone remember playing that game while travelling through this beautiful country? I am sure they do. We all do, yet yesterday the Liberal health minister described this family road trip as a punishment. For all average Canadians, it is quality time.

Will the Prime Minister show some compassion and vote for us on Monday, so Canadians can afford a summer road trip?

• (1135)

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the Conservatives stood in the House and promised Canadians sunshine and flowers and hundreds of dollars in savings if only the Liberals would agree to their crazy proposal. What we found out is that one would have to drive back and forth to Mexico several times in order to save the money that they claim, and to do that, families would be locked in cars non-stop. These things that the Conservatives come up with are just crazy.

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Madam Speaker, after nine years, the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

On Monday, the House will vote for our common-sense Conservative motion to save Canadians 35¢ per litre on gas until Labour Day by axing the carbon tax, the federal fuel tax and the GST on gasoline and diesel.

Families really need a break. The tax holiday will save the typical Canadian family \$670 this summer. Will the Prime Minister vote with us so that Canadians can afford a simple summer road trip, or will he keep Canadians home this summer?

**Hon. Ya'ara Saks (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, on the other side of the benches, they just do not do the math. Since the

government has come into power, things such as the Canada child benefit, or CCB, have lifted over 450,000 children out of poverty so that they can have gymnastics classes and go on that summer road trip. In addition, with \$10-a-day child care, we are saving families thousands of dollars. Rather than 35¢ on the dollar, why do they not invest in families?

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the Liberals are becoming more unhinged and out of touch. There is the perfect example of the Liberals' socialist agenda: They tax people to oblivion and then they look at what little they can give back, which is actually people's own money.

Now Canadians cannot even afford to feed themselves. They cannot afford to visit loved ones. They cannot afford to save for their future, certainly. Taxes keep going up, and the carbon tax just went up 23%.

The Liberals should give people a break. They should give people a tax break. Will the Liberals vote for our common-sense bill to give families a tax break and axe all federal fuel taxes this summer, or will they just keep Canadians at home?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, let me remind the member of her record.

In the last election, she went around Kelowna Lake Country telling everyone, "You know what we're going to do? We're going to put a price on pollution." Now she is coming here and flip-flopping, saying, "Oh, I must have been mistaken. I really didn't do that. It's really selective amnesia on our part."

The member has also voted against every single tax relief measure that the government has put forward in the House that favours the middle class and asks a little more of those able to pay.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**CLIMATE CHANGE**

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Madam Speaker, Québec's Groupe d'experts en adaptation aux changements climatiques tabled a disturbing report on Tuesday. Experts expect warming of 4.5 degrees in Montreal and 7.6 degrees in northern Quebec, five times more than the Paris target.

Meanwhile, also on Tuesday, the Liberals and the NPD voted for \$30 billion in tax breaks for oil companies; that is another \$30 billion to greenwash the increase in oil production.

Could the government not take that money and use it to find climate change adaptation solutions?

*Oral Questions*

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I think it is very important to take this opportunity to talk about the national inventory report that we submitted to the IPCC to show that our emissions are the lowest they have been in 30 years. That is not taking into account the COVID-19 period.

This shows that what we are doing to fight emissions and put a cap on emissions here in Canada is working.

• (1140)

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Madam Speaker, while the Liberals and NDP are handing out gifts to oil companies, the forest fire season has already begun out west. There was a tornado in Montérégie on Monday and, on Wednesday, the Weather Network was predicting a hot, dry summer with a high risk of drought, severe thunderstorms, crop losses and forest fires.

Now is the time to make significant investments to mitigate the consequences of natural disasters. Every dollar invested now will save \$15, according to a group of Quebec experts on adapting to climate change.

Once again, why not take the gifts being handed to oil companies and redirect them towards climate change adaptation?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member is talking about disasters. I know all too well what she is talking about. Here in the Outaouais, we have experienced three 100-year floods in the last six years.

What the member does not know is that we are the first and only government to have prepared a credible plan to combat climate change and greenhouse gases.

She should really go talk to those on the other side who flatly deny that climate change exists. I wonder why she is not doing that. Any investment or measure to combat climate change must be implemented—

[*English*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest.

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**HOUSING**

**Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the best time to buy a home or rent an apartment in this country was nine long years ago, before the NDP-Liberal government coalition broke our country. Its policies have doubled rent, doubled mortgage payments and doubled down payments. It is a housing nightmare for young Canadians. For families like the Hamiltons in Saint John, it means paying \$1,500 each month to live in a leaky, mouldy apartment because they have nowhere else to go.

Will the Prime Minister stop funding photo ops and bureaucracy and instead start getting homes built in this country to help Canadians who desperately need help?

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Madam

Speaker, my colleague should check the record. Under Stephen Harper, housing costs doubled.

When they talk about, for example, things like bureaucracy and use the term “gatekeepers” in the pejorative every time they get, what they are actually talking about is not working: not working with partners, with provinces and, in particular, with municipalities. We know that working with municipalities, mayors, councillors and public servants at the local level is fundamental because that is where zoning decisions are made. The housing accelerator fund is leading to zoning changes. We are going to get more homes built through that way and many others.

**Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC):** Madam Speaker, that is not good enough. Homes are not being built fast enough to help Canadians.

Mr. Cory Hamilton is a husband and a father of four. He is worried. He believes his six-year-old son has been sick because of the family's living conditions. The Hamiltons, like many other Canadians across this country, have no decent options because of Canada's housing crisis caused by the Prime Minister's wacko ideology that makes everything more expensive.

After nine years, the Prime Minister is not worth the cost. What does he have to say to the Hamilton family and other desperate Canadians across this country?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the first thing I would say is that they are very well represented by the member for Saint John—Rothesay. The second thing I would say is that they should talk to this member of Parliament and tell him to stop advocating for a cut to zero for regional development agencies and ACOA in this country. The third thing I would say is that for every single housing measure put in place and proposed by this government, the member has voted against. If one is a Hamilton, one wants him gone.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Order. The hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest had an opportunity to ask his questions and he should take the opportunity to listen.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup.

\* \* \*

**HOUSING**

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Madam Speaker, after nine years of this Prime Minister, the housing crisis has become intolerable for Quebecers.

While homelessness and hunger spread in Quebec, affordable housing is becoming increasingly scarce. To Canada's shame, it takes almost two years to get a building permit in Montreal. Quebecers deserve better than this kind of incompetence.

*Oral Questions*

Will this Liberal-Bloc government stop its out-of-control spending and give Canadians what they truly deserve?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, one, two, three, four, five, six: That is the number of affordable housing units that the Conservative leader built across the country during his entire career as housing minister.

Meanwhile, the member talks about insults and the people lobbing insults. What about the way that he insults Quebec municipalities by calling them incompetent when Quebec municipalities are building 8,000 affordable housing units? Who is more incompetent, the ones building 8,000 affordable housing units, or the Conservative leader, who built six?

• (1145)

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Madam Speaker, nine years under this Prime Minister has meant nine years of misery for Quebeckers. They have no affordable housing and are now forced to live in motels and on the streets.

The Bloc Québécois claims to stand up for Quebeckers, but it is turning its back on them and voting against every measure that would ease their suffering. Bloc members voted against the Conservatives' common-sense bill to build housing, but in favour of \$500 billion in centralizing and inflationary spending. They had no problem with that.

Can the Liberal-Bloc government help Quebeckers instead of recklessly wasting their money?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, let me try a different approach. It was not 10, nine, eight or seven affordable housing units that the Conservative leader built across the country during his entire career as the minister responsible for housing. It was only six.

It is surprising to hear about affordable housing and to hear the insults from my colleague from Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-loup, whom I really like, when, in his riding alone, 134 affordable housing units have been built in recent months, with the support of the Canadian government.

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[English]

**ELECTORAL REFORM**

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Madam Speaker, New Democrats want to make voting easier and more accessible for Canadians. That is why we pushed the government to make changes to the electoral reform bill. However, the government has proposed changing the election date, allowing 80 additional MPs to qualify for a pension. Canadians are struggling with high costs. They do not want politicians to make laws for their own financial gain.

New Democrats will introduce an amendment to keep the original election date. Will the government support it?

**Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, while some mem-

bers in the House seem to be focused on pensions, we are focused on fair elections. We are focused on participatory elections. We are focused on elections where people can vote and vote fairly.

Obviously, every party in this place wants to have a fair election, and everybody wants to engage. We will ensure, through Bill C-65, to make it easier for Canadians to vote, we will make sure there is no foreign interference and we will get the job done.

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**AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD**

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Madam Speaker, grain farmers are anxiously waiting for the Liberals to make a decision on the Bunge and Viterra merger. If this merger goes forward, they would dominate the market in the Prairies and own 47% of Vancouver ports. This would mean less competition, and hard-working farmers would lose about \$770 million a year.

The Minister of Transport has until Sunday to send his recommendation. Will the minister meet with the farmers unions and grain terminal workers before making a decision?

**Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, obviously we take competition very seriously in Canada, and we want to ensure that farmers get fair access when they export their grains. We will be speaking with the Minister of Transport about this issue, and I know he is already seized with it.

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**MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS**

**Hon. Helena Jaczek (Markham—Stouffville, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, every year, approximately 4,500 people die by suicide in Canada. That is equivalent to 12 deaths every day. The impacts of suicide extend far beyond the individual. It affects families, friends and communities.

Canadians need timely access to suicide prevention supports, no matter where they live. Can the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions tell the House how we are working with all partners to strengthen our suicide prevention framework?

**Hon. Ya'ara Saks (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, today we released Canada's first national suicide prevention action plan. My heart goes out to the many families and friends who have lost a loved one to suicide, with the ripples of pain that are felt throughout communities. The new national suicide prevention action plan brings together all orders of government and indigenous partners toward better collaboration on suicide prevention. This is about working together to save lives.

*Oral Questions*

If a person or someone they know is thinking about suicide, call or text 988.

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**FINANCE**

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Madam Speaker, Mark “carbon tax” Carney should show some courage, show up to the finance committee and answer what he will do when he is coronated Liberal leader. Canadians are terrified that he will take the country down the same destructive path that the Liberal-NDP Prime Minister did. It caused carnage, it doubled rents and mortgages and it made food unaffordable, all on the path to quadrupling the carbon tax. After nine years, none of these carbon tax crusaders are worth the cost.

Will the Liberal lapdog NDP and its costly, cover-up coalition partner get their future leader to testify at finance committee, yes or no?

• (1150)

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am old enough to remember when the member was running under Erin “carbon tax” O’Toole.

The fact is that the finance committee has a lot of work to do in passing a budget that ensures fairness for every generation. There are major investments in housing and major investments in making sure that Canadians, especially young Canadians, can get ahead in life.

On the games the Conservatives play, they have to get off them. Obviously, math is not a criteria to be the finance critic over there. Here is what we suggest he do: get to work on passing the budget.

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Madam Speaker, Liberal math says that budgets balance themselves.

The minister should give courage to carbon tax Carney to show up. He will be his leader soon enough, after all. Canadians are terrified to know what path carbon tax Carney is going to take the country down once he becomes the Liberal leader. They need to know if he is going to continue down the same extremist, woke, wacko policy, ideologically driven path as the current Liberal-NDP Prime Minister.

Will the costly coalition step up, give Carney some courage and get him to testify at the finance committee, yes or no?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** I just answered that gimmick question, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am not sure what words we are still allowed to use here, but I think it is okay and fair to say that this is the most incompetent, reckless government in Canada’s history, consistently undertaking radical experiments with objectively terrible results. An RBC report from today says, “a slow bleed over the last 2 years has left per-capita output back at 2016 levels”.

Canada’s per person income has been falling for two years now. When will the NDP-Liberal government recognize that the more it borrows and spends, the worse it makes things for Canadians?

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the Conservatives again use GDP per capita or per person. That is what the member is talking about as a measure of critique, which they can do. It is one measure but not a particularly useful one, as most economists will say.

Let us look at that. On that particular list compiled by the IMF and other organizations, the country leads Japan, the U.K., Germany and France. We have a AAA credit rating reaffirmed by Moody’s and the lowest debt and deficit in the G7. We are going to lead the G7 in economic growth going forward in the future.

**Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC):** Madam Speaker, let us take a look at some Liberal history, if we can. Let us take a look at the Trudeau legacy. The Trudeau legacy is 14 deficits in 15 years in the seventies and eighties and a Liberal government that has not run a single balanced budget yet. That is 24 deficits in 25 years.

That is the Trudeau legacy. It led to economic devastation back then. It is leading to economic devastation right now. How can anybody in the NDP or Liberal caucuses support this economic disaster unfolding?

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we have groundbreaking legislation to deal with the crisis that is climate change. We are the first government that has acted meaningfully on the issue of reconciliation. We lifted 2.3 million people out of poverty, hundreds of thousands of kids out of poverty. We are going to continue that record.

What we do not talk about enough as a country is pensions. The Conservatives want to join Danielle Smith to deplete the Canada pension plan by 53%. We will not let that happen.

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[Translation]

**DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**

**Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the Liberals promised that the Hogue commission would have access to all the information on foreign interference. In her report, however, Justice Hogue criticizes the Liberals for withholding information.

The Prime Minister’s Office sends her redacted documents. It even hides entire documents. Worse yet, yesterday, the Prime Minister told Justice Hogue that he has already provided enough information.

*Oral Questions*

I am sorry, but that is not for him to decide. It is up to the judge to decide when she has enough information.

Will the Prime Minister stop sabotaging the foreign interference commission?

• (1155)

[English]

**Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the independent commission, to be very clear, has broad access to classified and unclassified documents, as agreed to by all parties. It is a very important point to make that under the commissioner's mandate, all parties agreed to examining foreign interference in the 2019 and 2021 elections, bolstering the security of our democratic processes and protecting Canadians of diverse backgrounds.

We will continue to make sure that she has the information she needs, which all parties in this House have agreed to.

[Translation]

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the Liberals promised Justice Hogue access to all the information. The Prime Minister needs to keep his promise.

Let us not forget that the Hogue commission was created because the Liberals were refusing to shed light on Chinese interference. Let us not forget that the Prime Minister even tried to set up a phony investigation by appointing his own investigator, an old family friend. He was unable to cover it up then, and he will not get away with it now either.

Will he get out of Justice Hogue's way and give her what she needs to do her job?

[English]

**Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, Madam Justice Hogue is a distinguished jurist in this country. The independent commission has broad access to classified and unclassified documents, as agreed to by all parties in this place. The only exceptions relate to access to solicitor-client privilege and cabinet confidence. These exceptions will be applied by the professional and impartial public service.

We want the truth, and we will always do everything in our power to get the truth.

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### ETHICS

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Madam Speaker, \$110 million tax dollars flowed out the door and business was booming for the Liberal employment minister after his lobbying firm got direct access to the Prime Minister's Office and the finance minister. Insiders lined their pockets while Canadians were lined up at food banks. After nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, Canadians can see that it is clearly not worth the cost or this kind of corruption.

Will the minister face the ethics committee on Tuesday, or will the government try to deflect and distract like the minister, who is not going to answer the question that I have just put to him?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, Canada has one of the most stringent conflict of interest and ethics guidelines and rules for officials and ministers that exists in the world. The minister has complied with all of them and has answered all of the questions that the member just put.

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is always great to hear members on the front bench over there talk about the ethics rules in this country, when he sits next to a Prime Minister who has broken our ethics laws twice. The public safety minister broke those laws. The trade minister broke those laws. It is a cabinet of serial lawbreakers. Now there is the minister from Edmonton, who lined the pockets of his firm when it got direct access to the Prime Minister's Office and the finance minister's office.

We know that the minister does not want to answer the question and we know that Liberals are going to try and get him out of his appearance on Tuesday. Will they call in the RCMP?

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, once again, the member knows very well that the minister has complied fully with all of his obligations under the conflict of interest and ethics guidelines. The member keeps going on, a bit like Javert, on the issue, but I guess that is the job he has been given, and that is why we have to continue to answer the questions that have been answered repeatedly.

**Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister's green slush fund chair resigned after lining her pockets with taxpayer money, another NDP-Liberal green slush fund director was caught funnelling \$42 million of taxpayer money to companies she owns, and now the Minister of the Environment, before his election, lobbied the PMO more than 25 times to help the director put that \$42 million in her pocket. I know you are going to say he was just like John McClane saying he was just “[getting] together [to] have a few laughs”.

Will the Liberals investigate every taxpayer dollar the environment minister stuffed into the corrupt director's companies?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I will remind the member that he is to address questions and comments through the Chair and not directly to members.

The hon. government House leader.

**Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, once again, Conservatives are really trying to reach and take wild swings. Ministers are required to submit to the most rigorous conflict of interest and ethics requirements in the western world. The minister and all ministers have fully complied with those requirements.

*Oral Questions*

• (1200)

[*Translation*]

**DENTAL CARE**

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, thousands of seniors, including seniors in my riding of Lac-Saint-Louis, have already been to the dentist for care paid for by the Canadian dental care plan. However, the opposition continues to strongly oppose this program. The Leader of the Opposition has even gone so far as to stick his head in the sand and say that the program does not exist.

Can the Minister of Public Services and Procurement give us an update on how this program is already making a big difference in the lives of seniors in this country?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Lac-Saint-Louis for his question. I would like to share some surprising news with the House. Last week, the Conservative leader announced on Radio-Canada that the Canadian dental care plan does not exist, when two million seniors have enrolled the program and 120,000 of them have already started receiving care since May 1. About 60% of dental care providers in Quebec have already signed up for the plan.

Rather than spreading misinformation, we are providing encouragement. We are encouraging all seniors in Quebec and elsewhere to enrol in this new plan that will really help them to improve their oral health.

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**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am shocked.

The member for Alfred-Pellan, a member of the Liberal caucus from Quebec, denied the relevance of French as the only official language in Quebec. He told the Standing Committee on Official Languages that Quebec should be bilingual to be stronger and that it should not just be a unilingual francophone province.

That is unacceptable. Not one member of the Liberal caucus from Quebec stood up to condemn his comments, not even the member for Papineau.

When will a Liberal member finally really stand up to defend French in Quebec?

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question because it gives me an opportunity to talk about how the Conservatives failed to take action for nine years on priorities related to the modernization of the Official Languages Act and the action plan.

I would like to remind the House that we have made historic investments by almost doubling the investments in the action plan and that we will continue to be there for the French fact and for minority languages in Quebec and Canada.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member asked his question. It seems reasonable to expect him to

take the time to listen to the answer, instead of continuing to expound on his point of view.

[*English*]

The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George.

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**MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS**

**Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC):** Madam Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, six British Columbians are dying every day from overdose. Deaths in B.C. are up 380%. Overdose is the leading cause of death for children aged 10 to 18 in B.C. Despite this, the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions claims that B.C.'s radical drug experiment was a success. Was it really? She has even refused to rule out expanding the deadly program to Toronto and Montreal.

Will the Prime Minister commit today to keeping the rest of Canada safe from his failed drug policies?

**Hon. Ya'ara Saks (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it never ceases to amaze me how much misinformation members on the other side can present on this floor and to Canadians. B.C. requested a pilot program. The pilot program continues, and we continue to work with the province in order to save lives.

I have also been unequivocally clear, having worked with the premier and with Toronto Public Health, to reject their proposal. We do not work in hypotheticals on this side of the House; we work with evidence, experts and the best comprehensive measures that we can take to save lives in the overdose crisis. Shame on the Conservatives.

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**CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA**

**Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC):** Madam Speaker, with respect to the dairy barn at the Joyceville correctional institution that is scheduled to open in July, number one, what was the original budgeted cost? Number two, what is the actual cost? Number three, has dairy quota been made available by Dairy Farmers of Ontario? If so, what are the contract details and how much will that cost? Finally, will any of the milk that is produced be entered into the general supply for public consumption?

**Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for his ongoing interest in corrections and in the well-being of prisoners who are incarcerated. That was a complex question. We will take note of it and make sure we get back to him with the details. It was almost in the style of an Order Paper question.

What I would say is that Corrections Canada is committed to making sure that inmates leave our correctional facilities better than they came in. We provide vocational training whenever we can and wherever we can to ensure that they truly are rehabilitated and can make contributions to society in the future.

• (1205)

### SMALL BUSINESS

**Hon. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, businesses that make up our main streets are the lifeblood of our communities.

[Translation]

Over the years, especially during the pandemic, main street businesses have run into challenges. I know that the minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario has created a program that will help main street businesses grow and prosper.

[English]

The members opposite may not see the value in supporting our small businesses, but on this side of the House we know just how important they are to our regional economies. Can the minister share in the House how important the program is?

[Translation]

**Hon. Filomena Tassi (Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Ottawa—Vanier for her important question.

The My Main Street initiative is very important to small businesses and to our communities.

[English]

My Main Street, delivered through the Canadian Urban Institute, is going to deliver \$15 million to small businesses on main streets and to the organizations that support them. Our government knows that those businesses are the vibrancy and success of our communities. We are going to continue to deliver important programs that grow businesses. We thank our hard-working entrepreneurs and all the organizations that support them.

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### TAXATION

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Madam Speaker, Canadians are struggling, while the government lets rich oil and gas corporations off the hook. The recent Parliamentary Budget Officer's report on corporate taxes is clear: Oil and gas corporations pay among the lowest federal tax, by industry, in Canada. As they jack up our carbon emissions and our country burns, oil and gas corporations made a record \$120 billion in profits in 2022.

When will the Liberal government stand up for working Canadians and bring in an excess profit tax on greedy oil and gas corporations that are clearly not paying their fair share?

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we have eliminated inefficient fossil fuel subsidies. We have introduced a tax on share buybacks. Throughout, we have made it a priority to focus on tax fairness at all levels, and that includes the corporate sector.

### Oral Questions

We are going to continue to be there for Canadians. We are going to continue to make sure that those who are doing well are paying their fair share. It is important for the future of this country. There is so much at stake.

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### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.):** Madam Speaker, with their anemic new defence policy, “Our North, Strong and Free”, the Liberals finally recognize there is a Canadian Arctic and its sovereignty needs some protection. The severely underfunded two-decade policy includes the building of northern operational support hubs. The problem is that the policy has zero dollars for these hubs in 2024-25.

Can the Minister of National Defence inform Canadians how he can build anything without any money for a year, and with an abysmal \$2 million in 2025-26? Has he ever shopped for a house in the north? Will there even be a sovereign Arctic in 2044?

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member's question reinforces the fact that we have introduced a wonderful defence policy update where we are increasing our spending. We have actually taken notes. We are listening to our partners. We are listening to our CAF members. There is \$8.1 billion over the next five years, and we will continue to help our military as it is always ready for us.

\* \* \*

### ANTI-SEMITISM

**Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC):** Madam Speaker, regarding the recent violence against the Jewish community, I seek unanimous consent for the following motion, which I believe has been agreed to. I move:

That, the House condemn the recent violent attacks on Jewish schools in Montreal and Toronto and a firebombing of a synagogue in Vancouver and stand firm with the Jewish people to ensure Canada remains a place where Jews are free to live, worship and pray in peace and security, and call on the government to do more to stop anti-Semitic violence everywhere in Canada.

[Translation]

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

It is agreed.

[English]

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

Hearing none, the motion is carried.

(Motion agreed to)

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

● (1210)

*[English]***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 nine petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

\* \* \*

**COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES

**Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the following report from the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, also known as the Mighty OGGO: the 19th report, entitled "Main Estimates 2024-25".

*[Translation]*

## PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the following two reports of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

*[English]*

The 40th report is entitled "COVID-19 Vaccines", and the 41st report is entitled "Rehabilitation of Parliament's Centre Block".

I will note briefly, just to commend this committee's work, that the public accounts committee of Canada, of the Parliament of Canada, was the first committee anywhere to review the COVID-19 vaccine documents. We did this through collaboration and good work from all committee members, and I want to recognize the unanimous work that happened on the committee as we reviewed these documents.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to each of these two reports.

*[Translation]*

## CANADIAN HERITAGE

**Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage on the Main Estimates 2024-25.

*[English]*

## AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 19th report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, entitled "Main Estimates 2024-25".

**PETITIONS**

## LUNG CANCER THERAPIES

**Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition signed by Canadians from all over the country, including 107 from my province of Saskatchewan.

The petitioners call upon the House of Commons to support patient access, the funding of lung cancer therapies, and the approval and funding of new treatments and clinical trials, and to work with other stakeholders, such as provincial cancer agencies, health care providers, patient groups and drug manufacturers, to improve access and affordability of cancer drugs for all Canadians.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to the table two petitions on behalf of my constituents in New Brunswick Southwest.

The first petition is concerning the rising rate of crime in rural communities. The petitioners no longer feel safe in their communities because of the soft-on-crime laws passed by the Liberal-NDP government. They note that Bill C-75 made it easier for repeat violent offenders to obtain bail, Bill C-5 removed mandatory prison time for serious gun, drugs and sex crimes, and Bill C-21 redirects valuable police resources away from our streets and toward too much back-office work.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to protect victims of crime by giving jail, not bail, to repeat dangerous offenders and to bring home safe streets for rural communities by immediately passing the Conservative reforms found in Bill C-325.

● (1215)

## NATURAL HEALTH PRODUCTS

**Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition concerns the Liberal-NDP government's plan to restrict access to natural health products and traditional medicines in Canada. These important treatments are used by millions of Canadians on a daily basis. They are legally purchased from licensed pharmacists and grocery stores.

The petitioners are shocked to learn that, through the government's latest omnibus budget bill supported by the NDP, new regulations were adopted by Health Canada that will increase the cost of vegan and gluten-free toothpaste, vitamins, probiotics and other natural health products.

Petitioners would like to note the existing regulations are safe, effective and balanced. They call on the Government of Canada to reverse these reforms before it is too late. Focus on restricting access to illegal hard drugs that kill innocent Canadians every single day, and get back to basics.



*Routine Proceedings*

## PUBLIC SERVANTS

**Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I too have two petitions I would like to present on behalf of Canadians across the country.

The first is in relation to public service non-public funds workers of the Canadian Armed Forces. They are public servants under schedule V of the Financial Administration Act, which means they are limited, in terms of an exclusion order, from negotiating with the federal government, like most public servants.

I am presenting a petition on their behalf, stating that the undersigned employees of the staff of Non-Public Funds, Canadian Forces, citizens and residents of Canada call upon the House of Commons to abolish the exclusion order and to include the staff of the Non-Public Funds, Canadian Forces in the Public Service Employment Act.

## ANIMAL WELFARE

**Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the second petition I want to present today is in relation to animals being used for the defence department training exercises. Typically, piglets are used and are being killed. They are being stabbed, mutilated, exposed to radiation and chemical nerve agents for training purposes.

There are alternative ways that the Canadian Armed Forces can do their necessary medical exercises, and therefore, with this petition, the undersigned citizens and residents of Canada call upon the Minister of National Defence to end the use of animals in military medical training.

\* \* \*

## 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, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 2546, 2547, and 2549 to 2557 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled in an electronic format immediately.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Scott Reid):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

**Question No. 2546—Mr. Gord Johns:**

With regard to the communities which comprise the federal electoral district of Carleton, since fiscal year 2005-06: (a) what are the federal infrastructure investments, including direct transfers to municipalities and First Nations, broken down by fiscal year, total expenditure, and project; (b) what are the federal infrastructure investments transferred to regional districts, broken down by fiscal year, total expenditure, and project; (c) what are the federal infrastructure investments transferred to Island Trusts; (d) what are the federal infrastructure investments transferred to First Nations, broken down by First Nation, fiscal year, total expenditure, and project; (e) what is the funding of highways, broken down by fiscal year, total expenditure, and project; and (f) what other infrastructure investments are provided through the funding of national parks, highways, the Building Canada Fund, Infrastructure Canada, the Gas Tax Fund, Small Crafts and Harbours, etc., broken down by fiscal year, total expenditure, and project?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 2547—Mr. Alistair MacGregor:**

With regard to government contracts for veterinary services provided by veterinarians in all federal departments, broken down by fiscal year, since 2017-18: (a)

what is the total number of contracts signed; (b) what are the details of all contracts signed, including the (i) agency contracted, (ii) value of the contract, (iii) number of veterinarians provided, (iv) duration of the contract; and (c) what is the total amount of extra costs incurred as a result of relying on contracted services instead of employing veterinarians directly?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 2549—Mr. Sameer Zuberi:**

With regard to loans and other repayable contributions made by government departments and agencies since November 4, 2015, excluding student loans and those made as part of emergency pandemic relief programs such as the Canada Emergency Business Account: (a) how many instances have occurred where loans or repayable contributions were made and the recipient did not repay the amount owed in accordance with the terms of the agreement, in total and broken down by program under which the funding was provided; (b) what is the dollar value of the loans and contributions in (a); (c) what is the breakdown of (a) and (b) by type of situation or reason (late payments, business insolvency, etc.); (d) of the amount which was not paid back in accordance with the terms of the agreement, how much (i) has been recovered to date, (ii) has not yet been recovered but is expected to be recovered, (iii) has been written-off, by the government; (e) what is the breakdown of (d) by funding program; and (f) what are the details of all instances where the amount written off by the government was in excess of \$1 million, including, for each, the (i) recipient, (ii) original amount of funding, (iii) amount written off, (iv) purpose of the funding, (v) date the funding was provided, (vi) date the funding was written off, (vii) reason for the amount being written off?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 2550—Mr. Sameer Zuberi:**

With regard to the cost to the government to administer remittances for the Goods and Services Tax and the Harmonized Sales Tax, broken down by year for each of the last three years: (a) what is the total amount spent to administer the remittances; and (b) what was the total amount spent to administer remittances to businesses generating (i) under \$30,000, (ii) between \$30,000 and \$60,000, (iii) between \$60,000 and \$100,000, (iv) between \$100,000 and \$500,000, (v) over \$500,000, in revenue?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 2551—Mr. Tim Uppal:**

With regard to government investments in businesses that included a commitment to create more than 100 jobs as a result of the investment, since November 4, 2015: for each investment, what was the (i) recipient, (ii) amount of the federal investment, (iii) promised number of jobs created, (iv) number of jobs created to date, (v) date of the investment?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 2552—Mr. John Brassard:**

With regard to the benefits received by Canadian Armed Forces veterans classified as wartime service veterans and benefits received by veterans who fought under the "special duty service" classification: (a) what are the benefits received by (i) wartime service veterans, (ii) special duty service veterans; (b) how many veterans are receiving "special duty service" benefits for the (i) Persian Gulf War, (ii) Bosnian War, (iii) Afghan War; (c) what is the cost of benefits provided to wartime service veterans in (a) for (i) 2013, (ii) 2014, (iii) 2015, (iv) 2016, (v) 2017, (vi) 2018, (vii) 2019, (viii) 2020, (ix) 2021, (x) 2022, (xi) 2023; (d) what is the cost of benefits provided to "special duty service" veterans in (a) for (i) 2013, (ii) 2014, (iii) 2015, (iv) 2016, (v) 2017, (vi) 2018, (vii) 2019, (viii) 2020, (ix) 2021, (x) 2022, (xi) 2023; (e) what would be the increased cost to provide "wartime service" benefits to Persian Gulf War veterans if benefits were applied for the year (i) 2018, (ii) 2019, (iii) 2020, (iv) 2021, (v) 2022, (vi) 2023; (f) what would be the increased cost to provide "wartime service" benefits to Bosnian war veterans if benefits were applied for the year (i) 2018, (ii) 2019, (iii) 2020, (iv) 2021, (v) 2022, (vi) 2023; and (g) what would be the increased cost to provide "wartime service" benefits to Afghan War veterans if benefits were applied for the year (i) 2018, (ii) 2019, (iii) 2020, (iv) 2021, (v) 2022, (vi) 2023?

(Return tabled)

*Government Orders***Question No. 2553—Mrs. Laila Goodridge:**

With regard to inmates in facilities operated by the Correctional Service of Canada, broken down by location, since 2015: (a) how many inmates were on opioid agonist therapy, including sublocade, suboxone or methadone as of January 1 of each year; (b) of the inmates in (a), how many were also concurrently accessing the needle exchange program as of January 1 of each year; (c) how many inmates in total used the needle exchange program each year; and (d) how many inmates accessed other forms of treatment and services, broken down by year and type of treatment and service?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 2554—Mr. Colin Carrie:**

With regard to Health Canada (HC), the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) or the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) and the COVID-19 vaccines: (a) when did the (i) Chief Public Health Officer, (ii) Deputy Chief Public Health Officer, (iii) Chief Medical Officer at Health Canada, (iv) Minister of Health at the time, become aware that the COVID-19 vaccines did not prevent transmission of SARS CoV-2; (b) when were any of the federal health agencies in Canada made aware of this information and by who; (c) when was the information described in (a) delivered to (i) the Office of the Prime Minister, (ii) the Privy Council, (iii) the Cabinet, (iv) the members of the House of Commons; (d) what federal entity, ministry or minister first initiated the concept of “COVID-19 vaccine passports”; (e) on what date did the federal government implement vaccine passports for (i) federal employees, (ii) travel restrictions for all unvaccinated Canadians; (f) in 2021 and 2022, did any personnel from HC, PHAC or NACI engage with or share information about the vaccines’ inability to stop transmission of SARS-CoV-2 with any person involved with (i) the World Health Organization’s Strategic Group of Experts, (ii) Vaccines Together, (iii) the International Vaccine Institute, (iv) Dr. Hanna Nohynek, the World Health Organization’s Chair of Strategic Group of Experts on Immunization; and (g) if the answers to (f)(i) through to (f)(iv) are affirmative, what were the summaries of those discussions or correspondences in relation to the transmission question and the validity of vaccine passports?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 2555—Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:**

With regard to government contracts for psychological services and social workers within all federal departments, broken down by fiscal year, since 2017-18: (a) what is the total number of contracts signed for (i) psychological services, (ii) social workers; (b) what are the details of all contracts signed, including the (i) agency contracted, (ii) value of the contract, (iii) number of psychologists or social workers provided, (iv) duration of the contract; and (c) what is the total amount of extra costs incurred as a result of relying on contracted services instead of employing psychologists and social workers directly?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 2556—Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:**

With regard to government contracts for medical services and nursing services within all federal departments, broken down by fiscal year, since 2017-18: (a) what is the total number of contracts signed for (i) medical services provided by a doctor of medicine, (ii) nursing services provided by registered nurses or nurse practitioners; (b) what are the details of all contracts signed, including the (i) agency contracted, (ii) value of the contract, (iii) number of medical doctors, registered nurses, or nurse practitioners provided, (iv) duration of the contract; and (c) what is the total amount of extra costs incurred as a result of relying on contracted services instead of employing medical doctors, registered nurses or nurse practitioners directly?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 2557—Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:**

With regard to the Canadian Forces Housing Agency, since January 1, 2021: (a) how many Canadian Armed Forces personnel are on a waitlist for military housing, broken down by month and year; and (b) what is the average time military members are on the agency’s waitlist?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Scott Reid):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-65, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

**Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague, my northern neighbour from St. Albert—Edmonton, cleared up quite a few issues in his speech. While we are hearing a lot of push-back from the government to his speech, I would just like to get a bit more feedback on whether the member really believes this is a pension bill for future Liberal losses for their benches or an actual change to the Electoral Participation Act. Why is it focusing so much on extending pension privileges for losing Liberal MPs, rather than focusing on helping Canadians in the election process?

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as I said, the bill ought to be called the “loser Liberal pension protection act”, and if it has nothing to do with pensions, then frankly, the government members should get on with what Canadians want so badly, which is for them to call a carbon tax election so that Canadians can once and for all rid themselves of arguably the most rotten and corrupt government in Canadian history.

**Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I actually want him to follow up a little more on that because maybe it has potential. I know we have heard an amendment from the NDP to potentially move the election date back to the normal date. Maybe another amendment would be just to move it a full month or a month and a half further into the future, or maybe even to next week.

What does my colleague think about that?

• (1220)

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Mr. Speaker, I think Canadians would like it if the Prime Minister, this afternoon, went down to Rideau Hall and called a carbon tax election. That is what Canadians would like, but it will not happen because the Prime Minister knows, and the member for Winnipeg North knows, that they would be decimated.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that all the Conservatives want to say is to axe the tax and to call an election. That is all they ever say inside the House of Commons. They do not necessarily realize that there is still another year plus, in terms of the mandate that was provided. Here, we are talking about changes to the election that would enable more Canadians to potentially participate, such as increasing the number of advance voting days.

Does the member support the recommendation to increase the number of advance voting days?

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Mr. Speaker, yes. I do support that aspect of the bill, but there are other problems with the bill, which I outlined in my speech, with respect to some of the special balloting measures contained in the bill, the inadequacy of the amendments to the third-party financing regime, and above all else, the fact that the overriding purpose of the bill is to pad the pockets of soon-to-be defeated Liberal MPs.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today we are debating Bill C-65, tabled by the Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs.

I want to give a bit of background on the content of the bill before delving into the details of the Bloc Québécois's position.

The bill is presented as a means to encourage voter participation. It is hard to be against such an objective. I could talk about certain aspects of the bill, such as the idea of “two additional days of advance polling”. Giving voters two extra days to cast their ballot is certainly not a bad idea. We are not opposed to that.

The bill also seeks to “authorize returning officers to constitute polling divisions that consist of a single institution, or part of an institution, where seniors or persons with a disability reside”. Basically, the goal is to set up polling stations in long-term care facilities or in residences for people who are elderly or who have severe disabilities or mobility issues, so that they can vote on site. Again, that is not something we are opposed to. It is actually rather positive.

The bill seeks to “provide for the establishment of offices for voting by special ballot at post-secondary educational institutions”. The government wants to let people vote in schools. These are things that have already been done, particularly in Quebec. We do not have any problem with that. We tend to agree with that measure.

Then, there are other measures that would not be implemented right away but that could be implemented later if the findings of the Chief Electoral Officer's reports show that they would be worthwhile. Those measures could be put into in a second bill later. The Chief Electoral Officer would be responsible for presenting a few reports on various topics, one of which is “the measures that need to be taken to implement a three-day polling period”. The government wants to determine how the Chief Electoral Officer can ensure that polling is carried out over three days rather than just one. We are talking about the final election or D-Day, as we say.

The bill also provides for the Chief Electoral Officer to submit a “report on the measures that need to be taken to enable electors to vote at any place in their polling station”. Often, when people go to vote, there are several small polling stations scattered around. There are lists, and the polling stations are divided into several lists, so there are four or five polling stations. Thanks to this measure, people can go to any polling station to vote and will not have to wait if, for example, everyone happens to go vote at the same time and there is a line. That way, people can vote at the nearby polling station to avoid having to wait. This might speed up the processing rate. Again though, we will have to see how this measure can be implemented. How will we ensure that the right people are crossed off the right list? How will we ensure real-time monitoring? It will be up to the Chief Electoral Officer to tell us whether this is feasible or not.

The same goes for the three-day voting period. It is already hard enough to find places for people to vote. I have worked on elections in the past and have had discussions with returning officers. Many facilities need to be found, because there are several polling stations in each riding. Then people are divided up based on where they live. We must find locations that are close to where people live and that are available during the hours in question.

Is a three-day voting period a positive thing? If it is feasible, why not do it? It could be somewhat problematic. It will be up to the returning officer to determine whether there are possible solutions. For example, it would be hard to close schools for three days. If events are planned in certain locations, those rooms will have to be reserved. This can pose logistical problems.

The Chief Electoral Officer will also have to provide “a report on the feasibility of enabling electors to vote at any polling station in their electoral district”. Electors will not only be able to go to a different polling station if theirs is busy, but they will be able to go to any polling station in their electoral district. For example, instead of voting at the community centre next door, the elector could go vote at the school in the neighbouring town, at a polling station three blocks down, or even at a church. That type of location is often used for this type of event. People will be allowed to walk from one polling station to another to go vote. Again, this poses the same problem: We will have to ensure that no individual can vote at three or four different stations. The lists will need to be monitored. The returning officer might tell us how to manage this part.

● (1225)

There again, these are all things that we are prepared to look into to see how they could be implemented. They are not necessarily bad suggestions, on the contrary. They may even be good, if we can figure out a way to implement them properly.

*Government Orders*

When it comes to extending the polling period to three days and adding two additional days of advance polling, the only thing that presents an additional problem is the impact that will have on election workers, who are often students or retirees, because people who work full time are at work or sometimes have a family that they need to look after. They do not necessarily have time to work at an election. If we ask election workers to do more, we may need more workers to cover all the shifts. That may mean hiring more election workers or asking the same election workers to do more. The Chief Electoral Officer may find it difficult to get enough people who are trained and available. We will see what the Chief Electoral Officer says, but there are definitely some potential problems. In Quebec, the returning officers are saying that it is already hard sometimes to find election workers.

Finally, the bill provides for “a report proposing a process for the determination of whether a political party has as one of its fundamental purposes [or relies on] the promotion of hatred against an identifiable group of persons.” No one wants to see hate speech or hateful politics directed at an identifiable group of persons. The Chief Electoral Officer will therefore take responsibility for examining this issue as well.

All the items I mentioned are relatively worthwhile and positive. However, I wonder if anyone has considered the practical side of implementing all this. As I mentioned, the last items we talked about would not be implemented right away. They would be deferred until a later time. We therefore have time to think things through, although I believe that we have to consider practicalities before implementing anything, to nip all sorts of problems in the bud.

As we know, our electoral system is important. People generally trust our electoral system. We do not want to break with that trust in the integrity of the electoral process. It is too valuable, just like the public's trust in the process is valuable. If we decide to do something, we need to do it right.

However, there is something else in the bill that the Liberals are not talking about. We have been listening carefully, and so far, they have barely mentioned it in their speeches. Every time the Liberals introduce a bill, I always wonder why they are introducing it. Is it for partisan reasons? One has to wonder. The bill before us would delay the election by one week from October 20, 2025, to October 27, 2025. Why move the election by one week?

The official reason we were given is that the government wants to accommodate Indian communities and their celebration of Diwali, which is a festival of lights. That is the reason the government gave us. If it were a statutory holiday, we could understand that, but I find it odd that an election would be moved because of a religious holiday. Canada is supposed to be a secular state. A secular state, by definition, is not supposed to bend to the whim of every religion.

Whether it is Mardi Gras, the Feast of the Assumption or Palm Sunday, will the government start saying that we cannot vote because there is a religious holiday that day? If we take into consideration all the religious holidays that exist, we will never find a day to vote. It seems to me that this is a slippery slope and that it is not the right direction to take. I am even wondering whether that is the real reason.

I would like to remind members that people already have six days to go to the advance polls, so if they want to celebrate Diwali, for example, then good for them. That does not prevent them from voting during the six days of advance polling, since this bill adds two additional days to the four advance polling days that we already have. They can also go to the returning officer's office to vote at any time.

• (1230)

If people can already go vote at the office of the returning officer at any time during an election, is it really a major issue if the last day on which they can exercise their right to vote falls on a religious holiday? I am not so sure.

People can also vote by mail. That was implemented during the last election and it is now more widespread. People can vote in schools. That was mentioned earlier. There are even going to be mobile voting options for people with reduced mobility. That means that if someone has difficulty getting around physically, because they are in a wheelchair, for example, someone will visit them so they can vote. People can also vote in long-term care facilities or CHSLDs. That is why I am not entirely sure that Diwali celebrations are the real reason behind this.

This creates another problem. The Liberals did not think of it or maybe they do not care, but there will be municipal elections in 1,108 municipalities in Quebec at roughly the same time. In fact, the date of the municipal election is November 3, 2025. The date of the federal election was initially set for October 20, 2025. If it is moved to October 27, there will be six days between the two elections. I do not know if anyone has any idea of what that might look like.

There will be signs for every federal party: the Bloc Québécois, the Liberal Party, the NDP and all the other possible parties. Add to that all the signs for all the municipal parties. There will be a fight to see who posts their signs first. This will also create a media situation where everyone is clamouring to be on the news. Everyone will be in battle mode to get media coverage. Will the coverage be on the municipal election or just the federal election? The journalists, whose numbers are already dwindling, will have difficulty finding the time to properly cover both election campaigns.

All 1,108 municipalities will hold elections at the same time. It is not like one small remote town or a single school board was having an election—those do not exist anymore anyway. My point is, 1,108 municipalities is a lot of people. All these people will have to ponder, think, listen to debates, get informed—because not everyone is a full-time follower of politics—and make a choice. They will now have to do all of this twice in the same period.

*Government Orders*

What is more, something tells me that there will not be enough space—mental space, space in the media, physical space and space for volunteers. We want people to get involved, but, judging by what I can see in my riding, it is the same people who are volunteering in municipal, provincial and federal elections. They are also the same people who organize social and community events. Very often, the same people are involved in everything. Now, we are going to tell these people that they have to take care of all the elections. Volunteers are not the only ones. There are also election workers. The people who work for municipalities during the elections and who get paid by returning officers will be called upon to work during the federal elections. This will create a competition of sorts. Federal and provincial polling stations will have to be set up and staff will need to be trained. That will quite the whirligig.

I cannot understand why the Liberals overlooked that, unless they do not care. We know that they often skip over Quebec's cities, refuse to even listen to them and want nothing to do with them. For the Liberals, Quebec's cities do not exist. Sometimes, the Liberals even interfere in their areas of jurisdiction. We often talk about it in the House. I think it is sad, because it makes no sense. It almost seems like they are deliberately trying to confuse people. Why would they do such a thing?

In fact, it is because the Liberals are a bit desperate. I visited the 338Canada site this morning. At the moment, the Liberals have 156 seats, but the latest projections show that they would win 71 seats if an election were held tomorrow morning, meaning that 85 Liberal MPs would lose their jobs. Some of them would lose more than just their jobs. If an election were held on the date originally scheduled, they would lose their pension too. If that date were pushed back a week, they would get it.

As we understand it, the Liberals have found a way to say that they might be defeated in the next election, but they intend to give their friends a little parting gift, a bigger cheque, to make them richer on their way out the door. No member of the Liberal family will be abandoned or allowed to fall through the cracks. It is pathetic.

● (1235)

Now the cat is out of the bag. All of the good intentions and positive measures in Bill C-65 that the government has been bragging about do not seem quite so great when we find out why the bill was actually introduced. The real reason is that the Liberals want to treat themselves with taxpayers' money.

I am rather taken aback by that. Over the past several weeks in the House, often during question period, the member for Honoré-Mercier, who is the Minister of Transport and the Quebec lieutenant, has sometimes been taking pleasure in answering the questions of Bloc Québécois members by saying that we are not here for our convictions but for our pensions. That is what he said. I am 35 years old, so I am not going to be getting a pension anytime soon.

Now we are learning that, while the Liberals say that, what they are really doing is scheming, with the complicity of the NDP, to get themselves some nice pensions. Come on. Perhaps the NDP brought it up during question period because that is what they were thinking about. That is what was on their mind. The NDP was won-

dering how to make the Canada Elections Act best serve the interests of the Liberal Party.

This reminds me of the infamous wage subsidy. The government said that it wanted to help struggling businesses keep their employees during the COVID-19 crisis so it would subsidize wages. The Liberals also found a clever trick with that program. They figured that they needed the money as well, so they got the wage subsidy. Nothing is too good for the Liberals. The same thing is happening again with Bill C-65. It is pretty discouraging.

In fact, it is discouraging and sad because making changes to election legislation is a sensible thing. Making changes to election legislation is, in fact, the very essence of democracy. The public trust is sacred; we should not play around with it, indulge in self-serving largesse and constantly try to make it work to our advantage. In the end, these little Liberal shenanigans only serve to fuel public cynicism and make people feel more disconnected from our institutions. People tell themselves that this does not really represent them and that they do not trust it.

For these reasons, we are obviously going to vote against the bill. We are saying no to chaos in municipal elections held at the same time as federal elections and no to accommodations for religious holidays when we are a secular state and we are told that religious holidays will determine the timing of elections. Who understands that? I do not. Above all, I say no to Liberals who decide to fatten up their pension funds just before they leave.

\* \* \*

● (1240)

[English]

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Hon. Dan Vandal (Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to designate Monday, June 3, as the day appointed for the conclusion of the debate on the motion to concur in the 19th report of the Standing Committee on Finance.

\* \* \*

**ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-65, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was listening very closely to my friend across the way. He was talking about the consideration for the Province of Quebec and raised a lot of valid points. I wonder if he is aware that the City of Edmonton, the City of Calgary and the municipalities in Alberta have their elections on October 20. That is when the legislation is proposed. If nothing is done, we will have our election on the same date as those municipalities.

*Government Orders*

When he makes reference to Diwali, I myself appreciate Diwali, which is good over evil. There are all sorts of things that I would talk about with respect to Diwali. Having said that, I share the same concerns the member just talked about for the Province of Quebec. That is why I ask: Would he apply the same principles he just finished talking about with respect to the Province of Quebec for the people in the Province of Alberta? Should that be taken into consideration at all?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Mr. Speaker, I could answer quickly that the concern for a Bloc Québécois MP like me is primarily for Quebec, the municipalities of Quebec, its jurisdictions and all the rest.

I am not necessarily against what my colleague is proposing, that we should take into consideration the dates of other provincial and municipal elections. In fact, from the point of view of a parliamentarian or a federal government, it should go without saying that efforts should be made to avoid having these elections at the same time. Is it my role, as a member from Quebec, a member of the Bloc Québécois, to check whether there is an election in Alberta, Saskatchewan or Manitoba? No, that is my colleague's job. It is his responsibility.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what a pleasure it is to see you in that chair.

I appreciated my colleague's speech very much. He was elected for the first time in 2015. He mentioned his age. I did not think he was that young. The member raises a very important question regarding the necessary coordination when an election is called. We know that we have three levels of government in Canada: municipal, provincial and federal. We try to avoid creating bottlenecks whenever possible.

On the other hand, we recognize that Canada has 10 provinces and tens of thousands of municipalities, each with their own agenda. We recognize that. However, in this specific case, given the timing of the municipal elections in Quebec, we can plainly see that we are headed for a perfect storm in the name of a theoretically fixed-date federal election.

I believe that the same timing issue happened in the last election, in 2021. Members may recall that the Prime Minister called an election during the fourth wave of the pandemic, after a year and a half of a minority government. The current minority government is now in its third year and he will draw things out for a fourth one.

I want to draw members' attention to what my colleague said. Some members will have reached the six-year mark by the next election. What a coincidence. The government is proposing to have the next election after the supposed fixed date. I wonder if my colleague would be open to examining the proposal to hold the election 10 days before the fixed date. In that case, some members might not get their pension.

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Mr. Speaker, I think my colleague raises a very interesting point.

The government's priority should not be to work to ensure that its members make bank. The government's priority should be to ensure that the public can vote under the best possible circumstances. The

government is saying that it is going to make elections better, that it will be easier for people to vote, but that it wants to do it at the same time as municipal elections. I am not sure that this will help people.

• (1245)

[*English*]

**Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, for those who are watching, you are one of the longest-serving members in the chamber here, so it is good to see you in this role.

To my colleague, the NDP has proposed a change to stop the extra week that would allow this pension issue to rear its head and really distract from some good, necessary electoral reforms. There may be some other potential amendments that would help increase voting; voting numbers have not been as robust as what we would want.

The Liberals cannot get out of their own way. They continue to be the only party that wants to have this pension benefit thing exist. Would my colleague be supporting the NDP amendment to get rid of this entire pension debate, as well as other amendments to increase participation in democracy?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague said that the NDP would like to keep the original date with an amendment. What I do not understand is why the NDP needs it and why it is announcing it now.

When the bill was introduced, the NDP was patting itself on the back, saying that they had worked on it together and that it was so proud of the bill's outcome. In the end, they came forward with something else today.

It would be better if the date were moved by a week. It is better to vote a week and a half before a municipal election in Quebec than to vote six days before a municipal election. We agree on that. That said, the dates would still be very close together, and there would still be confusion. What would be even better would be to move the date back a little further, so that the election would be called a little earlier.

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his extremely interesting and enlightening speech.

I would like to remind members of the title of the bill, which is the electoral participation act. Our number one concern in the House is to get as many people to participate in elections as possible. My number one role is to get elected by the people of Shefford. I am starting to see a pileup—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Scott Reid):** The hon. member for Cariboo—Prince George on a point of order.

[*English*]

**Mr. Todd Doherty:** Mr. Speaker, forgive me if I am wrong, but I do not believe our hon. colleague is in her actual seat.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Scott Reid):** Perhaps we will give the member a chance to get to her seat.

Everything is in order.

*Government Orders*

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Shefford.

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche:** Mr. Speaker, I apologize. I was so caught up in this compelling and interesting debate that I forgot the rules. I will come back to my question. Bill C-65 is on electoral participation. Above all, our role as elected members is to ensure that more people participate in the electoral process.

For some time now I have seen a pileup of bills, facts or news in the House that are harmful to democracy. Let me explain. When two parties call each other names—I saw this again just this week—this just fuels hate and fosters a hateful environment that discourages people from going out to vote. I do not think that shouting insults is very edifying for democracy.

I have another concern. The Bloc Qu b cois is losing a riding in eastern Quebec. Not only are we losing political weight in the region, but Quebec is also losing political weight. It is worrisome for democracy. Now more elements are being added that will hinder the next election, namely having the federal election at the same time as another election. Moreover, people will only become more cynical about politics because they will think that politicians are giving themselves a pension by moving the date of the next election.

This is starting to really add up. What does my colleague think?

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for a very good question. I think she raises a good point with the so-called electoral reform, by which I mean the latest redistribution. The electoral map is obviously a part of democracy.

Unfortunately, there is nothing in this bill to correct the issues being faced in regions where the ridings are even larger, where the impression of being far from power is even greater, and where the work of MPs and elected representatives is even more difficult. These are the kinds of issues we would like the feds to address. However, we are getting the impression that the Liberals are turning a deaf ear.

We know that an independent Quebec would be more receptive because there is already a willingness in Quebec to ensure that the regions are heard and well represented. We know that a process of reflection is under way.

• (1250)

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I asked the member about applying the same principles that he used in his speech for Quebec to Alberta. His response was that this in Alberta, and it does not matter to him.

There are 30-plus Conservative MPs from Alberta. Does the member believe they should at least give some thought to the impact of having Calgary, Edmonton and municipal elections throughout the province?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval:** Mr. Speaker, I do not think the member opposite understood my answer. What I am telling him is

that I am a member of the Bloc Qu b cois, a member from Quebec, and that my focus is Quebec.

However, he is a member of the party in power and it is up to the Liberals to manage the entire country and all the concerns of every province. It is up to them to find solutions. If someone tables a solution to these problems, we will not oppose it. However, we are focusing on Quebec's problems.

[*English*]

**Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in this House to represent the people of London—Fanshawe and to speak today to this really important piece of legislation.

Today is yet another win for Canadians being delivered by the NDP caucus. It is yet another example of what can be accomplished by sending members of Parliament to the House of Commons who put people first. We do not focus on ourselves. We do not work to expand only our own power, or the power of our rich donors, because we do not have rich donors; we have normal people working together for a cause that they believe in. New Democrats work to ensure that our democratic institutions are strengthened for all people. This legislation is a good step. It is one step, but a good step to give power back to Canadians and not tear down democracy simply for clickbait.

When we all arrived in Ottawa, after the 2021 election, there were a lot of choices that had to be made by all members. We had the choice to spend the next four years fighting, accomplishing little for our constituents, throwing tantrums because we could not get the results that we wanted, or we could be better. My caucus knew that Canadians wanted action. As a New Democrat who grew up under the leadership shown by Jack Layton, I knew the importance of balancing a proposition while in opposition. We did not want to be like the Conservatives spending four years fundraising and disrupting Parliament. We knew the Liberals would spend four years breaking the promises that they had been making to Canadians for so long, so we stepped up.

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One thing is very clear in the House: New Democrats and Conservatives have a very different understanding of our responsibility in this House. We are elected by constituents as individuals first. We are here to fight for them, sometimes alongside colleagues in the government, sometimes not. We saw this in action during COVID-19. In this chamber, we put politics aside and fought for Canadians in one of the largest crises in Canada. We, the NDP, used our power in a minority government to collaborate with all sides. We increased the Canada emergency wage subsidy to protect jobs. We made sure that the Canada emergency response benefit provided enough supports for everyone so they could make ends meet. We ensured necessary programs were coming out on time with minimal barriers. We made sure that students were supported. All parties, to differing degrees, came together during COVID. I think that Canadians noticed that support for Parliament as an institution and the respect that they had was felt.

Parliament is at its worst when political parties wield their majorities as a way to shut down others, but our experience during the COVID-19 pandemic showed politics can work for Canadians when we come together. We have seen how collaboration can help more and more Canadians. Our agreement with the government says it all. If Liberals finally deliver on their promise of ending first past the post, we can make that collaboration the rule, not the exception. We can end a system where 100% of the power goes to a party with less than 40% of the vote. We can end a system that incentivizes the toxic clip culture and recklessness from opposition parties waiting to have their turn. Canadians would like to see Liberals, Conservatives, Bloc, NDP and Green members working together on solutions. If we can listen to Canadians and end first past the post, we can make that collaboration. Again, it could be the rule, not the exception, in this place.

I would like to talk more about how working together has helped Canadians: 1.7 million seniors have registered for dental care, the single-biggest expansion of our health care system since Tommy Douglas; nine million Canadians will receive barrier-free birth control; 3.7 million Canadians will receive diabetes medication and devices for free; a new rental protection fund to stop greedy corporate landlords from getting rich off the backs of precarious renters is set to happen; a new national school food program will provide meals for 4,000 children across Canada; and now, today, with the introduction of Bill C-65, we can move toward fairer elections.

Today is a great example of why New Democrats needed to step up and use our influence to make Liberals act. I remember knocking on doors in 2015, and the powerful promise given to Canadians by the Prime Minister that 2015 would be our last unfair election under first past the post. How many people in this place remember hearing that? In 2015, the Liberals were elected with a majority government and had four full years to exercise their majority in this House to pass that legislation but, in 2019, confusingly, I was elected to this chamber by London—Fanshawe under first past the post.

• (1255)

Then, in 2021, even the Prime Minister was catching on, saying that we had to eliminate first past the post and he again said, “Oh, I will take on election reform”. New Democrats knew that was not going to happen, that we would see that election promise broken again, and that is exactly what happened.

My colleague, the NDP MP for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, brought forward a fantastic motion to create a citizens' assembly on electoral reform. She argued to this House that Canadians were becoming cynical about politics. A 2020 Leger poll showed that 80% of Canadians supported the creation of a citizens' assembly on electoral reform. This was a popular idea to solve the drop in voter turnout in Canada. However, the Liberals and Conservatives teamed up in February to defeat it.

If Canadians are thinking that the new Conservative leader will be any better, I am sad to say that is not the case. In 2014, he was the Minister of State for Democratic Reform and brought forward infamous unfair changes to the Canada Elections Act. At a time when there was growing consensus in Canada to fix our broken electoral system, the Conservative leader created more barriers to vote and made the process less democratic. The Conservative leader was caught misleading this House when he promised he had consulted the Chief Electoral Officer, but within minutes of his making this claim, Elections Canada officials corrected the record to say that they were never consulted on the contents of the bill.

It took years to see the true impact of another major problem with this bill, because the Conservatives stripped the investigative powers of the office of the commissioner of Canada elections. Now we know the rest of the story. We have had years of foreign interference allegations that have shaken this country, but the elections watchdog was stripped. It probably had something to do with the Conservatives' getting caught in that infamous robocall scandal.

Canadians know that our elections need more oversight. Conservatives stripped it away. The Conservative bill also allowed for more monetization of our political system. The Conservative leader spiked the maximum donation limit, so the Conservatives' rich insiders could fill their coffers. The Conservative leader made expense-limit loopholes, further making it easier to influence election outcomes by those who have lots of money.



The most cynical part of the bill was that they doubled down on the systemic barriers for marginalized people to participate in our elections. Indigenous communities, youth, seniors and the poor are disenfranchised by politics. Politicians use their power to benefit the wealthiest elites in this country, but it is these marginalized communities who need to engage in our electoral system to elect officials who will champion their needs. The Conservatives made it harder for them to engage in our electoral process. The Conservatives knew that tightening rules on voter identification would systematically disenfranchise these voters. They did not care. The Conservatives knew it would cause confusion for those communities, and they went as far as banning Elections Canada from advertising to these communities with respect to how to vote under the new system, which was shameful. Finally, the Conservatives rammed this legislation through Parliament to avoid scrutiny, using their majority government and tight time allocation.

Those are not the only changes that the Conservatives made to our elections. The Conservatives used their majority to cut a crucial part of our democracy: per-vote subsidy. Since the NDP was founded in 1961, we have been the party of workers who came together to end the monopoly on politics wielded by the richest and most powerful. The per-vote subsidy meant that Canadian political parties did not need to rely on big donations in exchange for political favours. It allowed Canadians to not only vote for their member of Parliament but to also have a say in which political party had the resources to campaign to get their message out. The Conservatives would rather their insider buddies decide, and they cut the per-vote subsidy while hiking that maximum donation limit. Therefore, the Conservatives made things worse. They made elections less fair, less transparent and less accessible.

After the last election, we saw the impact of lower voter participation on our democracy. We knew, as New Democrats, that we needed to use our influence and place Canadians first. We used our power to get these changes to Parliament.

Now, let me be clear: This bill is not perfect. We have a number of changes that we would like to make when this reaches committee, but in this bill there are important wins.

- (1300)

The bill would add two additional days of advance polling, bringing the total to seven, including election day. It would require Elections Canada to offer online registration for special mail-in ballots. It would create the option to register early for special ballots in the case of fixed-date elections. It would create the option for electors to return special ballots in person or vote in person on election day if they have registered for, but not submitted, a special ballot. It would enshrine in legislation the Vote on Campus program for post-secondary students; and make voting easier in long-term care facilities by allowing returning officers to work with facilities to identify the best date and time for residents to vote early, removing proof-of-address requirements for electors in these facilities and allowing them to choose anyone they would like to assist them with voting.

The bill would require a report to Parliament by the Chief Electoral Officer on steps needed to give electors the ability to vote at any polling station in their riding by 2029. It would require a report to Parliament by the Chief Electoral Officer on steps needed to im-

### *Government Orders*

plement a three-day election day period for general elections by 2029 and beyond. It would increase protections against election interference and foreign financing of third party campaign activities. It would introduce new protections against people knowingly making false or misleading statements related to an election or the voting process.

The bill has new third party finance rules requiring increased transparency on the source of funding that third parties use to pay for regulated activities. It would create new safeguards for voters' personal data held by political parties.

I mentioned that there were things that we wanted to see changed. We need to see more in the bill, and we will be pushing for that at committee. We want to ensure that all communities and Canadians can engage in our electoral system. That means allowing indigenous languages on ballots across Canada. That means allowing telephone voting for people with disabilities. That means lowering the voter age to 16. These changes are critical to ensure we elect politicians who look like and serve all Canadians

We also want to remove any chance of the bill being cynically used for MP pensions. We want to ensure that the bill would not circumvent the normal procedure for allocation of MP pensions and ensure that any change to the election day does not push anyone over the line for access to a pension that they would not have otherwise received.

We also want to ensure that unions are not unduly prohibited from communicating with their own members about politics. Despite attacks by other parties, unions are part of our democracy. They are elected. We cannot just have electoral democracy; Canadians need economic and workplace democracy. That means ensuring workers can come together and work together to change our political system.

We also know Canada is lagging behind on the world stage for gender parity in politics. In 1997, 20.6% of members of Parliament were women. Today, we have only grown to 30.6%, well behind countries, like Mexico, that have reached gender parity by making it a part of their electoral process. I am very proud that the NDP has a robust gender equity policy in our selection of candidates, but the last couple of weeks have shown that we cannot rely on political parties alone to make that change. Canadian women deserve true representation. They need gender parity in this House, and that will require changing how we do elections.

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I just wanted to expand on this a bit, too, in terms of what I have seen in the procedure and House affairs committee recently, as we are talking about harassment in this place and in this institution. The misogyny that we see in this place needs to be rectified. I have approached many progressive women, seeing if they would put their names forward. They see what happens in this place. They do not want to be a part of that. They cannot see themselves in this place. That has a huge negative impact on how we govern this country.

As I conclude, the NDP is extremely proud to have pushed the Liberal government to make elections more accessible for Canadians. There is a lot more work to be done, and we need to keep pushing to make sure that it is done. Canadians are sick and tired of those broken promises, and they are sick and tired of being manipulated solely so certain parties can focus on their own power and privilege.

• (1305)

There are fundamental changes that we need to make to ensure that every Canadian's vote matters. I believe that means ending first past the post, which is key for proportional representation; getting indigenous languages on ballots; telephone voting for people with disabilities; and lowering the voting age to 16 years of age for those who contribute to our financial system yet have no voice within our democratic system.

This bill, while a small first step, is a very good step. With New Democrats using our power to deliver fairness for Canadians, we are proud that we will be making our electoral system better and fairer.

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Madam Speaker, after nine years of the Liberal-NDP Prime Minister and the government's woke, wacko, extremist policies, Canadians are poorer than they have ever been before. It is because the New Democrats have helped prop up the most corrupt Prime Minister in Canadian history. He doubled rents and mortgages and made food unaffordable, all on a pathway to quadrupling the carbon tax scam.

Does the member agree that it is time for her party to stop protecting its leader's pension, stop propping up the corrupt Liberal-NDP government, help put an end to Canadians' misery and call a carbon tax election now so that common-sense Conservatives can axe the tax and Canadians can kick this costly coalition to the curb?

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** Madam Speaker, there were a lot of slogans put into one question, albeit a very concise one.

Interestingly, I talked about clickbait in my speech. I do not know if the member heard that. I do not know if the member has heard me speak in this House about the rage farming that occurs. In my speech, I talked about how we can make our electoral system better, how we can make politics better, how we can work together, not for ourselves and not for the power that Conservatives seem to cling to so tightly, and how we can do that for the people who have elected us and need us to be better.

If I showed up at a workplace and all I did was fight with everybody I worked with, would I get anything done? Would I hold my

position for long? No. I have to be better and we all have to be better, and I refute everything the member said.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to pick up on expanding advance polling. I will be providing further thoughts on this shortly, but when I reflect on it, I see that advance polling has had an uptick. More and more people are taking advantage of marking their X by participating at advance polls, one of the highlights of this legislation. I think we should all get behind supporting that initiative.

I am wondering if the member wants to emphasize her personal thoughts regarding the benefits of expanding the number of days to vote in advance.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** Madam Speaker, that is exactly one of the reasons we are happy to move forward with this bill and make the needed changes. In fact, one of those changes, to put the election day back to the original date, would mean more advance polling or voting days. That is why we want to see the election expanded to three days. In the end, it would provide more opportunities.

We believe we would not have to argue so much about the end date if we had more days, more flexibility and more options for people to vote throughout the election process. This is about expanding that even more, and I am fully in support of it.

• (1310)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I want to pick up on a few words that my colleague from London—Fanshawe said.

She said that we need to improve politics, be better, and rise above the kind of petty politicking that we see all too often.

There are a lot of good things in this bill. A more accessible electoral process is a good thing. The idea of extending advance polling station operations by a few days is a good thing.

However, instead of introducing a bill that would have brought the opposition parties together, the government included things like pushing back the election date, which opens the door to legitimate criticism from Canadians who see it as a move by the Liberals to provide pensions to those elected in 2019.

Why use a religious holiday as an excuse for a date change, knowing full well how much it would irritate proponents of a secular state who refuse to make unreasonable accommodations on religious grounds? Why put forward a date just six days away from upcoming municipal elections in 1,109 Quebec municipalities, and thus jeopardize Quebec's municipal election process?

*Government Orders*

There could have been a way to create a unifying bill that accommodated the sensitivities of all the parties, but no, they did not do that.

[*English*]

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** Madam Speaker, again, I go back to what New Democrats have put on the table. We want to see this go to committee, so that we can make the changes necessary to do exactly as the member said and bring it back to the original date. We do not want this to be about us. This is about the electors. This is about Canadians and what they need.

To eliminate that conversation, let us make the changes that we need to, but we have to do that together instead of just striking the legislation down. We did not write the legislation. The government wrote it, but we are, again, being the adults in the room and taking the time to take a look at it and see how we can make it better. That is our job. Let us make it better.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I agree with the member that a lot of Canadians are increasingly feeling concerned and separated from government. I think it is imperative that we do not use slogans that separate and divide, but rather, clearly state where we are strong, even if we are reflecting on where other parties are weak.

I represent a more rural and remote community. I know that one of the challenges we have is that people will go to another part of the riding and think they can vote there. Of course, they are not always able to.

Can the member reflect on how having longer advance polls, longer election dates and a longer period of time to vote would allow people who are in a bigger riding to find the right place to vote?

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** Madam Speaker, the member's point of view is very important, in terms of the rural side and the disenfranchisement of those specific voters. They do not have the same access that other Canadians might have. That is key. That is one of the fundamental principles of a democratic election process. Ensuring that we have an expansion of advance days to vote is a really big part of that.

One thing that I would like to see, which has been floated, is for people to be able to vote wherever they are in the electoral district, no matter which polling station they have access to. I think that would take a lot of work. I think we need to put the resources into our Elections Canada office to do that kind of research and make that positive change for Canadians, no matter where they live and no matter who they are, within the democratic system.

• (1315)

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, my colleague and I actually work together on the procedure and House affairs committee, and we worked closely together to get a lot of good things done.

The member brought up really good points in her intervention. I was on the electoral reform committee. I still have flashbacks. I know we were together with the member opposite as well.

The member brought up some really good points about increasing voter participation. Does she have any recommendations to include in this bill about how we can continue to increase voter participation?

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate working with the hon. member on the procedure and House affairs committee, and the incredibly important work that we are doing in terms of the conversation about harassment in this workplace and what that means to our democratic institutions.

Within this bill, we need to expand a lot more. I am not sure if it would fit within this bill, but I did mention extending and expanding the voter age to 16, which my colleague put forward. Unfortunately, it was defeated, but we will keep trying for that.

Moving to mixed-member proportional representation would provide an understanding and immediate feedback to people that their vote matters. They would be able to see it more directly, as opposed to the first-past-the-post system, which we are stuck in right now.

I think the conversation about per-vote subsidy also has a really big part in this. It would allow the full enfranchisement of all political parties, based on the number of votes they get, to then continue the conversation and be able to get into the public sphere on a far more equal basis, allowing them to communicate to people, and then people would know their choices more.

All of those things need to be part of this conversation. I would love for it to be part of this bill, but these are conversations that we have to have collaboratively and together as part of our healthy democratic institution.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order, in my rush to get to Government Orders, I missed a question. I ask for leave to go back.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

\* \* \*

**QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, Question No. 2548 will be answered today.

[*Text*]

Question No. 2548—**Mr. Blake Desjarlais:**

With regard to government contracts for dentistry services with Indigenous Services Canada, broken down by fiscal year, since 2017-18: (a) what is the total number of contracts signed; (b) what are the details of all contracts signed, including the (i) agency contracted, (ii) value of the contract, (iii) number of dentists provided, (iv) duration of the contract; and (c) what is the total amount of extra costs incurred as a result of relying on contracted services instead of employing dentists directly?

*Government Orders*

**Ms. Jenica Atwin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to government contracts for dentistry services with Indigenous Services Canada or ISC, ISC does not systematically track this information in a centralized repository.

ISC undertook an extensive preliminary search in order to determine the amount of information that would fall within the scope of the question and the amount of time that would be required to prepare a comprehensive response.

The information requested is not systematically tracked in a centralized database, and producing a comprehensive response to this question would require a manual collection of information that is not possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

\* \* \*

[English]

**ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION ACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-65, An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to address an issue that I was not able to address earlier today because of time constraints.

I want to amplify this, because my friend in the Bloc raised a really important point. One issue that was constantly being brought up in questions and answers was why the government gave any consideration to the change of date from October 20. It was interesting when the representative from the Bloc articulated, far better than I ever could have, that we were being insensitive by changing the date from October 20 to October 27 because municipal elections were going to be at the beginning of November. He brought up a lot of excellent representations to validate why he was concerned. He felt, in essence, that Quebec was not being treated fairly because we were moving the date to October 27.

I understood what the member said very clearly. That is why I asked him whether he would apply the very same principles that he articulated, with his concerns about the municipal elections in Quebec in early November, to Alberta, because for Alberta, October 20 is election day. That would mean for people who live in Edmonton, Calgary or any of the municipalities, the election on October 20 would be in direct conflict with both a federal and a provincial election. A voter on election day in Edmonton would be voting for a mayor, councillors, MPs and the prime minister.

We know the Bloc's position. As articulated, the Bloc would not support that if it was in Quebec. They made it very clear that they would not support a federal election that would interfere directly with the Quebec election. We saw the resistance to that when it was getting close to the election.

That causes us to ask this question: What about the Alberta members of Parliament? There are 34 members of Parliament from Alberta, 30 of whom are from the Conservative Party. I will say to those particular members that I give the Bloc some credit for taking

into consideration the concerns of Quebec, even though they do not care about Alberta. However, what about Alberta MPs? There is not one word. In fact, from their seats they say they are fine; they are okay, no problems. There is no consideration whatsoever.

At the end of the day, when I look at the issue the Conservatives continue to raise, I see they want to label it for a reason, and I understand why. As a government, we brought forward the legislation, but as I said in my remarks when introducing the legislation, as a minority government, a majority of MPs, which implies more than one political party, have to support the legislation, including the changing of a date.

I understand where the Bloc is coming from, and there are some principled positions there. However, the Conservatives are one hundred per cent political in their nature. We should not be surprised by that, because the Conservative track record on reforming election laws is not all that good.

● (1320)

I was in the chamber, and I actually did a little bit of research on this one on openparliament.ca. I looked up a gentleman by the name of Brad Butt. Do members remember him? He was a Conservative MP who was sitting in the government backbenches. We were talking about the Fair Elections Act. He said:

I am from a semi-urban area of Mississauga, where there are many high-rise apartment buildings. On mail delivery day when the voter cards are delivered to community mailboxes in apartment buildings, many of them are discarded in the garbage can or the blue box. I have actually witnessed other people picking up the voter cards, going to the campaign office of whatever candidate they support and handing out these voter cards to other individuals, who then walk into voting stations with friends who vouch for them with no ID.

One has to put the bizarre, untruthful comments to the side and understand what the Conservative Party was trying to do at that time. Conservatives might have called it the Fair Elections Act, but what they were trying to do was deny Canadians the opportunity to use the cards that Elections Canada produced as part of ID, not sole ID, but as a part of it, for one purpose: They wanted to try to minimize the number of people participating in the election. They came up with their arguments to try to justify it, and Mr. Butt actually ended up retracting the claim, saying he never actually saw the incident and that it was just made up.

I have been a candidate in 10 or a dozen elections, and I can recall one mistake where I actually boosted a Facebook post, which I should not have done. I admitted that I should not have done it. No one is perfect. Even though I would argue that it was unintentional, there are intentional things that I see and have seen from the Conservative Party. We all remember the robocall scandal, where Conservatives were spreading misinformation in terms of not voting at a particular place on a particular day, trying to prevent or discourage individuals from voting, through misinformation directing them to other places. It was voter suppression.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS***[English]***NATIONAL STRATEGY ON FLOOD AND DROUGHT FORECASTING ACT**

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-317, An Act to establish a national strategy respecting flood and drought forecasting, as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** There being no motions at report stage on this bill, the House will now proceed, without debate, to the putting of the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.)** moved that the bill be concurred in at report stage.

*[English]*

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** If a member participating in person wishes that the motion be carried or carried on division, or if a member of a recognized party participating in person wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, on division.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia** moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

He said: Madam Speaker, before I begin my speech, I would like to extend some thanks. I would like to thank all the members of the House, particularly those who serve on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. As we know, the bill was endorsed by all the parties. It received unanimous support, and I am very pleased about that.

I also want to thank the scientists who helped me develop and draft this bill, including John Pomeroy, a world-renowned hydrologist. He is an expert in climate change and hydrology in nordic countries like Canada. He was instrumental in helping me draft this legislation. More importantly, he taught me a lot on the subject. I am not a scientist. I have a keen interest in freshwater, but I did not know a lot about flood and drought forecasting. Professor Pomeroy was extremely patient and really helped me learn about the subject, along with Alain Pietroniro, a former public servant at the Department of Environment in Ottawa who now works at the University of Calgary. The University of Calgary is in the process of setting up a faculty dedicated to water studies, which is very impressive. It has a whole team studying this area in depth, and it keeps me abreast of what is going on. The University of Saskatchewan, where Professor Pomeroy works, is recognized for its expertise in water issues and, most importantly, in the science behind flood and drought forecasting.

Do members remember the in-and-out scandal? In fact in that one, the Conservative Party was actually charged for its inappropriate behaviour. What about Dean Del Mastro himself? I believe he was the parliamentary secretary to the prime minister. He is a gentleman who ended up leaving in handcuffs. We do not need to take lessons from the Conservative Party.

We see the frustrations and the Conservatives' general respect for election laws. I say it in this tone because I say that if one takes a look at what I said this morning, I thought I was maybe a little bit more diplomatic and kinder in my words, ultimately believing that all of us were supportive of the fine work that Elections Canada has done.

The legislation before us was brought forward as a way in which we could make some positive changes to ensure that we have even healthier and stronger elections where we see more voter participation. After I articulated it for a few minutes this morning, in the first question there was a labelling of the legislation as if it were not what it is meant to be: legislation that would enhance opportunities and strengthen our election laws.

• (1325)

Then we have the Conservatives, in particular, who are trying to make it out as a conspiracy that we are trying to beef up 32 Conservatives' pensions, as well as the pensions of 22 Liberal, 19 Bloc and a half-dozen NDP members.

It is as though that was the only consideration for this legislation and that no consideration was given to the Province of Alberta, which is going to be electing mayors and councillors in Edmonton, Calgary and other municipalities, or that we are not recognizing the Indo-Canadian community and Canadians, many of whom acknowledge and celebrate Diwali, including myself.

At the end of the day, as I said earlier this morning, we need to recognize the valuable role Canada plays today and can continue to play in leadership on democracy by supporting such things as the independence of Elections Canada and by looking at ways in which we can strengthen our election laws. That is the primary purpose for the legislation, and members opposite know this full well.

I heard that the NDP is going to be bringing in a motion to change the date and that the Bloc is going to support the motion. As for the Conservatives, who knows what they will do? They are likely going to support that motion too, so the only thing that has to be decided is what day.

I would suggest that maybe we should be considering what the Bloc said about the Province of Quebec and municipal elections. Maybe we should also be considering what is happening in Alberta. After all, the Bloc members said it is the government's problem. We have to deal with the Alberta situation; the Bloc only deals with Quebec. The government is at least putting it on the table, and if the Conservatives want to ignore it—

• (1330)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I am sorry. I need to interrupt the hon. member. We are out of time.

*Private Members' Business*

Earlier this week, I raised an issue when we were debating areas of jurisdiction within the Canadian federation. I said that the Canadian federation is more than a power game or a power relationship. Yes, we do politics here, in the House. Doing politics is part of building and maintaining relations between the federal and provincial governments. However, the Canadian federation is bigger than that. It encompasses the resources and expertise that we share. It also includes a technical component in that we share knowledge and ways of doing things. This is evident in a number of areas, like health, for instance. Each province is like a laboratory and tries to manage its health care system in a certain way. If things work out, other provinces may want to follow suit. I think we have seen this happen in Quebec, where a government agency, Santé Quebec, was just created. Apparently it is similar to what was created in Ontario, but I will spare you the details. It is a bit like the United Nations. Obviously, the United Nations engages in politics, especially the General Assembly and the Security Council.

However, the United Nations is much more than that. It is expertise and resources. Countries collaborate on technical issues, whether it is through the World Health Organization, the International Maritime Organization or the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. A lot of work is being done. It is a bit like what happens here: Often, question period is theatre, but in committee, we do good work. Theatre is not bad. It has its place in politics. I would like to say that the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development does good work.

• (1335)

Bill C-317 is a rather technical bill, designed to encourage technical collaboration with respect to forecasting droughts and floods and to better predict them. That is the purpose of this bill. As I said at the outset, I did not know much about this field, but I have learned a lot. This has enabled me to bring in this bill and move it forward.

This bill will encourage collaboration, but without incurring any expenses. This bill will not force an internal reorganization within the Department of Environment. This bill will require federal officials to collaborate with experts, many of whom work in a provincial government, as well as with indigenous peoples and the insurance industry. Everyone needs to work together to develop a plan for better collaboration on drought and flood forecasting. There is some collaboration now, but it is not very formal and it would be better if it were even more structured and streamlined. That is all this bill seeks to do.

It will be a major step forward if the bill is passed in the House of Commons and the Senate and if the departments in question are required to implement this strategy. Why am I interested in flooding? I have been interested in the freshwater policy since I was elected, and floods and droughts obviously impact the amount of water that is available. Either there is too much or too little.

I would also like to talk a little bit about my riding. It is located on the Island of Montreal, in the west end of the city. It is surrounded by water, namely the Lac des Deux-Montagnes, Rivière-des-Prairies, Lac Saint-Louis and the St. Lawrence River. Every once in a while, but more often these days because of climate change, there is overflow and flooding. When we see it with our own eyes, we

realize just how much devastation and destruction that can cause. That is what prompted me to introduce this bill.

I would also like to take a moment to congratulate municipal councillors, who are really called upon to work together and do crisis management when there is flooding. They do it very well. That is one of the reasons this subject caught my attention. I would also like to thank my colleagues once again, especially those on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

I hope that this bill will be passed at third reading. Things are looking good, as I believe it was passed unanimously at second reading. If the bill passes in the House, I will have to wait and see what happens in the Senate. I have to admit that I am not as familiar with the workings of the Senate as I am with the House of Commons, but I will get there eventually.

• (1340)

[English]

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Madam Speaker, while I appreciate the member's efforts on this critical issue, I am concerned about the fact that it reinforces a pattern we have seen from the Liberals and the Liberal government. That pattern is a lot of concern about the impacts of climate change but a lack of action.

Here, in our part of the country, we have seen a record wildfire season already, with much more aggressive fires and much earlier than normal, because of the drought conditions resulting from climate change.

Most recently we have heard very concerning statements from the military. They see the kind of support they provided as recently as last year as "wickedly wasteful".

Does the member support the Liberal government not taking bold action on climate change? Does he believe that the federal government should be able to call on the military when needed, to keep communities such as mine and others across the country safe in the face of climate emergencies?

*Private Members' Business*

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Madam Speaker, I do not agree that the current government has not taken the environment in general, and climate change more specifically, seriously. Of all the governments in the history of Canada, ours is the one that has put forth the most ambitious and most multi-faceted environmental policies, including in the area of climate change. We fought all the way to the Supreme Court to protect an Environmental Assessment Act that we revamped in 2016 so that we could take into account emissions from projects when they are being evaluated. We went all the way to the Supreme Court so that we could gain jurisdiction and defend our policy of putting a price on carbon. Therefore we have really, I think, put our money where our mouth is.

As far as the military is concerned, over the last few years it has done a remarkable job helping us address domestic emergencies, whether it was the pandemic or helping with firefighting and so on. I am very proud of the members of our military, and I know they will be there when they are needed.

**Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have more of a comment to build on the last question from our NDP colleague, because I want to put it on the record.

I have huge belief in our Canadian Armed Forces members to move forward and be there for domestic operations, but that is not their primary role. They will be there to do those tasks that nobody else in the civil service can do, or if municipal or provincial capabilities do not exist. However, something I would encourage the government to look at is how we can restructure a federal force to be able to deal with those tasks, one that would not be part of the Canadian Armed Forces.

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Madam Speaker, that is a very good point. I agree that the people who join the Armed Forces probably have their eye more on serving in conflict zones and so forth. However, yes, from time to time in all countries, the military is called upon to lend a helping hand in situations of emergency. I do believe that the government has stood up a humanitarian force to deal more specifically with domestic situations, which is, I guess, an outgrowth of the fact that, yes, we are facing a climate emergency and it is having impacts here in Canada.

• (1345)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, whom I hold in high esteem, for his speech.

My question is quite simple: How does he think this bill is going to improve coordination among the various stakeholders who manage weather forecasts? Is this bill really going to improve things for them?

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Madam Speaker, as I said in other speeches, weather management is really a federal responsibility. The Canadian Meteorological Centre manages weather forecasts. I am talking about weather forecasting and how to make better predictions. That is already being done. Forecasters are already talking about it, but we need something a little more structured.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for my colleague from Lac-Saint-Louis, and for good reason. He thanked all those who worked

in committee and in the House to move his bill forward. That happened because someone opposite wanted it to happen and took the necessary steps to make it work. I am talking about the member for Lac-Saint-Louis. I would also like to remind the House that, in less than four weeks, at the end of June, he will be celebrating the 20th anniversary of his election to the House of Commons.

I knew that I had seen him somewhere before. I was a journalist when the Right Hon. Paul Martin became prime minister. There was a large gathering in Montreal for the prime minister. Obviously, I would have to assume that the member for Lac-Saint-Louis was there.

Why are we supporting this bill? There are three major reasons.

The first is that it does not cost anything. That is important to us. We have an excellent federal public service. These people are equipped to ensure that the necessary steps are taken and that the work is done with the provinces and municipalities. This can be accomplished using the department's existing budget. That is important to us.

The second reason is that this bill is based on a principle that is near and dear to us: collaboration between the different levels of government, coordination and information sharing. That is exactly what we are talking about. Obviously, we recognize that every place has its own unique characteristics. Each province has its own expertise. Sometimes, a province may have several completely different kinds of expertise. The expertise in northern Saskatchewan and southern Saskatchewan can be dramatically different. The same goes for Quebec, the Maritimes and British Columbia. In short, our country is magnificent. It is large, vast, distinct and different. That is why we need to share best practices to inspire people to take the most effective approaches used in a specific location and transpose them to another context. That takes coordination, collaboration and information sharing.

Here is the third reason why we support this bill. The leader of Canada's Conservatives, the member for Carleton, said something important last September in his keynote speech at our national convention. It was his first major speech to all Conservative Party supporters. More than 2,500 supporters from all 338 ridings gathered in my part of the country, in Quebec City. The future prime minister of Canada, the member for Carleton, spoke to a group of grassroots supporters about the realities we are facing today. He sent a clear message that we need to face the realities and impacts of climate change, which is real and requires that we work together.

The main purpose of this bill is to enable us to work better, to get to know each other better, to exchange ideas and to learn from one another's experiences as we face the new challenges of climate change and learn about the best approaches to take when dealing with spills and floods. As the member for Lac-Saint-Louis put it so well, his riding is very familiar with this reality, as the name suggests.

*Private Members' Business*

This does not happen as much as it did before, but when I take the plane in Dorval, most of the time we fly over bodies of water. It is a chance for me to see the power of Quebec's water resources. Quebec is a beautiful land that is just covered in lakes.

Two weeks ago, I went to Val-d'Or. I did the return leg from Val-d'Or to Quebec City with a local company, Air Liaison. The flight was just over an hour and went very smoothly. We flew over La Vérendrye Park and all of that. It is incredible to see all the lakes that we have. We have a country of land and water and we can be very proud of that. This also gives us responsibilities.

From our point of view, this bill is a step in the right direction. If by chance Canadians give us the honour of putting their trust in us, we will be very happy to work with this new body that will be charged with exchanging information that is essential for the future of Canada.

● (1350)

**Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ):** Madam Speaker, in November 2023, I rose to speak to the bill introduced by my colleague, the chair of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development and member for Lac-Saint-Louis, with whom I have the great pleasure of working on that committee.

As I said at the time, the Bloc Québécois does not have any objections as to the content of the bill. I pointed out that it is important to remember that all of the tools already exist and have been implemented in Quebec. I also pointed out that there was a problem that seemed fundamental to me, namely that better coordination was needed among the existing organizations. I am talking about the organizations responsible for handling information related to weather events that result in major flooding and occasional or prolonged drought.

Droughts and floods are natural phenomena, but we know that they are exacerbated by climate change and climate disruptions. In order for us to adapt to climate change impacts, public authorities must come together and take action. They must rely on science to guide the government's decision-making in that area. This means making relevant information available to the public and all stakeholders, which is consistent with this bill.

The committee conducted its study, which went well. It was unanimous. Now, I want to get back to what is happening in Quebec. I am going to talk a bit about climate change, which will certainly come as no surprise to anyone.

Quebec has experienced numerous floods in recent decades, and the socio-economic costs associated with them have been steadily increasing. Philippe Gachon is a professor and holder of the UQAM research chair on hydrometeorological risks related to climate change. He has studied these phenomena extensively and is working to determine why rivers overflow and the future risks. Before there is a flood, rivers overflow from spring flooding, and in some cases, the damage can be considerable.

Let us talk about the Ottawa River, which is near Parliament Hill. In 2017, flood levels on the Ottawa River not only reached areas with just a 1% chance of being flooded at the time, but they exceeded them by a significant amount on two occasions.

The ink was not even dry on the report prepared in the aftermath when flooding returned in the spring of 2019. The Ottawa River once again flooded the streets of Rigaud in a disaster that lasted for more than 42 consecutive days. For the 2019 spring flood alone, the Insurance Bureau of Canada pegged the damage at \$127 million. Across southern Quebec, more than 10,000 people had to leave their homes.

Professor Gachon's team is working with Environment Canada software that is used to prepare short- and medium-term weather forecasts. This team is attempting to create a version that can make long-term predictions about the influence of future disruptions at specific locations, while observing the dynamics at work in the watersheds of Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes. The knowledge that this professor is building would surely be worth sharing to maximize the chances of achieving the bill's objectives.

I am not going to reel off a lot of data or statistics on the increasing number of floods or droughts. We know that these events are increasingly costly and increasingly devastating.

However, I would like to point out that no one is immune to the climate disruptions wreaking havoc on our communities, no matter their geographic location. Most importantly, these disruptions are devastating our agricultural economies. When we had concerns about the benefits of Bill C-317, I have to say that we did not get enough answers, so we are choosing to be optimistic about this initiative.

I will close by quoting Professor Emeritus René Laprise of UQAM, who spoke in 2019 to the Québec Science magazine about future risks and what Quebec might look like in 2050. He said, and I quote:

● (1355)

The models show that there will be more droughts and more flooding. It seems counterintuitive, but we have to understand that it is the distribution of precipitation in the weather that will change. For long periods, there will be no rain. In a hotter atmosphere, the water vapour will accumulate more, then all of the water will fall all at once. That is why we predict that there will be more floods—with the overflow problems that entails.

...mean sea level will rise by roughly 15 cm. At first glance, that is not a lot, but those 15 cm will add to the reduced ice cover on the St. Lawrence and the potential for more violent storms. This combination of factors will accelerate coastal erosion. The phenomenon is already visible on the shores of the Lower St. Lawrence and the Gaspé peninsula [and the Magdalen Islands].

The gravity of these phenomena deserves our attention. Quebec already has a good structure. I invite the federal government to reflect on the underlying causes of these costly and dramatic changes.



*Private Members' Business*

[English]

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Madam Speaker, today I am speaking to C-317, an act to establish a national strategy respecting flood and drought forecasting. Let us be clear. In Canada, we are facing a climate change crisis that is leading to more and more severe floods, and more and more severe wildfires. Let us also be clear that the government is failing, not only to deal with climate change, but to deal with the impacts of climate change.

The proposed bill requires the development of a national strategy to forecast floods and droughts. The bill is peak Liberal: It consults and forecasts, but it would do nothing to deal with climate change. It is yet another attempt to pathologize what is wrong with the patient instead of doing everything we can to bring the patient back to life, but what is worse is that the bill is a Liberal private member's bill. It is associated with a government whose actions are making climate change worse. Despite all of the PR stunts, the greenwashing and the lofty commitments internationally, Liberals have failed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Canada. The reality is clear: We are facing a climate emergency.

Earlier this month, we saw major wildfires on the west side of our constituency, by Cranberry Portage, Wanless and Flin Flon. We have never seen such aggressive wildfires so early in this part of the country. The fires moved as fast as they did because of the drought conditions, because of climate change. Hundreds of people were evacuated. Tens of thousands of hectares burned. Power and telecommunication lines were destroyed.

This is just the beginning. This is happening, not just across Canada, but around the world. Let us be clear that many communities in our region are being impacted disproportionately by climate change. When we talk about floods, no community knows this reality better than Peguis First Nation, the largest first nation in Manitoba and a community I am honoured to represent.

Peguis was forcibly relocated to a flood plain by the federal government, but it is now bearing the brunt of climate change. Just over two years ago, the community once again faced extreme flooding, destroying homes and forcing over 2,000 people to flee to Winnipeg. At the time, Chief Hudson said that he had never seen flooding that bad and called on the military to step in. This a community that knows what it is talking about, having dealt with flooding that led to evacuations in 2011, 2014 and 2017.

I supported the call to bring in the military. The federal government refused to listen. It did not provide the supports needed then, and it has not since, and Peguis has had enough. They filed a \$1-billion lawsuit just a few weeks ago against the federal government, the Province of Manitoba and two municipalities. The lawsuit is seeking damages caused by a “breach of duty and care and negligence...which has made living conditions on the reserve land...intolerable and which led to a wholesale evacuation.”

I was in Peguis a few weeks ago. Highway 224 and the roads in the community are torn up. Houses are abandoned and families are still evacuated. Peguis is asserting that the federal government breached its treaty obligations by not providing Peguis with a “sustainable and tolerable living environment, safe and secure from

flooding disasters, through adequate permanent flood protection for the reserve land.”

The lawsuit also claimed that the federal government failed to build adequate flood protection at the reserve. So much for reconciliation from the Liberals. Peguis deserves action now. First nations and northern communities on the front lines of the climate crisis deserve action now. Let us be clear that the Liberal government has done the exact opposite of what needs to be done to keep communities safe. Only one-third of all money spent on disaster relief is for long-term solutions. The government would rather fund evacuation efforts than help prevent them. It is band-aids for all when what is really needed is surgery. This is life or death for the communities in our region, but the Liberals refuse to do the work.

Last summer was the worst wildfire season recorded in Canada. It was so bad that Canada accounted for 43% of people displaced by wildfires globally last year. This summer could be even worse, which is why Canada needs to think long and hard about how we are keeping communities safe and who has our back.

This brings me to the news of this week. This week, a story in the Ottawa Citizen shed light on deeply concerning comments made by the chief of the defence staff, Wayne Eyre, who has complained that the use of military personnel has become “wickedly wasteful”. He said, “I made it quite clear to other departments that our capacity to do what we did last year is not the same, especially with reduced readiness [and], increased deployments to Latvia”. Eyre told senior officers during an April 23 video conference, “We're not going to have the same forces available...for the scale and duration of response.”

• (1400)

Regarding “wickedly wasteful”, let us be clear. I know first-hand as a Manitoban and as a Canadian just how much of a difference the Canadian military has made when all other resources have been exhausted in fighting major floods and wildfires. Much of this deployment occurred when Canadians were serving overseas, whether it was in former Yugoslavia or even Afghanistan. Now, when we are sending more troops to Latvia, a key military leader is essentially saying that if it comes to forest fires and floods in Canada, good luck.

*Private Members' Business*

Describing these types of deployments as “wasteful” is absolutely unacceptable. However, what is even more unacceptable is the response from our Prime Minister. When I asked him about these comments in question period earlier this week, he responded with a series of indecipherable platitudes. He did not deal with the key question. Will he and his government assure Canadians that when it comes to our military, they will put the interests of Canadians first, responding to floods and forest fires when all other resources have been exhausted, or will the Prime Minister politically play with fire and once again try to have it every which way, trying to stand for everything but in the end standing for nothing?

I want to be clear. When it comes to our military and to the Prime Minister, I am proud of the service of so many women and men. I know first-hand from my family, from my partner, what that service means. That includes being there for Canadians when needed. That, in particular, means being there for northern and indigenous communities when needed. My message to the Prime Minister is to take a stand and make it clear that his government will reject any idea that helping in terms of forest fires and floods is wasteful, and to give the military the resources and the funding it needs to continue that work here at home.

Finally, I want to appeal to this House to take seriously what we are dealing with in Canada and around the world. We must reject the way in which we are increasingly sleepwalking into major policy decisions without considering their consequences. The government's escalation of troop deployment and weapons supplies without debate or discussion, when the military is now saying that it will be incapacitated in its ability to respond to Canada's needs, is not acceptable.

This bill talks about forecasts. I would like to make a forecast: If we do not consider the consequences of our actions right now, we will increasingly be part of the problem, not the solution, when it comes to international conflicts and catastrophic climate change. This would have an impact not only on Canadians today and in the near future, but on the very future of our planet.

● (1405)

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The member for Lac-Saint-Louis for his right of reply.

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I think I really said all I had to say about this bill. I hope it passes today. I would like to see it pass on division and get through all the stages in the Senate fairly quickly.

We are running out of time. As just about everyone has said today, climate change is creating disastrous conditions. We need to do a better job of forecasting them if we want to minimize costs. I know the insurance industry is following the bill closely and wants to see it passed as well.

I will conclude by once again thanking my colleagues for their support.

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

[*English*]

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

**Mr. Rick Perkins:** Madam Speaker, we request a recorded vote.

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Pursuant to Standing Order 98, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, June 5, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[*English*]

It being 2:08 p.m., the House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

Have a great weekend, everybody.

(The House adjourned at 2:08 p.m.)





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